# UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

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The European Public Sphere in the European Broadcasting Space
*Does the European public sphere exist in European television?*

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PhD CANDIDATE
FLORA ANNA RETFALVI

SUPERVISOR
PROF. GUIDO LEGNANTE

PhD DIRECTOR
PROF. FRANCESCO ZUCCHINI

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The PhD program Political Studies (POLS) (30th cohort) stems from the collaboration of four Universities, namely Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Università degli Studi di Genova, Università degli Studi di Milano and Università degli Studi di Pavia. The University of Milan serves as the administrative headquarter and provides the facilities for most teaching activities.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Changing the European (communicative) environment

Even though the European integration has an almost century-long history, it has experienced endless evolution over time, given to continuous changes of circumstances, of the composition of member states, of leading political ideologies, of public opinion and the quality of interconnection. Contemporary the media in Europe are reshaping, as elsewhere in the world.[1] There is a growing competition and consolidation due to existing broadcasting systems' outreach. Digitalization enables television channels to broadcast also abroad, therefore television companies started to grow geographically speaking. Just as the media systems have changed, so too have media organizations. New technology, new media, new generations of journalists, and the more competitive marketplace all contributed to changes within news organizations.[2]

However, in past decades both politically and geographically growing European integration had an increasing impact on member states' policy-making and therefore a major influence on its citizens everyday life. European policy-making is not a process that is easily distinguished from national policy-making, despite its continuous changing not only regarding the number of its member states, but also its concept especially after 1989.[3] This growing influence of the European policy-making caused an increase of communication in this matter. Media started to dedicate more attention to EU affairs. The EU's development as a new kind of polity is therefore closely connected with the range and depth of its development as a communicative space. Inasmuch as the Union actually serves as an exponent for the development of post-national democracy at the supranational level, surely such a process has to be rooted in the reshaping of the EU as an overarching communicative space (or spaces).[4] Last but not least, the relatively recent appearance and diffusion of digital television also contributes to the defining of a changing coverage of EU affairs.[5]

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[1] Papathanassopoulos, S., Negrine, R. M.: *European Media.* Polity Press, UK and USA. [2011]

[2] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication. West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

[3] Ibid

[4] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E.: The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making? Researchgate, www.researchgate.net [2007]

[5] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication. West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

Studies confirm that the less direct contact people have with a given issue the more the media becomes important/popular as intermediary. There are no doubts that media plays an important role in giving information to people about EU initiatives, policies and actions. And also Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcón claims that: "Because European citizens rely on the media for information about the EU, it is important and relevant to evaluate how the EU is portrayed in the news."[6]

For this reason not only did editors and publishers needed to adapt to the new ways of communicating the European integration, but also the European institutions needed to emphasize a coordinated information diffusion in order to define the European image. According to De Vreese, whenever Europe has developed a communications strategy, it has tended to be elitist, self-congratulatory, and without an understanding of how the news media actually work. Nevertheless, the aim has been defined as making people love Europe, not to give people the information they need in order to be able to understand and tolerate it.[7] The EU institutions need to provide all the means to journalists to explain European policy-making. This is important as by 'normalizing' and getting European politics into national politics, we are most likely to see a "legitimate Europeanized public politics" develop.[8]

EU directives however seem to have been caught between the realization of a common communication strategy regarding European issues inducted by the European institutions, and the desire to maintain a plurality of media provision to enhance the competitiveness of the European media sector.[9] Therefore I agree with Harrison (2012), who said "we need to clarify and define what the media sector 'does' and 'wishes to do' to and with Europe and to what Europe 'does' and 'wishes to do' to and with the media."[10]

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[6] Menendez Alarcón, A.V.: *International Journal of Communication* 4, p. 398-415
[7] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]
[8] Ibid
[9] Stevenson [2012]
[10] Harrison [2012]

## 1.2. Does the communication deficit mean a democratic deficit?

As said before, the European integration process is inevitably accompanied by an increasing media visibility and an international media convergence. This means that the level of European issues appearing in mass media grows according to the developing integration. Media visibility thus contributes indirectly to the legitimacy of the EU as such, as it depends not only on its institutional arrangements but on the degree to which it is discussed publicly as well.[11] Given that a vast majority of citizens across Europe repeatedly identify news media as their most important and preferred source of information about European integration, there is an increasing number of studies on the relationship between media and politics. [12] Especially that the dynamics of the interaction between these actors can be studied from a variety of angles, including, for example, the role of news in the political process and influence on changes in public opinion. Taking a cross-national perspective offers an escape from the ethnocentrism common to most research in the field of political communication.[13]

But unlike national states, the European Union has limited access to means of mass-communication for reaching out directly to its citizens. As Page and Shapiro (1992) argue, the media are more likely to shape our perceptions of international and foreign policy issues than of domestic politics with which we often have direct experience.[14] And indeed, "very few citizens have first- or even second-hand contact with Community affairs in Brussels."[15] Increasing the visibility of EU news, boosting the presence of EU level actors or sparking the number of cross-references across EU countries in such a system can therefore only be achieved indirectly. First and foremost by making it politically more

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[11] Wessler H., Peters B., Brüggemann M., Kleinen-von Königslöw K, Stift S.: *Transnationalization of Public Spheres*. Houndmills. [2008]

[12] De Vreese, C., Boomgaarden, H.G.: *Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union*, JCMS 2006 Vol. 44. Nr. 2. Pp. 419-36 [2006]

[13] Gurevitch M., Blumler J.G.: *The Crisis in Public Communication*. London: Routledge［1995］
Przeworski, A., Teune, H.: *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: John Wiley & Sons [1970]
Swanson D., Mancini, P.: *Politics, Media and Modern Democracy*. London: Praeger [1996].

[14] Page, B. I., Shapiro, R. Y., Chicago: University of cago Press, [1992] in De Vreese, C., Boomgaarden, H.G.: *Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union*. JCMS 2006 Vol. 44. Nr. 2., pp. 419-436 [2006]

[15] Dalton and Duval, [1986], p. 127 in De Vreese, C., Boomgaarden, H.G.: *Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union*, JCMS 2006 Vol. 44. Nr. 2., pp. 419-436 [2006]

relevant. This places the responsibility on the side of 'politics'[16] and only in the second place on the media. [17]

The ongoing processes are contradictory. As integration has become more decisive on a national level, the quantity of European-related news has slowly increased, as stated by Mr. Duch, the European Parliament's Spokesperson: "*Compared to 20 years ago, today the quantity of news broadcasted in television on the European Parliament has increased significantly, and this is related to the growing importance of this institution*." Nevertheless, the last data provided by 2014 Parlemeter display how the gap in news coverage is far from being filled, with a large majority of Europeans (67%), who declare not to feel well informed about the European Parliament's activities. The problem is acknowledged and underlined by Mr. Duch himself, who stresses the existence of a mismatch between the impact of European policy-making on citizens' everyday life ("Policies with capital P") and the insufficient information provided both by national governments and news media.[18]

This is due to the fact that existing European channels of communication are followed mainly if not exclusively by a so-called European intellectual élite. Even if traditional media are still the main source of information, news on European issues still appear scarcely and often from a misleading national prospective. As a consequence, in recent years the European institutions have invested substantially in online communication, as a direct channel and therefore, the most convenient way to reach European citizens.[19]

But as democracy relies on communication between citizens and power holders the European communication gains major importance. The EU suffers from a democratic deficit which is accentuated by a striking communication deficit. In its institutional reform process, the EU needs to take communication seriously—and not by developing communication plans that are self-congratulatory.[20] The European Union would like European citizens to be more involved in its political processes and to cast off this

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[16] Schuck, Andreas R.T., Azrout, Rachid, Boomgaarden, Hajo, Elenbaas, Matthijs, van Spanje, Joost, Vliegenthart, Rens and de Vreese, Claes H.: *"Media Visibility and Framing of the European Parliamentary Elections 2009: A Media Content Analysis in 27 Countries"*, in Political Communication in European Parliamentary Elections, (Eds.) Maier, Michaela, Strömbäck, Jesper, Kaid, Lynda L., pp. 175–196, Ashgate, Farnham [2011]
Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention, Communication, Society and Politics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. [2010].
[17] De Vreese, C.H. : *The EU as a public sphere.* Living Reviews in European Governance, Vol. 2, No. 3 [2007]
[18] Arcostanzo, F.; Retfalvi, F.: *When Institutions Go Online: Case Study on the European Parliament's Facebook Fan page.* Bologna, Molino S.p.a 365-387 pp. [2015]
[19] Ibid.
[20] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

"democratic deficit." A functioning European public sphere has been seen as both a solution and an instrument for producing a European identity that might motivate more participation. [21]

However media performance is often held responsible for the European Union's perceived "democratic deficit," and its lack of visibility, resonance and legitimacy in the "hearts and minds" of citizens. Media—and in particular television—are key resources for citizens across Europe when learning about the EU. Strikingly, however, we know hardly anything about how the EU is represented in broadcast news. Nonetheless, journalists are often blamed for contributing to cynicism about EU affairs.[22]

Also politicians are never slow to blame the media when their EU integrationist aims founder, whereas EU elites see better communication through national media as the best way to improve their legitimacy.[23] Thus, as said earlier, the EU's institutional "democratic deficit" is linked to, or partly caused by, the above mentioned "communication deficit." From a normative viewpoint, adequate political communications are essential in response to the multi-levelling and the spread of governance beyond national borders that have resulted from advancing European integration, not least to ensure effective links between political institutions and citizens. This is the thrust of the growing Habermas-inspired[24] "European public sphere" research (e.g. Koopmans, 2007[25]; Peters et al., 2005[26]; Statham, 2007a;[27] Trenz, 2007[28]).

So it has become increasingly—and pressingly—relevant to discuss whether there could be a European public sphere wherein citizens might simultaneously address common issues across state borders and see themselves as the authors of the EU laws

[21] Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol22(4): 479-492. [2007]

[22] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

[23] This is a finding of EurPolCom's 'Constitution' project (ESRC RES-000–23–0886), see Michailidou (2007). Statham,P.: *Making Europe news. How journalists view their role and media performance.* SAGE Publications Vol9(4): 398-422 [2008]

[24] Habermas, J.: 'Why Europe Needs a Constitution', in E. O. Eriksen, J. E. Fossum and A. José Menéndez (eds) *Developing a Constitution for Europe*, pp. 19–34. London Routledge. [2005]

[25] Koopmans, R.: '*Who Inhabits the European Public Sphere? Winners and Losers and Opponents in Europeanised Political Debates*', European Journal of Political *Research* 46(2): p. 183–210. [2007]

[26] Peters, B., Stifft S., Wimmel A., Brüggerman M. and Kleinen von Königslöw K.: '*National and Transnational Public Spheres: The Case of the EU*', European Review Supp. No. 1: p. 139–60. [2005]

[27] Statham, P.: '*Political Communication, European Integration and the Transformation of National Public Spheres: A Comparison of Britain and France*', in J. E. Fossum and P. Schlesinger (eds) *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?* London: Routledge, p. 110–34. [2007]

[28] Trenz, H. J.: '*Quo Vadis Europe? Quality Newspapers Struggling for European Unity*', in J. E. Fossum and P. Schlesinger (eds) *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?*, pp. 89–109. London: Routledge. [2007]

they have to abide by. Especially that the European public sphere contributes to a general knowledge, to informedness, participation, democracy and therefore also to the legitimacy of the European Union. Also according to one of the main researchers of this field, de Vreese, in the specific case of the EU, public communication can further advance democratization of the EU and it is a necessary condition that public communication contributes to knowledge about European affairs.[29] And these principles foster legitimacy that requires citizens to hold beliefs about a political system that are motivated by informedness and knowledge. These beliefs should motivate them to support, accept obligations vis-`a-vis the system, and act according to its rules. Crucially, these beliefs and attitudes should be articulated in public discourse. [30]

Consequently, media and especially the European communication space contribute to the legitimacy of the European Union. This idea is embraced by the theory of the European public sphere, which is "an arena for 'the perception, identification, and treatment of problems affecting the whole society" according to Habermas.[31] Numerous researchers study the existence and challenges of the European public sphere, the previously mentioned, 'Europeanization' of media and their influence on the European identity and public opinion.

## 1.3. The European public sphere and legitimacy

The complex and interconnected communication platform within the European integration (and beyond) shapes both our European identity and moreover the European public sphere. Against the background of the democratic deficit of the European Union, scholars recognized that the process of European integration must be accompanied by Europeanization of political communication in order to overcome the lack of legitimacy and popular involvement in the EU by European citizens[32]. Numerous models regarding Europeanization of political communication across the EU, and the possible development of a European public sphere, have been presented in the last decade by a variety of scholars, and several of these are outlined in this research[33]. However national public

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[29] De Vreese, C. H.: [2007] pp. 8

[30] Peters, Bernhard, 2005, *"Public Discourse, Identity and the Problem of Democratic Legitimacy"*, in, Eriksen, E. O. (Ed.): *Making the European Polity: Reflexive Integration in the EU*. Routledge, London, pp. 84–123. [2005]

[31] Habermas, J.: *Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bu¨rgerlichen Gesellschaft (The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society)*, Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied. [1962]

[32] Koopmans & Pfetsch [2003]

[33] Van Os, Jankowski & Wester [2012]

spheres of all other countries are also more and more fragmented and/or pluralized as a result of social changes, technological developments and media reregulation. The coherence of public spheres of all sorts is increasingly based in networks of discourses and symbols rather than in geographical proximity between participating citizens.[34] Also cultural diversity adds to this. The EU has not so far produced a collective identity; nor can it draw on the shared norms and values that communitarians find necessary to sustain a community. In communal terms, the EU may be understood less as a coherent community and more as a Union of deep diversity. [35]

With the European integration gaining importance, not only the European communication became a crucial aspect but also the academic debate widened in this regard. The numerous studies of media effects theorists may also enrich our understanding of European integration in that it encourages a perspective which not only focuses on what Europe does with the citizens, but also on what the citizens do with Europe.[36] Also the development of the methodological background and know-how of measuring the public sphere contributed the proliferation of empirical studies and assessments of the scope and parameters of a European space. Also this research, such all future studies are charged with the challenge and necessity to arrive at comparable operationalizations and shared measures. [37]

The new forms of access to, and consumption of news continue to develop rapidly and it is important to try and assess their impact. Although the measurement of such activity is an industry itself in its infancy, I have tried where possible to present data that reflects both the efforts of news channels to be widely available to their audiences, and also the use and viewing of audiences of television news and their contribution to a mutual understanding of the European Union and so the European public sphere.

Previously theorizing the public sphere was limited as there was a mismatch between the level of theorizing on a European public sphere on the one hand and the

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[34] Lingenberg, S.: *The Audience's Role in Constituting the European Public Sphere: A theoretical approach based on the pragmatic concept of John Dewey'*, pp. 121-32 in N. Carpentier et al. (eds.) *Research Media, Democracy and Participation.* Tartu: Tartu University Press [2006]

[35] Fossum, J. E.: *'Still a Union of Deep Diversity? The Convention and the Constitution for Europe'*, in E. O. Eriksen, J. E. Fossum and A. J. Menéndez (eds): *Developing a Constitution for Europe.* London: Routledge. [2004]

[36] In a singular and exceptional study linking media coverage about the European Union to public opinion, it was reported that a press, persistently sceptical towards the new currency, had damaged early confidence in the euro. Monthly fluctuations in the direction of the news coverage of that issue were related to changes of public support for the new currency. Y et in contrast to that rather issue-specific public opinion, an effect of the news coverage on more general attitudes towards the EU was not found - although the tone of the news about the EU was modestly, but consistently, negative; see Norris, A Virtuous Circle.

[37] Esser, F., Stromback, J. and de Vreese, Claes H.: *"Reviewing key concepts in research on political news journalism: Conceptualizations, operationalizations, and propositions for future research"*, Journalism, 13(2), p. 139–143. [2012]

availability of empirical studies on the other, this shortcoming is becoming partly alleviated. A catalyst for this development has been the completion of a number of large scale international and comparative studies and the accompanying availability of systematically collected data.[38]

According to de Vreese, we can distinguish three strands of research. One group of studies has concentrated on the necessity and prerequisite for a "truly" European public sphere. A second group of studies has focused on specific cases and specific segments amongst which a European public sphere is or has been in existence, while a third group of studies has focused on the indicators and extent to which Europeanization in the national public spheres can be identified.

The first two strands are, in terms of empirical explorations, much more limited than the third strand which is where the majority of studies are located.[39] Also this research shall foster the third category. And now let us see how this research is structured and what results it has obtained.

## 1.4. Structure of the research and outcomes

### 1.4.1. Structure and results: European public sphere (Chapter 2)

This research is structured in four main sections (besides introduction and endnotes). In the first section (chapter 2) I aimed to collect existing studies in order to give an overview and preliminary explanation about the European public sphere. This chapter's additional value shall be the way it assumes the existing studies and outcomes on this matter, paragoning the different standpoints and scholars' view.

The terminology of the European public sphere, generally refers to the place where public opinion takes form through the discussion of questions, political issues and decisions and where the political power is placed under scrutiny.[40] Therefore I first clarified the conceptual point of view and what the phenomenon means. By examining up researches and the broadcasting space tried to understand how the European Union tends to establish the European public sphere.

As a result, I could categorize academics and their studies into three streams. In the first stream are those political philosophy studies that focus on the EU's democratic deficit and the possible solutions that communication processes can offer while creating a supranational public sphere. (see, for example Eriksen, Schlesinger, Habermas, Fossum).

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[38] De Vreese, C.H. [2007] pp. 13
[39] Ibid
[40] Fossum, Schlesinger [2007]

The second group might be literature that discusses empirically the existence of a transnational public sphere. (Schlesinger, Ionescu). Studies dealing with the topic of the Europeanization of the national public spheres can be distinguished in the third group. (Van de Steeg, Risse, Trenz).

Research conclusions and consequences depict a not thoroughly united picture of the process, effects and results of Europeanization. Moreover they appear not to have proposed a clear alternative description and explanation of how the mechanism of communication is actually operating at the EU level and of how it should function in order to enhance democratic legitimacy.

The existence of a solid European communication space fosters various elements of general opinion and behavior of the public. The measurement of the manifestation of the consequences of the European public sphere can be also used as indicators to examine whether the EPS exists. These characteristics are the following: first of all a working European public sphere emphasizes the general knowledge and informedness about the European institutions and affairs. Second legitimacy is crucial. As previously mentioned, media are important to legitimate the EU and the whole process of European integration. Third democracy, as the EPS is also crucial in framing public opinion and therefore condition political decision-making. A solid European public sphere shall be the controller of the political power. Forth participation, as knowledge is a key-predictor for engagement, political participation is an indicator of EPS. Fifth identity. A common knowledge also contributes to a common identity, a European identity and to a we-feeling that we can mention as sixth. A European public sphere contributes to a shared identity and participation that are connected to the so-called we-feeling that, as mentioned, an existing and efficiently functioning EPS can foster.

As we could see, these features can't really be tackled independently and shall be results of a well-functioning European public sphere.

However I aimed also to explain the various groups of EPS, the Europeanization of national public spheres, the Europeanized news, the role of the social media and the European institutions within this context.

### 1.4.2. Structure and results: Broadcasting space (Chapter 3)

In this chapter, chapter 3, I was dedicating major focus to the examination of the European broadcasting space and to its trends. I have found that the number of TV channels established in Europe has increased notably since 2009, but more than half of the growth can be attributed to the launch of HD channels, generally simulcasts of existing

channels. The 60% of the net increase of channels was due to HD channels that were the main reason of the growth.[41]

I have examined influencing factors, just as how the changing media landscape can influence the competitivity of private channels and influence public ones. Also the European law plays part in determining European tendencies in broadcasting. Today audiovisual media are treated as other goods and services within the EU policy and there are certain EU-wide rules that ensure the free circulation of films and broadcasting content on the free market of Europe independently from how they are delivered: traditional TV, video-on-demand, Internet, etc. This is regulated by the EU's audiovisual and media policy, more precisely by the audiovisual media services directive.

Last but not least I have listed all the European initiatives that tried to overcome of the lacking European Union owned media and the EU's direct contact to its citizens through media, especially as I could see that there is a significant correlation between feeling informed and understanding the EU, that affects also the belief in the EU and feeling European. First the MEDIA Program that is an initiative promoted by the European Commission that aim to support audio-visual production, distribution and cross-frontier cooperation. Unfortunately, research prove that the European cultural and political integration didn't provocate positive results yet.[42] Also specialized European media, just as Politico Europe, EurActive, New Europe and EUObserver that however, they effectively address only the "Brussels bubble" of EU officials, Members of the European Parliament, lobbyists, think tanks, political observers, and PR companies and a certain elite that follows and understands European jargon and the complex policy-making-system. Last, but not least, the European Broadcasting Union that contains 75 organizations of Public Service Broadcasting from 56 countries has launched various projects in order to facilitate cooperation and content-share within the European context: such as the Eurovision song contest, Eurosport, News Exchange and also Euronews.

After getting to know these facts and recognizing the European effort invested in its communication, I focused on the evaluation of participants of this field and the general opinion on the European communication.

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[41] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G.: *Mavise Extra: Linear and on-demand audiovisual media services in Europe 2015.* p. 14. [2016]

[42] Collins R.: *Broadcasting and Audio-visual Policy*; Humphreys: *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*; Weymouth A. and Lamizet B.: *Markets and Myths*. [1996]

### *1.4.3. Structure and results: The European dialogue (Chapter 4)*

As I have specified the dialogue between the European institutions and its citizens isn't direct but journalists, editors and news-producers are mediating it. For this reason the 4th chapter is dedicated to the major understanding of the first step of this communication, the one between journalists and institutions.

In media effects research, agenda-setting, priming, framing and persuasion as a result of tone of the news are amongst the most applied concepts to understand. Media impact on public opinion formation is the core question of numerous research and studies.[43] Frames can mean a template for journalists to compose a news story in order to optimize audience accessibility. In turn, news frames are potentially important resources for public thinking about, understanding of, and support for contemporary political and economic issues, such as the EU. However national frames adopted by news media cause a scarcity of knowledge beyond the lack of information.

News however show a low priority to EU issues, as they are in public agenda.[44] Moreover news are both, positive and negative on EU matters: positive regarding utilitarian benefit considerations and negative with regard to the democratic nature and functioning of the EU.[45] Therefore the European institutions need to invest in communicating with news-representatives in order to set the agenda and encourage framing in a favorable way.

However the EU faces challenges in this process, as the information that they need to transmit is complex, voluminous and scattered. Commission, Parliament and Council aim to pass through information on their functioning, however they don't coordinate among themselves. The DG COMM, Directorate General of Communication of the Commission is not coordinating with the Directorate General of Media of the European Parliament that has a growing importance ultimately due to the growing influence of the EP in European decision-making and also the easier communicability of parliamentary debates.

This chapter uses many of the observations of the interviewees to explain tendencies and evaluate processes. I have interviewed various figures from the European communication space in order to gain insight into the various aspects of the publishing,

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[43] McLeod, D. M., Kosicki, G. M. and McLeod, J. M.: *"Resurveying the boundaries of political communications effects"*, in Bryant, Jennings, Zillmann, Dolf (Eds.): *Media effects: Advances in theories and research*. Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ. p. 215–267. [2002]

[44] De Vreese, C., Boomgaarden, H. G.: *Media Effects on Public Opinion about the Enlargement of the European Union.* JCMS 2006 Vol. 44. Nr. 2, p. 419-36. [2006]

[45] Schuck, Andreas R.T., Azrout, Rachid, Boomgaarden, Hajo, Elenbaas, Matthijs, van Spanje, Joost, Vliegenthart, Rens and de Vreese, Claes H. [2011]

elaboration and distribution of the news. Among the interviewees I have had representatives of the European institutions, such as from European media providers and news agencies, and journalists and editors from private and state television channels both from European member countries – Eastern and Western – and extra-European countries. The qualitative methodology, the semi-structured interviews enabled me to give deeper insight into details.

Outcomes were quite interesting when comparing the different opinions of the EU's communication initiatives. First of all journalists and editors gave an insight in their everyday functioning – order of meetings, choosing the editorial line etc. - and so we have seen that there are differences in the number and availability of Bruxelles correspondents, therefore they need to find alternative ways of gathering information. Local media, social media, interviews and also sometimes phone calls, nevertheless being only partially reliable contribute to news-production, as journalists admit that they are not first case witnesses in many cases. Journalists and editors claimed that these informal sources are often more useful in regard the European institutions, than are press releases and official communications. In addition, broadcasters use very often news agencies' materials just as their own internal database.

On the question whether nationality counts in gaining information or presenting them, opinions vary. Regarding social media as news source replies showed that journalists retain that the European institutions, just as politicians and news sites, the importance of social media as an information source is growing, however social media can be cited as an official news source general opinion was contradictory.

According to the interviews one very interesting topic were the factors that influence the editorial decision-making. Interviewees have mentioned transparency, accuracy, objectivity and balance as main principles of journalism and broadcasting. Nevertheless, we have learnt that visual, guests, language, context and pictures are the fundamental elements of balancing news, objectivity can be manipulated by proportioning these elements in order to fulfill editorial requirements.

Results regarding editorial aspects, public broadcasters follow lines defined by the general opinion and by the state, on the other hand, private channels follow market demand and the EU aims to overcome the two-stepped communication with its citizen. For this reason, the EU institutions tend to balance their targeting messages in order to make them become more interesting and relevant for citizens and at the same time they try to transmit information to all of the citizens to foster a European way of thinking, a common knowledge.

Despite European institutions don't coordinate their communication, each of them

tends to contact journalists independently through press materials, live streamings, press releases etc. but most of the time journalists find the European communication too heavy, not interesting to citizens life, not enough personalized and difficult to make a story out of it. Some of the interviewees blame institutions to speak only to the 'Bruxelles bubble'. Naturally EU officials claim that there is no such thing as the European bubble, however news editors and journalists believe that the European institutions don't put enough effort in establishing and fostering a direct contact with the European citizens.

This is why EU affairs doesn't always make it to the top news according to journalist. However according to the interviewees, EU institutions find difficulties as not only their topic and issues are distant and difficult, but also their organigram and everyday functioning is complex to explain to the public as it seems to be abstract and distant and there are numerous "talking heads" that makes the EU become impersonal and difficult to relate to.

European institutions aim to find the balance between targeting information and addressing all Europeans. Nevertheless journalists generally apply a national perspective to allocate a relevancy to European news in order to make them become more relevant for citizens, and so narratives can become distant from the EU and can shed a negative light on EU affairs.

Therefore the research aimed to understand to what extent these narratives affect the general opinion. This is what the next chapter focuses on.


### 1.4.4. Structure and results: Analyzing the audience (Chapter 5)

The 5th chapter is crucial mainly for the understanding on the one hand how the European broadcasting space is affected by certain elements such as ownership or language. On the other hand, it aims to depict the other side of this reciprocal relationship, how the European broadcasting affects the perception of certain elements, such as trust, informedness, news independence and diversity of news. This latter implies than that we can define the main pillars of the general opinion: the image of the EU, feeling European and trusting the EU.

First of all I have seen that not only the European integration evolves, but also digitalization and market demand does so. As a consequence, the accessibility of the European broadcasting space and also content changes. I have seen that the broadcasting market was growing in the past decade: new channels appeared, new content-providers started to increase competitivity, viewer indexes increased also in a geographic reach out

and in absolute number due to the diffusion of digital tv. Many broadcasting companies started to air content abroad, or internationally, especially as language doesn't seem to be a limit.

This is why, after examining the dynamics and tendencies within the broadcasting market, I have focused on language being an element defining the European broadcasting space or moreover, limiting the evolution of a European public space. We have found that despite provisions, language seem to have rather a positive effect on feeling European according to data. Also the audiences are increasing of foreign language channels that in addition contribute to this feeling European. Therefore, we can agree with Mr. Thibault Lesenecal, the Head of Web Communication Unit at the European Parliament, who said that multilingualism is not a barrier.

The next aspect was ownership. There are significantly more private channels than public ones despite the influencing factors that determine their everyday functioning, such as content and framing news as they have to satisfy market demand to maintain or increase their market share, increase reach out, and last but not least to cooperate with the public administration and follow the national laws as the juridical background for the European broadcasting space is not harmonized. Some might say that this is also due to the televisive heritage that member states carry, as for example the times of the Iron Curtain have had an impact on the degrees and forms of modernization. Consequently, the present differences in terms of public sphere in general and television in particular between East and West. And this had also an impact on the entire process of media system evolution and change. [46]

In relationship to the juridical background, I have examined also news independence, general trust in media and diversity of content. Regarding this latter, respondents believe that news diversity is balanced.   Not like independence. Independence of general media varies country by country, and the range starting from 12% (Greece) goes up to 78% (Finland). Regarding public service media that shall be more informative and educative, 60% of the respondents retains public service media not independent only 35% agree on public service media being independent. Also the trustworthiness of the main information sources move on a wide scale. It came out that radio is the most trusted information source, followed equally by television and

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[46] Jakubowicz, K.: *Ideas in our Heads: Introduction of PSB as Part of Media System Change in Central and Eastern Europe.* European Jounrla of Communication 19(1): 53-74 [2004]

Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol22(4): 479-492. [2007]

newspapers. The analysis also showed that trust specifically in television varies among member states but the majority of the EU countries is above the European media.

Examining trust in media, it was also important to conduct a terzier research analyzing correlation between watching television and the EU having a positive image, or things going in a right direction I have found that there is no relationship between the two. So television doesn't seem to influence general opinion of European policy-making.

Last, but not least I focused on informedness. In regard I have found that the most viewed news-channels are CNN, SkyNews, Euronews and BBC. This confirms also the findings of language, as foreign language channels, especially those English-speaking gain more visibility as there is no linguistic barrier. Interestingly I have found that the regularity of watching television news doesn't influence the feeling of being informed, neither was there any correlation between being into political discussion and to think that things are going into a good direction. But there was a significative relationship between informedness and trust as results show that as the sense of informedness increases so does trust in European institutions.

After all this, I wanted to depict the general opinion mirroring the image of the EU, the feeling citizen and trust in the EU. As I said, there was no correlation between the amount of information and the positive image of the EU. So informedness doesn't necessarily increase a positive opinion about EU affairs. Nevertheless, if the information is positive than people feel more attached to the EU.

Regarding trust in EU and its institutions, trust towards the EU is higher than towards national parliaments or national governments, despite the decreasing tendency in general. And even if 54% of Europeans think that their voice doesn't count in EU affairs, feeling citizen has a significant impact on trusting the European institutions.

As a conclusion we can say that this complex matrix of interdependent factors needs to be evaluated from different points of view keeping in mind that there is a connection between each element. Language, ownership, diversity, independence, trust and informedness all contribute to the evolution of each other and each has an impact on the general opinion. These are secondary elements that are defined also by news-frames.

## 1.5. Methodology and limitations

The main objective of the research is to explain how these features and dynamics in the European broadcasting space influence the evolution of the European public sphere, whether they contribute to the establishment of it or they put some limits.

Therefore this research, besides discussing the mainstreams of the European public sphere(s) and summarizing and updating the ongoing debate over its existence/nature, primarily aims to address two additional academic aspects: on one hand it seeks to provide insight to the main communication channels and dynamics of information-exchange within the European network of journalists, news-agencies and television broadcasters—for this a qualitative method was used and interviews were conducted with journalists, editors and broadcasters. On the other hand, it aims to monitor and measure the perception of European and Europeanized news on national (public) television channels with regard to the European institutions' role in agenda setting, the impact of trust, informedness, language, diversity of news, independence and the channels' ownership. Quantitative methods were used and I have designed graphs and diagrams using raw data from Eurobarometer. Let me explain more in detail how.

As mentioned there is a wide academic debate regarding the existence and perception of the European public sphere. This question can be answered by following two methodologies: on the one hand several studies focus on the content analysis of news and information as most the objective variable in examining such phenomenon is to measure the appearance of European news. However studies focus on the quantity (regularity or timing of European news) rather than the quality of them (evaluating or labeling the stories, point of view, national prospective, objectivity, neutrality etc.). This latter is examined mainly by the other methodology, using surveys and by examining the audience. Audience-analysis is a common way of measurement of the European public sphere, especially in audiovisual communication. However it is not viewing the existence of the EPS strictly speaking, rather the effects of it, the consequences of its existence.

This thesis aimed to make a European comparison, viewing all European member states not only some of them. As this aim was highly ambitious regarding content analysis mainly because of the lack of knowledge of all the official languages, I needed to focus rather on the feedback of the audience. In addition to existing researches and statistical results, I have conducted several independent tables by using the raw data offered by the European Commission's previous survey answers and aiming to find correlations between my own variables and preferred focus points. In order to explain these results and to understand trend, tendencies and reasons, I made several interviews with professionals from each side of this media-communication process: EU officials, journalists and broadcasters.

In order to examine the existence of the European public sphere, and with taking in consideration the limited amount of information and data on my disposal, I identified four aspects that might depict the answer, whether television news on the European

Union contributes to an EPS. These are: (1) Common knowledge of the EU, (2) a common European identity, (3) a We-feeling and (4) the legitimization of the EU that manifests itself in trust and positive image. However these are values that a well-functioning European public sphere assures to its members and therefore if these can be measured in society, we might know that the fundaments of an EPS are set.

In order gain results in this regard I have examined the following aspects: (1) I retained that informedness of citizens is an indicator for common knowledge, (2) the general evaluation of the image of the EU fosters the European identity, (3) for we-feeling I have examined the general feeling of being a European citizen and last, but not least for (4) the function of legitimization I have examined trust if citizens in the EU and the European institutions.

Nevertheless these categories still need to be connected with the European communication, more precisely the EU in television news. Therefore, I have measured general opinion and several aspects that influence it, just like informedness, trust in media and its elements, evaluation of media independence and the diversity of information that are showing the belief in the independence and trusting the media.

Whilst conducting the research I had to face the lack of content analysis that has left unexplained the direct connection between the above-mentioned aspects and the impact of the television. Despite the thorough insight in European initiatives and agenda-setting means, content analysis would have show more clearly the connection between the European efforts in shaping the European public sphere and its general evaluation.

Therefore this significant field can be subject to further research such as the relation between the various elements, namely how ownership influences the diversity of information, how media independence has an impact on trust in media and whether there is a correlation between trust and informedness.

For every case this research is unique as it explains European communication in national broadcastings both from an empirical and practical point of view through interviews, and also aims to understand general opinion based on public televisions and their capacity of transmitting European news.

## *2.* **Theoretical Framework**

The main aim/topic of this chapter is the discussion of the impact of media representation in the European Union, and more precisely how media representation influences citizens' identification with EU.

Furthermore the main argument of this dissertation relies on a detailed analysis of the concepts of public sphere and the European public sphere. To establish a wide theoretical base (before examining empirical statistics and interviews detailed in the next chapter) we will also focus on the definition and formation of public sphere in general.

To be able to analyze the European public sphere, it is necessary to explicitly connect our topic to the European Union. Thus an important part of the chapter will be to examine some of the main characteristics and elements of the EU.

After an examination and short historical overview of the EU we can start our explication of the public sphere and the European public sphere. Later we will analyze the evidence that suggests there is no unified understanding of the phenomenon of European public sphere, and that despite its heterogenic vision academics agree on its importance and existence.

### 2.1. European integration and EU information diffusion

#### *2.1.1. The European Union's identity*

At the beginning of the 21th century the wish for European integration started to grow because of previous historical and political conflicts from the preceding decade. Nations started to feel the need for an institution that stood for peace and represented "collective identity, common values and common interest to promote social and political integration". This is the main reason European integration started to gain importance. [47]

According to the CIVITAS Institute for the Study of Civil Society we can describe the phenomenon of "European integration" the following way: "reducing barriers on transactions between countries. The process of EU integration means that states agree to allow decisions to be made at a European, rather than a national level." [48] Moreover many scholars of European integration have maintained that a democratic Union must emulate

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[47] Snyder T.: *Nations, Empires, Unions: European Integration and Disintegration Since 1914.* Fritt Ord, Oslo, [2014]
[48] Daley C.: *CIVITAS Institute for the Study of Civil Society.* [2015]

the nation state and develop pre-political elements such as a collective identity, common values and common interests, to promote social and political integration. [49]

Following Schlesinger and Fossum, in order to analyze and understand the complex nature of the EU, there are two distinct conceptualizations to follow in order to understand the function of the EU. Both methods cast the EU in terms of a nation state, which will be an important recurring aspect of this dissertation and later on I will explore its importance from different aspects.[50]

One of the above-mentioned conceptualizations is the 'regulatory' one, which sees the EU as transnational governance that consists of specialist agencies and regulatory bodies. Transnational governance stays above the nation state and helps with its function to the member states. Because of the fact that transnational governance raises the question of the democratic legitimacy of the European Union, it is important to look at the other model which shows that the EU is a political community that works in a democratic way and so is based on citizens' decision and works in their mutual interest. This second understanding stands for a 'federalist' explanation. [51]

However the EU's role and its relation with nation states remains an unfinished debate. There are opinions asserting the democratic nature of the EU because of the central decision-making role of the national governments, moreover with the presence of national representatives from EU member states in the European Parliament (representative democracy). Those representatives were elected in democratic manners view domestic elections in each member state. On the other hand, some opinions are skeptical of the significance of the European Parliament and claim that the European Commission is a much stronger body and, as we know, it is non-elected.

The exact classification of the EU is still under debate (see the debate between Moravcsik 2001[52] versus Føllesdal and Hix 2006[53], for example). Since transnational governance involves more than states and formal treaties, it questions the democratic quality of decision-making procedures, and thus also legitimacy of the policy outcomes.

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[49] Grimm, D.: *'Does Europe Need a Constitution?'*, European Law Journal 1(3): 282-302. Morgan, David (1999) The european Parliament, Mass Media and the Search for Power and Influence, Alderhot: Ashgate Publishing. [1995]
Offe, C.: '*"Homogeneity" and Constitutional Democracy: Coping with Identity Conflicts through Group Rights*', Journal of Political Philosophy 5(2): 163-82. [1998]
[50] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J. E.: *The European Union and the Public Sphere: A Communicative Space in the Making?* Researchgate, www.researchgate.net [2007]
[51] Ibid
[52] Moravcsik, A.: *In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit'. Reassassing Legitimacy in the European Union.* JCMS 40, no. 4. pp. 603-24. [2002]
[53] Follesdal, A. and Hix, S.: *Why there is a Democratic Deficit in the EU? : A Respose to Majone and Mporavcsik.* Euoprean Governance Papaers. C-05-02 [2006]

Moreover following Schlesinger and Fossum: "*Whatever sense of direction could be derived from a decades-long process of integration has apparently given way to profound uncertainty and heightened contestation over the Union's future development.*"[54]

### *2.1.2. Communicating the integration*

Since the beginning of European integration, the media has played a crucial role as the main tool that disseminates the initiatives of the Union to the public. The people have never had direct contact to the European Union, and the only sources were newspapers and TV channels that diffused the idea and policies of the EU.

A study by Robinson from 2010 confirms that the less direct contact people have with a given issue the more the media becomes an important/popular intermediary. There is no doubt that the media plays an important role in giving information to people about EU initiatives, policies and actions. As Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcón claims: "because European citizens rely on the media for information about the EU, it is important and relevant to evaluate how the EU is portrayed in the news."[55]

This is supported by studies that say that nevertheless European countries are not reporting more about each other today than 30 years ago, in terms of quantity in referring to discussions and topics and European speakers, they report a relative stability over the past two decades.[56] Even De Vreese et al. (2006) [57] state that in terms of visibility and share of EU actors, the trend between 1999 and 2004 is one of increase. The 2009 European Parliament elections were more prominent in the news than in previous elections[58]. Moreover, it was found that media coverage of the 2009 EP elections was more evaluative, polarized, and positive towards the EU compared to previous EP elections.

Also news-production changed its operativity in terms of their allocation of resources, strategic placement of correspondents and editorial staff, and choices for constructing news stories. The previously nationally organized news desks shifted towards

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[54] Schlesinger, P and Fossum, J.E. [2007]

[55] Menendez Alarcón, A.V.: International Journal of Communication 4, p. 398-415

[56] De Vreese, C. H. [2007]
Sifft, S., Kleinen-von Konigslow, K., Bruggemann, M., Peters, B. and Wimmel, A.: *"Segmented Europeanization: Exploring the legitimicay of the European Union from a public discourse perspective",* Journal of Common Market Studies, 45(1): p. 127–155. [2007]

[57] de Vreese, C. H., Banducci, S. A., Semetko, Holli A. and Boomgaarden, H. G.: *"The News Coverage of the 2004 European Parliamentary Election Campaign in 25 Countries"*, European Union Politics, 7(4): p. 477–504. [2006]. Online version: https://claesdevreese.wordpress.com/research-projects/

[58] Schuck, A. R.T., Azrout, Rachid, Boomgaarden, Hajo, Elenbaas, Matthijs, van Spanje, J., Vliegenthart, R. and de Vreese, C. H. [2011]

the international, or rather European focus. The Editor-in-Chief of the BBC Nine o'Clock News describes this shift: *"Earlier we compared ourselves to America, today we are much more likely to compare ourselves to another European country such as Germany or France ... We now have bureaux in Brussels, Frankfurt, Paris, Berlin and Rome and we can tap into BBC World's correspondents in places such as Warsaw and Vienna."* [59] The Editor-in-Chief of Britain's Channel 5 news program also comments on the implications of European political integration for news organizations: *" When setting up the program, we had to decide whether to have a bureau in Washington DC or in Brussels. We opted for Brussels as almost anything that comes out of there has importance, directly, for Britain, much more so than what comes out of Washington."* [60]

Not only editors and publishers had to adapt to new ways of communicating the European integration, but the European institutions themselves needed to emphasize a coordinated information diffusion in order to define the European image. According to De Vreese, whenever Europe has developed a communication strategy, it has tended to be elitist, self-congratulatory, and without an understanding of how the news media actually works. Accordingly, the aim was defined as making people love Europe, not necessarily to give people the information they need in order to be able to understand and tolerate it.[61] The EU institutions are responsible for providing all the means to journalists to explain European policy-making. This is important because by 'normalizing' and injecting European politics into national politics, we are most likely to see a 'legitimate Europeanized public politics' develop.[62]

Anyway, we need to see that two different components of this overall evaluation were distinguished: In most countries, news portrayed the EU positively regarding to more utilitarian benefit considerations and, at the same time, negatively with regard to the democratic nature and functioning of the EU. As Schuck et al. (2011a) conclude, the picture – overall – is highly balanced, but evaluations are clearly polarized into a (positive) benefit and a (negative) democratic deficit dimension. [63]

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[59] Interview with Jonathan Baker, Editor, BBC Nine o'Clock News, 23 Sept. 1999, by Claes de Vreese in Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: *Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication.* West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

[60] Interview with Gary Roger, Editor Channel 5 News, 27 Sept. 1999, by Claes de Vreese in Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: *Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication.* West European Politics 23, no. 4: 121-141. [2000]

[61] De Vreese, C. H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

[62] Statham, P: *Making Europe News: Journalism and Media Performance.* in The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention, (Eds.) Koopmans, Ruud, Statham, Paul, Communication, Society and Politics, pp. 125–150, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. p.305. [2010]

[63] Schuck, Andreas R.T., Azrout, Rachid, Boomgaarden, Hajo, Elenbaas, Matthijs, van Spanje, Joost, Vliegenthart, Rens and de Vreese, Claes H. [2011] pp. 175–196.

## 2.2. What is the European Public Sphere?

### 2.2.1. Understanding the Public Sphere

Jurgen Habermas, founder of public sphere theory defined the public sphere as "an arena for 'the perception, identification, and treatment of problems affecting the whole society'". [64]

According to Habermas (1989), originally the public sphere was developed first as a literary public sphere, centering on fictional literature (such as novels) and critical discourses related to it. And from this grew an explicitly political arena with numerous organizations and publications. Still the original remained essential in liberal democracies: "They formed the public sphere of a rational-critical debate in the world of letters within which the subjectivity originating in the interiority of the conjugal family, by communicating with itself, attained clarity about itself.". [65]

Also according to Habermas' characterization, the public sphere "can best be described as a network of communicating information and points of view [...]; the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions. Like the lifeworld as a whole, so, too, the public sphere is reproduced through communicative action, for which mastery of a natural language suffices; it is tailored to the general comprehensibility of everyday communicative practice." [66]

Later on, other researchers attempted to define the public sphere, such as Schlesinger and Fossum, who said that "the public sphere has a *triadic character*, with a speaker, an addressee, and a listener. 'Public sphere' entails that equal citizens assemble into a public and set their own agenda through open communication." [67] In this sense they maintain that the public sphere is a "*communicative space (or spaces) in which relatively unconstrained debate, analysis and criticism of the political order can take place*." This resonates greatly with the words of Habermas: "...arena which enables citizens to interact

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[64] Habermas, J.: *Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society).* Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Neuwied. [1962]

[65] Habermas, J.: *The structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* Oxford and Cambridge: Polity/Blackwell.(Orig.Pub.1962)[1989]

Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol22(4): 479-492. [2007]

[66] Habermas, J.: *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [1996a] pp.360

[67] Schlesinger, P. and Fossum, J.E. [2007]

and talk about (the same) political issues."[68]

This idea is important, as de Vreese's elaborates: "interpersonal communication is important for understanding both knowledge gains and an increased propensity to turn out the vote." This finding is in line with much scholarship suggesting that discussions of politics are at the core of democratic citizenship. Although one of the aims of public sphere is to arrive on a common consensus, in reality public and political life mostly entails lack of correspondence. This is due to the fact that *"the public sphere largely assumes homogeneity and consensus whereas public and political life is often characterized by heterogeneity and disagreement".* [69]

At this point it is worth to mention the growing role of the media. The media traditionally has been taken as the best 'proxy' and 'location' for expression of the public sphere.[70] This affects the ontological status of the public sphere: "The public sphere remains an ideal, but it becomes a contingent product of the evolution of communicative action, rather than its basis".[71] With the appearance of new media and social media, media consumption of the public in general became a significant focus of numerous studies as it explains the public sphere in different manners. This thesis does not aim to debate the merits of this topic, only dedicate a brief acknowledgement.

### 2.2.2. Defining the European public sphere according to scholars

The complex and interconnected communication platforms within the European integration (and beyond) shape both our European identity and moreover the European public sphere. Against the background of the democratic deficit of the European Union, scholars recognized that the process of European integration must be accompanied by the Europeanization of political communication in order to overcome the lack of legitimacy and popular involvement in the EU by European citizens[72]. Numerous models regarding the Europeanization of political communication across the EU, and the possible

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[68] Habermas, J., [1996a]

[69] De Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H.: *News, Political Knowledge and Participation: The Differential Effects of News Media Exposure on Political Knowledge and Participation.* Acta Politica Vol. 41. Pp. 317-341 [2006]
de Vreese, C. H.: *"Ten Observations about the Past, Present and Future of Political Communication"* unknown format, inaugural lecture, University of Amsterdam. [2006]

[70] Koopmans, R. and Statham, P (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention, Communication, Society and Politics.* Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press [2010]

[71] Calhoun, C.: *Introduction*. in C. Calhoun (ed.) Habermas and the Public Sphere, Cambridge: MIT Press. [1992]

[72] Koopmans & Pfetsch [2003]

development of a European public sphere, have been presented in the last decade by a variety of scholars, and several of these are outlined in this proposal[73].

Even though social media is gaining importance regarding the examination of the European public sphere, there is still a significant emphasis on traditional information-distribution, namely the television. Paraphrasing the words of Mr. Jaume Dutch Guillot, Director for the Media of the European Parliament, as the European integration is becoming deeper and wider, news on European issues gain more legitimacy, even if the EU's information and communication policy, in fact, has been present in the European agenda since the very beginning of the integration process.[74]

The neverending ways of defining the European public sphere reflect a deep and wide academic debate on its existence. I have collected some of the definitions proposed by researchers that also partially explain the way scholars relate to this phenomenon.[75]

- According to van de Steeg, a public sphere exists if "the same topics are discussed at the same time with the same intensity and structure of meaning" [76]
- A public sphere is "an intermediate sphere of public actions, affiliations, and relations beyond the state and the market, where citizens as relatively free and equal members of society and its polity use many, independent, and party rival associations and media to learn, discuss, organize collective action, and bargain, among other things, and where such practices of citizenship tend to protect and promote constitutional democracy under preconditions of maturity" (de Beus 2010: 14); [77]
- The public sphere is dynamic, it can "no longer be seen as one uniform national public sphere, but as a polymorph, polyphonic and even anarchistic" (Eriksen 2004:6);[78]

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[73] van Os, R., Jankowski, N.W., Wester, F.: *Exploring the Online European Public Sphere: The Web and Europeanization of Political Communication in the European Union* in Harrison, J., Wessels, B. 2012. ed. *Mediating Europe: new media, mass communications and the European public sphere. 1st edition.* Berhehn Books, US. [2012] pp. 73 - 98

[74] Valentini, C., Nesti, G. 2010. *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, UK.

[75] de Vreese, C.H. [2007] p. 6

[76] van de Steeg, M.*: "Rethinking he Conditions for a Public Sphere in the European Union",* European Journal of Social Theory, 5(4), p. 499–519, [2002]

[77] de Beus, J.: *"The European Union and the Public Sphere: Conceptual Issues, Political Tensions, Moral Concerns, and Empirical Questions",* in Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Dis- course and Political Contention.* Communication, Society and Politics, p. 13–33, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. (Cited on page 7.) [2010]

[78] Eriksen, E. O.: *"Conceptualizing European public spheres: General, segmented and strong publics",* ARENA Working Paper, 3/04, ARENA - Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, Oslo. URL (accessed 17 December 2007): http://www.arena.uio.no/publications/working-papers2004/papers/wp04_3.pdf. [2004]

- It is a "space for communication between political actors and citizen for discussions of matters of common interest" (Brantner et al. 2005); [79]
- The public sphere public sphere is "the place where civil society is linked to the power structure of the state" (Eriksen 2005: 342); [80]
- It is an "arena of communicative discourse to which citizens have access and may freely contribute to rational discussion of issues collectively deemed of societal importance" (Jankowski and van Os 2004).[81]
- The public sphere is" a system of communication where issues and opinions are being gathered (input), processed (throughput) and passed on (output)" (Neidhardt 1994: 8); [82]
- The public sphere is that social space where "every state holds a conversation with its subjects as to the legitimacy of its existence" (Price, E.M. 1995:234)[83]

As mentioned before scholars are not only very divergent in finding definitions for the European public sphere, but also they represent different point of views on whether or not this phenomenon even exists. De Vreese, one of the main researchers of this topic, retains that even though there is no consensus about the extent to which Europeanized public spheres exist, the contours of a European public sphere can still be sketched. [84] Also Trenz describes this phenomenon by saying that in relation to Europe, a European public space can be equated largely with "European political communication" being any form of communication which refers to European governance in the wide sense, expressing consensus or dissent with regard to particular issues[85] and then he adds that despite cross-national differences, there are positive indicators of an absolute degree of European public sphere. [86]

Numerous researchers are of the opinion that this conception of the EU does not

[79] Brantner, C., Dietrich, A. and Saurwein, F.: "*Europeanization of national public spheres: empirical evidence from Austria*" First European Communication Conference, Amsterdam, November 24 – 26. [2005]

[80] Eriksen, E. O.: "*An Emerging European Public Sphere*", European Journal of Social Theory, 8 (3): p. 341–363, [2005]

[81] Jankowski, N. W. and van Os, R.: "*The 2004 European parliament election and the internet: contribution to a European public sphere?*" Conference on internet communication in intelligent societies, Hong Kong, conference paper. [2004]

[82] Neidhardt, F.: "*Offentlichkeit, offentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen*" in Neidhardt, F. (Ed.): *Offentlichkeit, offentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen.* Sonderheft der Kolner Zeitschrift fur Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, vol. 34, p. 7–41. [1994]

[83] Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol 22. (4): p. 479-492. [2007]

[84] de Vreese, C.H. [2007]

[85] Trenz, H.-J.: "*Media Coverage on European Governance Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers*", European Journal of Communication, 19(3): p. 291–320. [2004]

[86] Ibid.

conceive of the public sphere in monolithic terms, but rather as a set of overlapping publics.[87] Therefore the very notion of a European public space will continue to be important to revisit: what is emerging is hardly a replacement of national public spheres, i.e., not a supranational structure but rather a composite composed of national public spheres. This notion of a European public sphere is indeed far removed from Habermas' (1996) criteria for a monolithic European public sphere. Many say that the European public sphere is accumulating and divided.[88] This is also due to the European Union being neither a state nor a nation, as it is still developing and continuously evolving. For this reason, whatever public sphere we might foresee developing in the EU will not necessarily be structured on the model of the modern nation state, as Schlesinger and Fossum contend.[89] The opinion of Swantie Lingenberg emphasizes this vision as he outlines three views in the scholarly literature on the subject.

Firstly, a proper European public sphere requires conditions similar to those of the national public spheres – a common language, a European-wide media system and citizens with a European identity. Secondly, one can speak of a European public sphere where the national public spheres provide the infrastructure but where there is also more or less simultaneous reporting (and discussion) of European issues seen in a European perspective. Finally, the European public sphere is "a pluralistic ensemble of issue-oriented publics that exists once the same issues are discussed simultaneously and within a shared frame of relevance".[90]

Nevertheless, many agree, with de Swaan, Eriksen and Schlesinger, included, that a common European public sphere is needed for an effective deliberative democracy to operate and that the present segmentation of the EU into national publics weakens its deliberative potential. They also add that overlapping flows of information do not of themselves ensure that overlapping publics will mean a common European public sphere.[91] This is because the by now largely rejected notion of a singular, supra-national, pan-European public sphere was conceptualized as communicative space requiring a common language, a shared identity and a transnational media system.[92] And so the current nature

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[87] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007] p.23

[88] De Vreese, C.H. [2007] pp. 13, Ibid. p. 5

[89] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007]

[90] Gripsrud, J. [2007] p. 479-492.

[91]Eriksen, E. O.: *"Democratic or Jurist-Made Law: On the Claim to Correctness"* in Menéndez A. J. and Eriksen E. O. (Eds): Fundamental Rights through Discourse. On Robert Alexy's Legal Theory - European and Theoretical Perspectives", ARENA Report 04/9. [2004] Schlesinger, Philip (2003) *The Babel of Europe*?, ARENA Working Paper 22, Oslo: ARENA.

[92] Kielmansegg, P.G.: *Integration und Demokratie, in Jachtenfuchs, M. and Kohler-Koch, B.* (Eds.) *Europåaische Integration* (pp. 47–71). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. [1996] Habermas [2001]

of the EU's formation means that while there is a transnational public sphere based on the workings of policy, there is no corresponding general public possessing of a common collective identity. [93] This resonates with the idea of Kielmansegg (2003)[94] and critics of this notion of a European public sphere: the European Union "is not a community of communication, hardly a community of shared memories; it is merely, and in a limited sense, a community of shared experiences"[95].

But what does a "community of communication" mean? What is the role of media in this regard? This is what we will examine in the following section.


## 2.3. The media's role in the European public sphere

For some two decades now, there has also been a growing body of work that addresses the complex relations between media and public spheres in the EU at the national or supranational level. Given the centrality of media in public sphere theory, we need to inquire more into the media, public opinion, and the responsiveness of politics to public opinion, [96] keeping in mind the question of whether traditional media, in particular print media, is the sole and most appropriate 'proxy' for a public sphere [97], even if "where people know and care little about the issue, and where it is remote from their everyday experience of life and their values, then the impact of the media may be greater". [98] Indeed, most of what citizens experience about politics involves media to some extent and the media represents an organized and confined space where certain speakers and actors can provide input for public discussions. News media is an arena in which political actors, civil society and even citizens can express views and make announcements. [99]

And so at this point it is worthwhile to summarize the tasks that media ought to

Grimm, Dieter, "*Treaty or constitution? The legal basis of the European Union after Maastricht*", in Developing a Constitution for Europe, (Eds.) Eriksen, Erik O., Fossum, John E., Men´endez, Augustin J., pp. 69–87, Routledge, London [2004]

[93] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E.  [2007]

[94] Kielmansegg, P. G.: *"Integration und Demokratie"*, in Europaische Integration, (Eds.) Jachten- fuchs, Markus, Kohler-Koch, Beate, pp. 49–83, Leske+Budrich, Opladen, 2nd edn. [2003]

[95] Schlesinger, P.: *"Changing Spaces of Political Communication: The Case of the European Union"*, Political Communication, 16(3): 263–279, [1999]

de Vreese [2002]

Kielmansegg [2003]

[96] de Vreese, C.H. [2007]

[97] Fossum, J. E. and Schlesinger, P.: *The European Union and the public sphere: A communicative space in the making,* Routledge, London. [2007]

[98] Newton [2006] p. 218.

[99] De Vreese, C.H. [2007] pp. 7

perform in democratic political systems, following the thoughts of Habermas, citing Gurevitch and Blumler: first (1) is surveillance of the sociopolitical environment, reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens; (2) also meaningful agenda-setting, identifying the key issues of the day, including the forces that have formed and may resolve them; (3) platforms for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy by politicians and spokespersons of other causes and interest groups; (4) dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power- holders (actual and prospective) and mass publics; (5) mechanisms for holding officials to account for how they have exercised power; (6) incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved, rather than merely to follow and kibitz over the political process; (7) principled resistance to the efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence, integrity and ability to serve the audience; (8) a sense of respect for the audience member, as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment.[100]

Despite identifying the previously mentioned functions of the media, its nature shall be described as the structure of media content is not neutral, even though it follows professional, organizational and cultural conventions and the content also includes commentary and interpretation.[101] For this reason numerous studies that focus on newspapers, television, journalists and the impact of social media use the methodology of content analysis in order to examine the public sphere through media.

For example, Trenz in an analysis of broadsheet newspapers in 2000 in Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Spain found evidence of a 'transnational resonance of political communications' implying that in relation to specific actors and institutions there are cross-references. He distinguished three types of 'European' news: news characterized by a shared meaning of European events and issues; Europeanized news characterized by the secondary impact of European events and issues on national news coverage; and national news on domestic events and issues characterized by evolving forms of European monitoring and rhetoric. And in this study Trenz concluded that despite cross-national differences, there are positive indicators of an absolute degree of European public sphere.[102] Just like Trenz, many other researchers have found evidence of a Europeanized news coverage in broadsheet, quality newspapers: Eder and Kantner, Wessler and others

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[100] Habermas, J.: *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [1996a]

[101] Shoemaker, P. J. and Reese, S. D.: *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content*. Longman, White Plains, NY, 2nd [1996]

[102] Trenz, H. J.: "*Media Coverage on European Governance Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers*", European Journal of Communication, 19(3) p. 291–320 [2004]

and Trenz and Eder[103] for example.

Others who have examined television news, might describe a more variegated picture. Following relevant studies, some say that television is the most widely cited source of information about the EU for its citizens (Eurobarometer)[104] and it does not provide a virtual space for the European public sphere and it gives only an occasional sign of Europeanization[105]. On the other hand, Fiske and Hartley say that television is one of the most highly centralized institutions of modern society. This is not only a result of commercial monopoly or government control, it is also a response to the culture's need for a common centre, to which the television message always refers. Its centralization speaks to all members of our highly fragmented society.[106] Also Gripsrud says that in Europe broadcast television has been one of if not *the* most important institution in the national public spheres (outside parliaments) for the last 50 years or so, delivering essential information and a broad cultural repertoire to citizens and also providing central, common forums for entire nation-states. The question can thus be altered to how television might function in the context of the EU and a European public sphere.[107]

The centrality of the medium of television to the public sphere and the traditionally national community it addresses was in early critical television theory first and best captured in Raymond Williams's (1975)[108] idea of broadcast television functioning in a situation marked by a historically unprecedented concentration of power and resources, on the one hand, and what he called 'mobile privatization' on the other, i.e. the dissolution of traditional communities and their replacement by nuclear families and swinging singles on the move both geographically and socially. In such a situation, centrally located broadcast television is a key distributor of essential information and a much-needed provider of social coherence and identity.[109]

Also Habermas says that "broadcast television has been a key structural component in the public spheres of western countries since the 1950s. It is commonly assumed that the mass media in general and broadcasting in particular have contributed

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[103] Eder, Kl. and Kantner, C.: *"Interdiskursivitat in der europaischen Offentlichkeit"* Berliner Debatte Initial, 13(5/6): p. 78–88. [2002]

Wessler, H., Peters, B., Brüggemann, M., Kleinen-von Konigslow, K. and Sifft, S. [2002]

Trenz, H.-J. and Eder, K.: *"The Democratizing Dynamics of a European Public Sphere: Towards a Theory of Democratic Functionalism"* European Journal of Social Theory, 7(1): p. 5–25. [2004]

[104] Eurobarometer http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ceeb/ceeb6/ceeb6_en.htm#2-3

[105] Peter, J. and de Vreese, C. H.: *"In Search of Europe: A Cross-national Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News"* Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 9(4): p. 3–24. [2004]

[106] Fiske, J. and Hartley, J.: *Reading Television.* London and New York: Methuen (Orig. Pub.1978) [2003]

[107] Gripsrud, J., p. 479-492. [2007]

[108] Williams, R.: *Television: Technology and Cultural Form.* New York: Schocken Books [1975]

[109] Gripsrud, J., p. 479-492. [2007]

greatly to the production of national identity, which fosters a strong inclination to participate in political processes within the nation-states of Europe [110]. Consequently, one would think something similar could apply to the EU."[111]

Overall we can say that the criteria to be able to define a common European public sphere in the media includes corresponding media coverage in different countries with shared points of reference in which 'speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in a common discourse that frames the particular issues as common European problems'.[112] Koopmans and Statham (2010)[113] additionally list visibility, inclusiveness, and the presence of contestation. At the very least, a European public sphere should reflect national media reporting on the same topic using common sources, including EU sources and sources from other EU countries. In this framework for example Schlesinger perceives contradictory tendencies in the EU's communicative spaces: on the one hand there are transnational networks and communicative flows and the steady rise of a lingua franca; on the other hand, media communication is still predominantly framed in national terms, despite the growth of news interest in the EU.[114]

However I need to state that the media is not, ceteris paribus, responsible for the public sphere falling short of normative standards, elite dreaming or decreasing support for advanced European integration. As Trenz and van de Steeg emphasize, the media is bounded by a number of constraints that limit it in performing this role of sole-responsibility such as market forces and other developments in the media and communication landscape.[115] Hereby, the 'prime responsibility' is actually a political one with problems to be addressed (or solved) on the side of institutions, parties and politicians.[116]

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[110] Anderson, B.: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London and New York: Verso [1983]

[111] Habermas, J.: *Keine Demokratie kann sich das leisten.* Suddeustche Zeitung 16 May [2007]

[112] Risse, Th., van de Steeg, M.: "*An emerging European public sphere? Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Clarifications*", International Conference on Europeanisation of Public Spheres, Political Mobilisation, Public Communication and the European Union, June 20 – 22, Berlin, conference paper. Online version: http://www.atasp.de/downloads/030624_europeanpublicsphere.pdf. [2003]

[113] Koopmans, R. and Statham, P., [2010]

[114] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E., [2007]

[115] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: *Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication.* West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

[116] De Vreese, C.H., [2007]

## 2.4. Why the European public sphere is an important aspect?

This wide debate on the existence of the European public sphere is due to the multiple roles it would have to take in the European integration process. Based on previous research, a European public sphere would fulfill many (if not most) of the following functions:[117] A transparency function as it is a space for all social groups and opinions. It also has a validating function for being a space for voicing, debating and possibly revising one's own opinion. The EPS has an orientation function as being a space for voicing and being confronted with opinions, it would have a legitimating function for being a space where opinions and policies are made visible, a forum for gaining (or not) public resonance and legitimacy. A responsive function as being a space for policy makers to infer opinions of the citizenry. It has an accountability function as it is a space where power holders would be discussed and held accountable. And last, but not least a participatory function as it is a space in which contributions would be encouraged.

These definitions imply that the public sphere may be more or less explicitly present in different spaces. And as said before, one important space is constituted by the media. The media and communication can facilitate discourses [118] and helps the functioning of the European Union.

*Knowledge*

Many see the Union less as a creature in the hands of the member states and more as a political system *sui generis*, whose most distinguishing feature, perhaps, is its inordinate complexity along cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and social lines. The EU is marked by great institutional complexity, in both vertical and horizontal terms, and by enormous discrepancies in the member states' sizes and institutional workings.[119] The media has its role to share information on these matters in a comprehensible manner that increases the general knowledge of them. This is crucial as public knowledge such as participation in politics are at the core of democratic processes. The quality of citizenship and the health of the collective are preconditioned by political knowledge, and there is a positive relationship between knowledge and the act of voting[120]. Generally, scholars agree that the media play a role in the process of public learning and engaging in politics. According to de Vreese and Boomgaarden, two scholars, Price and Zaller compared self-reported

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[117] Ibid pp. 6
[118] Ibid pp. 7
[119] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E., [2007]
[120] Delli Carpini and Keeter [1996]

measures of media use, interpersonal communication, and knowledge levels as predictors for recalling current news events. They find knowledge to be the strongest and most reliable predictor of recall and conclude that when investigating reception of political communications, knowledge is a better predictor than media use. However, when looking at change in knowledge it becomes necessary to assess the diet of information that individuals are exposed to and not merely predicting knowledge as a function of knowledge due to potential imprecision in exposure and media use measure.[121]

Although most scholars agree that knowledge about politics and public participation in political decision-making is beneficial to democracy, the literature is divided on whether or not the media helps in this matter, with some scholars focusing on the informative and mobilizing role of the media (e.g., Neuman et al., 1992; Norris, 2000; Dalton, 2002) and others on the contribution of the media to public cynicism, political inefficacy, and disengagement (e.g., Robinson, 1976; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Schulz, 1998; Putnam, 2000). [122]

*Legitimacy*

In the context of European integration, the underlying assumption is that a shared European space, a European public sphere, may contribute to the public legitimacy of the EU polity and its policies, in much the same ways as have been suggested for national public spheres. As the media are often held responsible for the EU legitimacy problems[123]. Meyer (1999)[124] observes that the fragmented and technocratic profile of the EU is particularly noticeable in the European Commission's interface with journalists. Therefore, a better understanding of EU-media relations might help to clarify the structural deficiencies at the core of the EU 'communication deficit'.[125]

In other words, even as the European Union celebrates 60 years of existence, worries are still frequently expressed over its democratic deficit and the low degree of

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[121] de Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H.: News, Political Knowledge and Participation: The Differential Effects of News Media Exposure on Political Knowledge and Participation. Acta Politica Vol. 41. Pp. 317-341 [2006]
[122] Ibid
[123] de Vreese, C.H. The EU as a public sphere. [2007] pp. 5Statham, P.: *Making Europe news: journalism and media performance.* in Koopmans R., Statham P. (Eds.): *The making of a European public sphere: media discourse and political contention*. Cambridge: University Press. P. 125-150. [2010]
[124] Meyer, C.O.: *Political legitimacy and the invisibility of politics: exploring the European Union's communication deficit*. Journal of Common Market Studies 37, no. 4: p. 617–39. [1999]
[125] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H.: *Information Flow and Communication Deficit: Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU officials,* Journal of European Integration, 34:4, p. 305-322. [2012]

citizens' participation in its key political processes. The EU's 2001 'White Paper on Governance' expressed concern with the growing disparity between the EU organization and citizens of the Union, since the connection between Europe and its citizens "is the starting condition for more effective and relevant policies". The EU is worried that the European public has lost interest in its political process, and that there is an increasing distrust in politicians and their institutions within the general population: "many people are losing confidence in a poorly understood and complex system to deliver the policies that they want. [Furthermore,] the Union is often seen as remote."[126] This is due to a segmented set of public spheres that has little capacity to challenge the democratic shortcomings of the EU and no evident ability to generate an overarching public sphere.[127]

These segmented spheres are involved in practical problem-solving and do not constitute an overarching European public in democratic terms. They tend to be narrowly confined issue communities. [128]

The public sphere is a precondition for realizing popular sovereignty, because in principle, it entitles everybody to speak without any limitations. It is an idealized common space for free communication that is secured by legal rights to freedom of expression and assembly, where problems are identified, but also thematized and dramatized and formed into opinions and wills that formal decision-making agencies are to act upon. The modern concept of a public sphere extended across Europe. [129]

However, the media is important to legitimate the European institutions and the whole process of European integration as power holders' basis of legitimacy is changed as citizens become equipped with rights against the state (through, for example, media-provided information). Decision makers are therefore compelled to enter the public arena in order to justify their decisions and to gain support.[130]

*Democracy*

A critical issue pertaining to public sphere is the character of the link between public sphere and democracy. This means the extent to which public opinion frames and shapes the operations of the political system as opposed to simply responding to the system's actions. A healthy public space can provide a forum for exchange between

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[126] Gripsrud, J., p. 479-492. [2007]
[127] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E., [2007]
[128] Ibid
[129] Taylor, C.: *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press [1995]
[130] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007]

citizens themselves and between citizens and elites, therefore it can improve the democratic quality of a system and contribute to the legitimacy and accountability of power holders.[131]

Nevertheless we should not assume, in any case, that national public spheres are paragons of openness and democratic participation. Decision-making does not follow upon free and open debate; instead political questions are decided behind closed doors, through institutionalized bargaining. This tendency has the effect of undermining the public space as forum and as critical assessor of what takes place inside the political system. The speaker and the addressee are *inside* the system and the public is left on the sidelines and relegated to the passive role of a spectator or mere reactor to what the system produces. [132]

Media is one of the means, if not the most important one that can legitimate certain political tendencies and while fostering common knowledge on certain issues it reinforces certain political power. This is particularly true given the critical importance of the media in today's age of 'permanent campaigning' in which politicians (and their spin-doctors) increasingly plan their activities around the requirements of the media, not only during campaigns preceding elections, but also in daily politics.[133]

This is why considerable effort has been invested in trying to expose and analyse the so-called democratic deficit of the European Union whilst examining its presence in the media. There is disagreement about the nature of the EU's democratic shortcomings (see the debate between Moravcsik 2001 versus Føllesdal and Hix 2006 and Hix 2008, for example) that are than represented also in the national media. Some argue that the EU is fully democratic due to the central role in decision making of elected national governments, whose actions are followed by parliaments, media, and voters at home. However, the European Parliament has increased its powers since its inception, and it has invested also in its media-appearance. Others argue that the European issues play only a marginal role in domestic politics, that power holders are thus not scrutinized, that the European Parliament is still too insignificant and that the Commission (a non-elected body) is too powerful. [134] In every case, scholars agree that media has a significant role in

[131] de Vreese, C.H.: *The EU as a public sphere.* Living Reviews in European Governance, Vol. 2, No. 3 [2007]

[132] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J. E., [2007]

[133] Nimmo, 2000 in De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

[134] Moravcsik, A.: *"Federalism in the European Union: Rhetoric and Reality"* in Nicolaidis, K., Howse, R. (Eds.): *The Federal Vision: Legitimacy and Levels of Governance in the United States and the European Union*. Oxford University Press, New York, p. 161–187. [2001]

emphasizing the basic principles of democracy by sharing information and increasing political participation.

*Participation*

The diffusion of the information on European topics and news on European affairs are crucial even in increasing the political participation. This means that the political knowledge is a key predictor for engagement. [135] This is why we agree with De Vreese that a well-functioning public sphere alleviates some of the concerns with regard to the democratic quality of the EU. [136] Actually, effective scrutiny mechanisms, even when they produce criticisms, should be welcomed by the EU. Although they will increase negative as well as positive news coverage of the EU, this type of political communication is the only mechanism through which real public legitimacy of the European construction can emerge. Enhanced scrutiny will also foster opinions of EU policies which, when negative and critical, will nonetheless be better informed and intelligent, and which are anyway preferable to the present voters' apathy.[137]

In other words, the media coverage of EU news can indirectly increase political participation. Logically this entails a 'European-wide public sphere' in which citizens and elected power holders deliberate and interact across borders in the same way as they interact within them. The same De Vreese writes that "This largely theoretical argument, traditionally part of the attempt to build a 'European demos', may come across as appealing and, in terms of democratic theory, ideal. However, the proposition is naïve. Previous top- down attempts to stimulate a common communication system have shown that a monolithic European public sphere does not work in practice".[138] Although being sceptic of the existence of a homogenous European public sphere, in a study written with Boomgaarden, he investigated the differential impact of exposure to different news media outlets, including both public and commercial television news and broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, and linked this impact to the actual content of the news outlets. They have demonstrated that news media exposure affects knowledge and political participation

Føllesdal, A. and Hix, S.: *"Why there is a democratic deficit in the EU: A response to Majone and Moravcsik"* Journal of Common Market Studies, 44(3): p. 533–562, [2006]. Online version (accessed 17 December 2007): http://www.connex-network.org/eurogov/pdf/egp-connex-C-05-02.pdf.
Hix, S.: *What's Wrong with the European Union and How to Fix It*. Polity Press, Cambridge; Malden, MA. [2008]
[135]De Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H.: *News, Political Knowledge and Participation: The Differential Effects of News Media Exposure on Political Knowledge and Participation.* Acta Politica Vol. 41., p. 317-341 [2006]
[136] De Vreese, C.H., [2007] p.8
[137] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project, p. 28. [2003]
[138] Ibid

positively. [139] And for the same reason I retain that the European communicative space is important for political participation.

*Identity*

I have mentioned before that communication is fundamental for sharing information that enforces common knowledge and therefore a common identity. A European public sphere is important for establishing and growing a European identity. For Eriksen, the prospects of an EU public sphere remain tied to greater public participation at the EU level, facilitated by transnational media and based in new modes of collective identification. [140]

Ultimately the European identity is a more complex phenomenon than the scope of this thesis. In a few words, I would quote Habermas who writes that social integration has two important pillars: a cultural and a political one. "The former denotes the kind of integration needed for individuals and groups who conceive of themselves as members of a community of values and beliefs, and often, as an ethnie. Cultural integration emphasizes the role of affiliation, language and history in the formation of a collective identity. It is premised on forms of cohesion – involving trust and solidarity in particular – which might transform an aggregation of people into a group with a distinct identity. It involves thinking of the nation as having a cultural basis". [141] Despite that most of these elements are present on a European level, the European identity cannot become homogene due to the dominant national aspect that appears even in news. I will write about this more in detail in chapter 5. For now, it is enough to state that a functioning European public sphere is important for forming citizens' European identity and a certain we-feeling.

What seems clear is that there is an interest in a European public sphere among EU citizens, an interest that shows an awareness of there being a European polity that one might well see as an expression of a European identity. The Eurobarometer survey 189a, for which fieldwork was conducted in September 2006, asked respondents whether they were interested in knowing the opinion of citizens in other EU member states on a dozen important political and social issues. The answer was affirmative from 60 percent or more on all issues. Over two-thirds answered 'yes' to nine of the issues and five issues (protection of the environment, terrorism/organized crime, securing energy supply, job

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[139] De Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H., [2006]
[140] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J. E., [2007]
[141] Habermas, J., [1996a]

creation and religious tolerance/protection of human rights) had positive answers from over 80 percent of respondents. The interest in learning the views of other Europeans is quite uniform across the 25 member states, regardless of, for instance, whether they voted yes or no to the proposed European constitutional treaty in 2005.[142] This explains very well how the European public sphere can increase a common, European identity.

*We-feeling*

Related to identity, a certain we-feeling appears with regard to the European public sphere. In fostering a common identity, I increase the sense of belonging to a wider community. This is why, according to Schlesinger, the nation, ideally, due to its deeper ties of belonging and trust, makes possible the transformation of an aggregation of individuals and groups into a collectivity capable of common action. A distinction can be made between the cultural or value basis of a political order and the constitutional order of such a society. The latter does not necessarily presuppose an underlying culture but may rather appeal to transcultural norms and universal principles on the basis of which it is possible to reach agreement between given cultures. [143]

And so, in the frame of communitarianism identity is value-based.[144] People need to regard each other as norm-abiding actors in order for solidarity and collective action to come about on a voluntary basis. What is more, communitarians hold that political integration requires a deeper sense of belonging and commonality.[145] And in this sense a European public sphere that increases knowledge, identity, participation and a we-feeling is a highly significative element for fostering a political integration, or rather European integration. This is explained even in a study made by Wessler et al. that shows that even though the relative stability is invariant over the past two decade of discussions of topics with a European focus and European speakers appearing in media s, nevertheless 'Europeans' as a collective or 'we' is nearly absent, albeit marginally increasing over time. They label this a "significant and steady, albeit modest process of increasing Europeanization over the past two decades".[146]

[142] Gripsrud, J., [2007]
[143] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007]
[144] Sandel, M. J.: *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, 2nd Edition [1982], Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [1998]
[145] Miller, D. (1995) On Nationality, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[146] Wessler, H., Peters, B., Brüggemann, M., Kleinen-von Konigslow, K. and Sifft, S. [2002]

## 2.5. Explaining the process of Europeanization

Contemporary with the rise of the debate over the European public sphere, the expression and phenomenon of Europeanization gained space. This expression is used by numerous scholars such as Gerhards, who contend that a more realistic scenario is not a genuine supranational European public sphere in the singular and monolithic sense, but rather a Europeanization of national public spheres.[147]

Two criteria are listed for such a Europeanization of national public spheres: an (increased) proportion of coverage of European themes and actors and the evaluation of these themes and actors from a perspective that extends beyond their one country and its interests.[148] However, Trenz differently defines the category of Europeanized news based on the notion of a "transnational resonance of political communications", implying that there are cross-references between specific actors and institutions. He distinguished three types of "European" news: news characterized by a shared meaning of European events and issues; Europeanized news characterized by the secondary impact of European events and issues on national news coverage; and national news on domestic events and issues characterized by evolving forms of European monitoring and rhetoric.[149]

Although there is a certain consensus on the process of Europeanization, different aspects emerge if for example we look at research crystallizing around the notion of varying (increasing) degrees of Europeanization of national public spheres...[150] Researchers agree that this process is "imperfect" compared to the (theoretical, ideal type) pan-European benchmark, and there is still no consensus about the extent to which Europeanized national public spheres exist.[151]

Cross-national comparison of this kind tends to challenge Trenz's finding that the elite press as a whole can be seen as kind of cross-national cheer-leader for the EU, but the contexts of public reception differ greatly. At this point we need to mention the interesting fact that Europeanization can be witnessed in the harmonized media

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[147] Gerhards, J.: "*Westeuropäische Integration und die Schwierigkeiten der Entstehung einer europäischen Offentlichkeit*", Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 22: 96–110. (Cited on page 10.) [1993]
[148] Ibid
Gerhards, J.: "*Europaisierung von Okonomie und Politik und die Tragheit der Entstehung einer europa ischen Offentlichkeit*", in Bach, M. (Ed.): *Die Europaisierung nationaler Gesellschaften*. Sonderheft der Kölner Zeitschrift fu r Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, Westdeutscher Verlag, Wiesbaden, vol. 40., p. 277–305. [2000]
[149] Trenz, H.-J., p. 291–320. [2004]
Trenz, H.-J.: *Europa in den Medien*. Die europaische Integration im Spiegel nationaler Offentlichkeit, Campus, Frankfurt. [2005]
[150] De Vreese, C.H.: *The EU as a public sphere. Living Reviews in European Governance* (www.livingreviews.org/lreg-2007-3), (2)3 [2007] p. 12
[151] De Vreese, C.H.: p. 10 [2007]

regulation, the increasing European media-ownership that could foster this process, but also that content tends to be less Europeanized due to the different editing policies and journalistic behavior. Semetko, de Vreese and Peter assert so in their study: "While the changes in domestic media systems and news organizations can be linked both directly and indirectly to the processes of European integration, little can be said about the changes over time in media content, particularly news, as a result of 'Europeanisation'".[152]

Accordingly, we can measure a certain Europeanization within news but also depict differences in point of views. Following Semetko, the category "foreign affairs" (defined as "Europe and the EU, relation with foreign countries") increased its share of the European campaign topics from one to six per cent on television and from 0 to 12 per cent in the press.[153] Albeit looking at EU news outside the elections, i.e., during routine periods when there are no scheduled events of the magnitude such as European Council meetings for example, EU politics appears marginally in national news.[154]

Other studies on media content underline the uneven presence of EU institutions and country-oriented approaches in the news[155]. Sifft et al. (2007), focusing on the quality of press in Germany, Great Britain, France, Austria and Denmark, distinguished different types of transnationalization. In terms of what they label "monitoring governance", i.e. reporting about the EU and its institutions, they find a clear process of Europeanization between 1982 and 2003. However, in terms of horizontal integration they report negative developments over time. This means that European countries are reporting less about each other today than 20 years ago.[156] Overall, we can see that evidence of the Europeanization of national public spheres comes from studies focusing on the quality broadsheet press, whereas studies focusing on the popular press, television and new media provide little evidence (yet) of a Europeanization trend.

However the notion of a European(ized) public sphere in some form remains crucial as it is expected to not only inform about the EU but also to contribute towards the legitimacy of the polity and the understanding of EU politics. Indeed it can be argued that a Europeanized public sphere is a precondition for democratic decision making in the

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152 Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J., [2000]
153 Semetko, H.A.: 'The News Agenda', in Norris et al., On Message, pp.73-8
154 Gerhards, J., [2000]
Peter, J. and de Vreese, C. H.: "In Search of Europe: A Cross-national Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News", Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 9(4): p. 3–24, [2004]
Peter, J., de Vreese, C. H. and Semetko, H. A.: "EU Politics on Television News. A Cross- National Comparative Study", European Union Politics, 4(3): p. 305–327. [2003]
155 van Noije, L.: The European paradox: a communication deficit as long as European integration steals the headlines. European Journal of Communication 25, no. 3: p. 259–72. [2010]
156 Sifft, S., Kleinen-von Konigslow, K., Bruggemann, M., Peters, B. and Wimmel, A., [2007]

EU.[157] According to Meyer EU governance should communicate the following to the media: 'accountability (who is advocating what); procedural (how does decision-making work); and issues (what is about to be decided).[158] To quote Habermas: "The deficit in democracy can only be eliminated if a European public sphere comes into existence in which the democratic process is incorporated... the pan-European political public sphere is the solution to the problem of insufficient social integration in the processes of Europeanization". [159]

Last but not least, the process of Europeanization is beneficial, if not boosted and guided by the European institutions. Accordingly, their self-defined strategic principles underlying the initiatives are 1) listening to citizens (taking their views and concerns into account), 2) communicating how EU policies affect citizens' everyday lives, and 3) connecting with citizens by "going local" and addressing citizens in their national and local settings.

While these principles may appear somewhat trivial, they do in fact represent and embody a real increase in investing in communication from within the EU institutions. As Meyer[160] noted, there was—prior to the mid 1990s—virtually no interest in or awareness of media coverage of European politics from the side of EU institutions.[161] Today there is a well-planned and complex machine fostering increase of the EU-policies appearing in the media, moreover trying to drive the content and be proactive by framing news. We will examine this topic in detail more in chapter 4, but first let us view how scholars differentiate within the various types of the European public sphere.

## 2.6. Interpretations of the European public sphere

The term European public sphere generally refers to the place where public opinion takes form through the discussion of questions, political issues and decisions and where political power is placed under scrutiny.[162] In this wide debate concerning the European public sphere various point of views, categories, and different interpretations of the phenomenon emerge.

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[157] de Vreese, C.H.: p. 8 [2007]

[158] Meyer, C.O.: *Political legitimacy and the invisibility of politics: exploring the European Union's communication deficit.* Journal of Common Market Studies 37, no. 4: p. 617–39. [1999]
Martins, I. A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C. H.: *Information Flow and Communication Deficit: Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU officials,* Journal of European Integration, 34:4, p. 305-322. [2012]

[159] Habermas, J.: *"Warum braucht Europa eine Verfassung? (Why Does Europe Need a Constitution?)"* [2001], online resource, Die Zeit. URL http://zeus.zeit.de/text/2001/27/200127 verfassung lang.xml.

[160] Meyer, C.O. [1999]

[161] De Vreese, C.H., [2007]

[162] Fossum & Schlesinger [2007]

By grouping previous studies three streams can be identified. In the first stream there are those political philosophy studies that focus on the EU's democratic deficit and possible solutions that communication processes can offer while creating a supranational public sphere. (see, for example Eriksen, Schlesinger, Habermas, Fossum) The second group is literature that discusses empirically the existence of a transnational public sphere. (Schlesinger, Ionescu) The third consists of studies dealing with the topic of the Europeanization of the existing national public spheres. (Van de Steeg, Risse, Trenz).

Although research conclusions and consequences depict a not-thoroughly united picture of the process, as of the effects and results of Europeanization, they do leave unquestioned the assumption that there is a link between communications policy and the fostering of our European identity[163] and the European public sphere. However various categorizations were depicted by researchers that differentiate between various types of the European public sphere(s).

The first category is between horizontal and vertical European public sphere. This is maybe one of the most important categorization of the European public sphere and was made by Koopmas and Statham. There is one important difference between news about the EU, its policies and institutions on the one hand and news about events and issues from other European countries on the other. The two sides of this distinction have been coined vertical and horizontal Europeanization, respectively. Vertical Europeanization refers to national actors addressing European actors, national actors addressing European issues or European actors partaking in national debates on European issues. Horizontal Europeanization is referred to as national media covering issues in other EU member states and national actors addressing issues or actors in another EU member state.[164][165]

The second category is based on distinction here is between 'strong' and 'general' publics. Strong publics are spaces of institutionalised deliberation "whose discourse encompasses both opinion formation and decision making", and weak – or what scholars term 'general' – publics are spaces "whose deliberative practice consists exclusively in opinion formation and does not also encompass decision making". [166]

Thirdly in the literature, we can observe a development from focusing on a 'public sphere heavy' notion of a singular, pan-European public sphere to focusing on a 'public

[163] Stevenson [2012]

[164] Koopmans, R. and Erbe, J.: *"Towards a European Public Sphere? Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Europeanised Political Communication"* Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research, 17(2): p. 97–118. [2004]

[165] de Vreese, C. H., [2007]

[166] Fraser, N.: *'Rethinking the public sphere. A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy'* in Calhoun C. (Ed.): *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press. [1992]

sphere light' notion of co-existing national public spheres with regard to European politics.[167]

The fourth category is between theoretical and real European public sphere, as several scholars have pointed out that there is a gap between the theoretical (and ideal) and observable (and real) European public sphere.[168]

Last, but not least the utopian, the elitist and the realistic groups can be named. The 'utopian' notion of a European public space would imply a supranational public space, EU level actors dominating, truly European themes being addressed, ideally in (pan-) European media. Transnational, segmented European spheres have been identified in relation to relatively confined issues and time spans.

The group of 'elitist', describes 'bubbles' of discourse that primarily involve specific, elitist segments of society and can hardly be said to be a public sphere but rather an 'elitist' notion of a European public space. This is because segmented transnational public spheres which have been conceptualized as issue-specific communicative space are largely dominated by political and economic elites [169].

The 'realistic' notion refers to the Europeanized national public spheres. This notion is based on observations of parallelization and synchrony in topics and an increase in salience of European issues and actors, a horizontal and vertical dimension of Europeanization. Most of the divergence in the literature can be explained by the focus on different media (e.g., national broadsheet, quality newspapers vis-`a-vis television news). [170]

Continuing this thread, it is important to speak about social media with regard to the shift in the television sector in relation to the information-consumption habits and the digital media field, as social media influences the establishment of the European public sphere. Nevertheless the aspect of social media is not strictly related to the research topic, however it sheds it.

The public sphere was from the beginning fundamentally tied to the emergence of modern mass media, in the form of books, journals and newspapers, and this dependence on media has radically increased over the last century. Consequently, the actual, functioning public sphere encompasses a lot more than the parliamentary assembly and explicitly political debates on the op-ed pages of leading high-brow newspapers.[171] In

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[167] de Vreese, C. H., [2007]
[168] Ibid
[169] Eder [2000]
[170] De Vreese, C.H., [2007] p. 12
[171] Gripsrud, J., [2007]

addition we have to acknowledge that information-sources became multiplicitous, consumers became conscious, and that there is the fragmented emergence and significance of non-mainstream sources of news and information. [172]

While media such as newspapers and television news remain crucial sources and indicators of a European public sphere, online sources play an increasingly important role. This role pertains to communications from the EU institutions themselves and between individual parties or actors that may communicate directly through the usage of social media (including Facebook and Twitter), and it also pertains to news sites, fora etc. Koopmans and Zimmermann (2010), however, caution that political communication on the internet with respect to European integration is remarkably similar to communication in the mainstream media. [173]

The European institutions use social media to increase their direct dialogue with its citizens, but nevertheless the academic debate on social media contributing to a European public sphere is getting wider. However, this thesis focuses merely on the existence of the European public sphere in television. Therefore, let us go more in-depth on this topic.

## 2.7. European coverage in television

The media coverage of European affairs is in lieu of a constant flow of news and is well described with three main characteristics.

First is that media coverage of the EU is cyclical, with occasional peaks and long periods of little news (de Vreese 2002; de Vreese et al. 2001; Peter and de Vreese 2004). Key events, such as national referendums on EU issues (e.g., de Vreese and Semetko 2004; Hobolt 2009), EU summits (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2006; van der Brug et al. 2007), and European Parliament elections can take up a substantial part of the news (de Vreese et al. 2006; Maier and Maier 2008; Schuck et al. 2011b).[174] For example Pippa Norris, analyzing data obtained monthly from monitoring Euromedia reports, concluded that with respect to the period from January 1995 to autumn 1997 most European issues received minimal coverage in the news media. If there was coverage, then it cyclically peaked around the EU summits. During routine periods, however, coverage of European affairs

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[172] De Vreese, C.H., [2007] p.13
[173] Koopmans and Zimmermann [2010]
De Vreese, C.H., [2007]
[174] de Vreese, C.H.: *The EU as a public sphere.* [2007]

remained ephemeral. The predominant topics in the 33-month period discussed by Norris were monetary union and EU development; in other words, issues that journalists could use for further analysis. [175]

Second is that most of the news is seen through the prism of the nation state. In a study by Semetko, De Vreese, and Peter, the British government chose to stay outside EMU and the euro, whereas Germany was not only in from the beginning, but played a key active role in bringing about the 1 January 1999 launch. An analysis of the television news coverage in Britain and Germany around the introduction of the euro revealed some important national differences in the way this common European key event was covered. [176]

And third is that television news is peripheric according to studies in which researchers have focused on the differential effects of television depending on the choice of programming. Putnam, for example, showed negative correlations when considering television the primary form of entertainment against a variety of civic engagement measures.[177] De Vreese and Boomgartner also found that in the countries with a lower visibility of political news, the positive effects were less pronounced. Therefore, while the proliferation of commercial news may not be worrying it is important to note that if news is moved to the periphery of prime-time programming, as for instance in Great Britain (e.g., Semetko, 2000), there is reason to worry about negative consequences for the political process. If informational programs become less popular and the public's interest and attention shift further toward entertainment and fiction, then some segments of the public might indeed be caught in a downward spiral of ever decreasing political knowledge and engagement. [178]

But how do European institutions contribute to news on EU affairs?

## 2.8. An introduction to European institutions communicating through television news

As television news consistently remains the most important source of information for Europeans about Europe, the framing of news about "Europe" plays an important role in contributing to public opinion formation about issues. News frames provide the

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[175] Norris P.: *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-industrial Democracies*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. [2000]
[176] de Vreese, C.H. [2007]
Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J., [2000]
[177] Puttmann [2000] pp. 230–244
[178] De Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H., [2006]

audience with direction on how to conceive of European issues, such as the introduction of the euro and the enlargement of the European Union.[179]

The EU institutions recognize the importance in framing news and therefore try to be proactive and share sufficient information on their operation. But needless to say, the European Union (as of 2007) has only some features of a state and many more differences including behind-closed-doors decision making, a weak parliament and a fragmented media system.[180] For this reason, the EU institutions face a different path to follow than do national politics, especially as they must base their communication mainly on national information channels rather than their own.

The national news media plays an active role in providing a national spin on the major events. The study of Semetko and De Vreese, in which they qualitatively analyzed the news in Britain and Germany, found that conflict frames, and in particular economic consequences frames, were most common across all television news program. In addition, studies focusing on the printed press's role in Europe have shown that the Council and the European Parliament are under-represented in the press coverage of EU-affairs and that the Commission tends to generate negative press coverage.[181]

This is due to several factors. The studies on EU press work confirmed the existence of a disparity between the perceived importance of the institutions' political messages and their respective communicative performance. The political-legal profile of the Commission emerges as a double-edged sword: while its right of initiative favors permanent media attention[182], the consensus-striving nature of this unelected institution—often criticized for policies owned by the Council—constrains its press work. This at least partially explains the recurrently negative evaluation by our interviewees. Conversely, the EP press releases are praised for their openness, but the institution's excessive transparency decreases its newsworthiness.[183]

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[179] De Vreese, C. H.: *The Effects of Frames in Political Television News on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience*. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Spring; 81, 1, p. 36 [2004]

[180] Kleinstüber, H., J., 2001, "*Habermas and the Public Sphere: From a German to a European Perspective*", Javnost - The Public, 8(1): 95–108. URL http://javnost-thepublic.org/article/2001/1/7/.

[181] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J., [2000]
Euromedia Monitoring 1995-1997. Union for public opinion and research. European Commission, Brussels: DG X. Fundesco/AEJ Annual Report [1997]
The European Union in the media 1996.
Madrid.Norris, P: *A Virtuous Circle. Political communication in post-industrial societies*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. [1997]

[182] Baisnee, O.: *The politics of the Commission as an information source*. in Smith A. (Ed.): *Politics and the European Commission: actors, interdependence, legitimacy*. London: Routledge, p. 134–55. [2004]

[183] Lecheler, S.: *EU membership and the press: an analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member-states*. Journalism 9, no. 4: p. 443–64. [2008]

I will examine in more detail the news-framing initiatives of the European institutions and its evaluation by journalists in chapter 4, but I retained it important to note with regard to the existence of a European public sphere the active role of the European institutions in guiding these processes.

Martins, I. A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H.: *Information Flow and Communication Deficit: Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU officials,* Journal of European Integration, 34:4, p. 305-322. [2012]

## 3. More on the European Broadcasting Systems

It is highly important to examine broadcasting channels from within their context as there are several contextual factors that might have an impact on broadcasting and content. The channels tend to be influenced one one side by the size and wealth of a country and on the other side by factors such as content allocation, ownership structures and funding schemes. This is why in this chapter I will examine trends in the broadcasting space, ownership and its changes, and address the impact of the legislative background and within this context I will analyze the European initiatives.

### 3.1. Recent trends in Broadcasting

At the dawn of the new century, the European broadcasting systems look remarkably different than from only two decades ago. There has been a structural shift from national public service broadcasting monopolies towards international and national broadcasting markets with competing public and private outlets.[184] In the 90's, all European countries (with the exception of Britain, Italy and Luxembourg) had only public service broadcasting channels. By 2000, all public broadcasting monopolies had come to an end.

This change is important because of the consequences it had on the provision of public affairs news and information. Research comparing various national broadcasting systems around the world in the early 1980s showed that the more 'commercial' the form of financing the system, the less room there was in prime-time schedules for information about political and current affairs.[185]

The above is the reason why while the shift from public monopolies to competitive broadcasting markets coincided historically with the increased pace of European integration processes in the 1980s and 1990s, it is not an easy task to determine the relative influence of European integration on the changes in broadcasting systems.[186]

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[184] For a discussion of the initial rationale for a public service system see P.J. Humphreys, Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1996).

[185] Blumler J. G. and Nossiter T. J. (Eds.): *Broadcasting Finance in Transition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [1991]
Blumler J. G. and Nossiter T. J.: *'Broadcasting Finance and Programme Quality: An International Review'*, European Journal of Communication 1, p. 343-72. [1986]

[186] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J., [2000]

### 3.1.1. Trends and tendencies regarding the number of channels within Europe

First of all it is important to consider the proliferation of television channels in Europe as this contributes to the fragmentation of information and diversification of content. In this evaluation I can rely on the outcomes provided by an analysis made by Schneeberger and Fontaine with a focus on the linear and on-demand audiovisual media services in Europe. They have found the following key-results[187]: First of all the number of TV channels established in Europe has increased notably since 2009, but more than half of the growth can be attributed to the launch of HD channels, generally simulcasts of existing channels. In half of the 28 EU countries people were able to watch over 400 television channels. A total of 2563 on-demand audiovisual services were established in the European Union by the end of 2015. Video-on-demand services and catch-up television services taken together represented 73% of the total number of services. And last, but not least 46% more TV channels established in the EU in 2015 than seven years earlier: The total number of channels established in the EU[188] grew from 3615 in 2009 to 5274 in 2015. This represented a total net gain of 1659 TV channels in seven years.

Moreover the figure below (Figure 3.1.) show that the increase of the number of TV-channels is concentrated in three countries. TV channels established in the UK (N=1556), France (N=489), and Germany (N=398), accounted for 46%, nearly half, of all TV channels licensed in the EU in 2015; the top ten countries accounted for 76% of the same figure.

It can be also seen that in almost every country there was growth regarding TV channels: Well over 90% of EU countries had more channels licensed in their territories in 2015 than seven years ago. The few exceptions to this rule were Sweden and Italy whose number of channels slightly decreased due to the migration of licenses in the first case and the closure of various time-shifted and entertainment channels in the latter.

Out of these newly established channels two thirds was shared among five EU countries: Three major EU economies including the UK (+481), France (+175) and Germany (+149) as well as the Czech Republic (+153) and the Netherlands (+101) were among the countries that registered the highest net increase of licensed channels in their respective territories in the period from 2009 to 2015. Their cumulated net increase of TV channels represented 64% of the total net increase of tv services in the EU.[189]

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[187] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G.: *Mavise Extra: Linear and on-demand audiovisual media services in Europe 2015*. p. 7. [2016]
[188] Excluding local channels and windows.
[189] Schneeberger, A.; Fontaine, G. [2016] p.7

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / MAVISE database; (1) Includes the 46 language versions of Europe by Satellite (EbS)

**Figure 3.1: Number of TV channels by country of establishment in EUR38 (2009, 2015)**

The conclusion can be drawn that this increase was not only significant in the absolute number of TV channels but also in the diversification in their genre and content.

### 3.1.2. Genre of television channels in Europe

Digital television has led to a remarkable increase in the number of television channels in Europe. With the increasing fragmentation of audiences, the spectrum of genres in the television landscape has been expanded considerably.[190] Always following the study of MAVISE Extra made by Schneeberger and Fontaine I can depict two pan-European trends: first that the 60% of the net increase of channels was due to HD channels that were the main reason of the growth. And second that as it can be also seen on Figure 3.2. sport (12%) and entertainment/TV fiction/games (11% of the total net increase) were the dominant genres of this increase. Figure 3.2. also shows that two-third (65%) of all TV channels founded in 2015 can be categorized by 6 different genres:  HD (22%), entertainment/TV fiction/games (13%), sport (11%), film (7%), culture/education/ documentary (6%) and  music channels (6%).

Figure 3: Breakdown of linear audiovisual media services established in the EU28 by genre (2009, 2015)
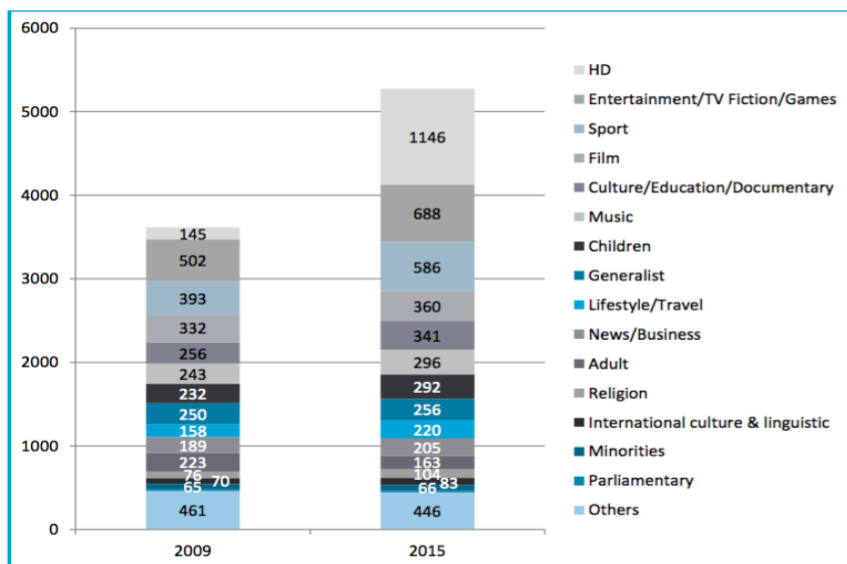


Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / MAVISE database

**Figure 3.2: Breakdown of linear audiovisual services established in the EU28 by genre (2009,2015)**

## 3.2. How does ownership change in the broadcasting system

Ownership is a very interesting factor in European media as it is an adapting evolution to digital innovations and legislative changes, moreover it can have a significant impact on the European public sphere.

According to Semetko and De Vreese, liberal European legislation has fostered a new environment for media ownership, with several cases of large-scale cross-media ownership. Especially strong publishers have entered the European broadcasting market, significant examples are Germany's Springer and Bertelsmann, and Australia's Rupert Murdoch. Non-press media companies as well as large businesses have entered the broadcasting scene with Italy's Berlusconi (Fininvest) and Germany's Kirch as well-known examples. The rise of international media holdings goes hand in hand with national restrictions on cross-media ownership and European competition legislation. Britain, Spain and the Netherlands, on one hand, have very restrictive regulations on cross-ownership of press and broadcasting, whereas the Scandinavian countries, Germany and France, on the other, have no or only limited restrictions on cross-media ownership. The situation today seems to be one in which both national and European policy-makers are dealing with cross-media ownership by adjusting current policies to national situations.[191]

Hallin and Mancini (2004) have examined in detail the correlation between media-ownership and the presence of the state in this field. They have distinguished three models of media systems in the western world which all assign a different role for the media. In the first model, the Polarized Pluralist model (found in most Mediterranean countries) there is strong state intervention: the media industry (in particular the press) is heavily subsidized and 'obligations' and expectations from the political side for editorial content are possible (but not necessarily desirable). In the second model, the Liberal model (found most pronouncedly in the U.S. and Britain), market domination is strong, the level of professionalization is high, and the possibility for political influence (except in cases where the party-paper parallelism remains high) is minimal. The third model, the Democratic Corporatist model (found in north-western Europe, including the Netherlands), is characterized by state intervention in the provisions of public broadcasting and press subsidies, but also by a strong degree of professionalization and editorial autonomy from political influences.[192]

This aspect of ownership is very important as cross-national media-services could

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[191] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: [2000]
[192] Hallin, Daniel C. and Paolo Mancini: *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [2004]

mean a homogeneous European public sphere or at least have an impact on news-harmonization due to shared national coordination. Broadcasting services have a direct influence on content and thus on the coverage of European affairs. By focusing on the effects of the latter, "the process of European integration is ultimately reconceptualised from a too simplistic unidirectional flow with European integration as independent variable to a more reciprocal model with European integration as both an independent and dependent variable" – states Semetko, De Vreese and Peter in their study. They also add that there is a relation between media content and public opinion that explains European integration not only as a top-down process but also as a bottom-up process that contributes to the common understanding of a European public sphere. [193]

Last but not least, media ownership tendencies in Europe are interesting and important also for the competitive and changing landscape for public service media that have to cope with new challenges. According to Peter Dahlgren, public service media can be associated with the realization of the public sphere and commercial broadcasting, and the market model of financing can be portrayed as a threat to it.[194] However, Kevin, Pellicano and Schneeberger did note in their study that the proportion of public service news channels is quite high and greater than that of the proportion of public channels with regard to the entire universe of television channels in Europe. In certain countries the public service broadcaster plays a dominant role in the provision of television news channels (Spain, Denmark, the Czech Republic and Ireland). Countries where private corporations dominate the news market include France, Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Sweden, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", and Slovakia.[195]

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[193] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: [2000]
[194] Gripsrud, J., [2007]
Dahlgren, P.: *Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media.* [1995]
[195] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: *Television News Channels in Europe*. European Audiovisual Observatory [2013]

## 3.3. The influence of the law

Agreeing with Schlesinger and Fossum, I take into consideration that a public sphere is imbricated in a set of legal and institutional arrangements which have been traditionally linked to the nation state. Consequently, it has been quite common to imagine the public sphere in rather monolithic terms on a national level.[196] But as the European Parliament began to harmonize national legislation and numerous European-level initiatives entered in force, national broadcasting started to become European regardless of the fact that member states can decide their own regulation of this field. According to Semetko, de Vreese and Peter: "Whereas the impact of European integration is perhaps only *indirectly* related to some of the general changes in the structures of western European broadcasting systems, it is possible to identify a range of *direct* and specific impacts of European integration on broadcasting legislation, ownership, and quota restrictions on cultural products. This impact of increased European integration, in turn, shaped the European broadcasting landscape in which political communication takes place."[197]

Legislation in the field of broadcasting and media was essentially a national policy issue until the early 1980s. International broadcasting legislation did not exist, not like in telecommunications and media. This sector was addressed in 1987 and 1990 by the Green Papers on telecommunication and satellite communication, and in 1997 with the Status Report on European telecommunication policy. Media policy and telecommunications policy had a long tradition as distinct areas of policy-making.[198]

With IT development and the evolution in digitalization many new media technologies entered the market. Decision-makers had to notice that the policy-making did not sufficiently address the growing disparity between distribution and content. A new generation of integrated communication policies was required.[199] The rapid growth in use of the Internet has posed new policy challenges and has raised new issues of copyright and ownership.

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[196] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J. E., [2007]
[197] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J., [2000]
[198] McQuail D. and the Euromedia Research Group: '*Caging the Beast: Constructing a Framework for Analysis of Media Change in Western Europe*', European Journal of Communication 5, p. 313-32. [1990]
[199] van Cuilenburg J. and Slaa P.: '*From Media Policy Towards a National Communications Policy*'. Journal of Communication 8, p. 149-76. [1990]
J. Melody, '*Communication Policy in the Global Information Economy: Whither the Public Interest*', in M. Fergurson (ed.), *New Communication Technologies and the Public Interest*. London: Sage [1993]

The European Community most notably addressed broadcasting in the 1984 Green Paper on 'Television without Frontiers'. As Peter Humphreys notes, the "initial impulse for a European-level media policy was the optimistic expectation … that transfrontier broadcasting might give a welcome fillip to the process of European cultural and political integration".[200] According to Anthony Weymouth and Bernard Lamizet much policy-making in this field was driven by the changes implemented by transnational satellite broadcasting.[201] The 'Television Without Frontiers' Green Paper, eventually adopted in the Directive of 1989 on television broadcasting, was aimed at opening national borders for a flow of television programmes thus creating a single market for broadcasting, unhindered by national legislation.[202] The core of this Directive was generally in line with the notions of deregulation and liberalism as embedded in the 1992 creation of the Single European Market.

The 'Television without Frontiers' act was updated by 1997 due to the challenges posed by the digital-related televised services, tv-shopping and new way of regulating advertising and sponsorship. The directive now addresses diverse issues such as the necessity for major events (particularly sport) to be carried on unencrypted networks, the protection of minors, and restrictions on broadcasting violence and pornography.[203]

Even today, audiovisual media are treated as other goods and services within EU policy-making, and there are certain EU-wide rules that ensure the free circulation of films and broadcasting content on the free market of Europe independently from how they are delivered (traditional TV, video-on-demand, Internet, etc.). This is regulated by the EU's audiovisual and media policy, more precisely the audiovisual media services directive.

This directive has set a goal of coordination among national legislation. This coordination manifests itself in the creation of comparable conditions for emerging audiovisual media, in protecting children and consumers, in stopping racial and religious hate speech, fostering cultural diversity, safeguarding media pluralism and ensuring that national media regulations remain independent.

The guidelines of which each country is encouraged to follow minimum standards are the following: Major events (like sport events, Olympic games or World Cups) need to be available to a wide audience. Children need to be protected by controlling violent or pornographic content. Strict advertising rules for certain products, like tobacco or alcohol.

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[200] Humphreys, P.: *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*, Manchester University Press, p.258. [1996]
[201] Weymouth, A. and Lamizet, B.: *Markets and Myths. Forces for Change in the European Media.* London: Longman. [1996]
[202] Collins R.: *Broadcasting and Audio-visual Policy in the European Single Market*. London: John Libbey [1994]
[203] European Parliament and Council Directive, 97/36/EC, 30 June, [1997]

Content needs to be accessible even for those with visual or hearing impairments. There are rules and incentives for the promotion of European films and audiovisual content.

In 2013, the Commission held a public consultation on the implications of the convergence between traditional TV and the internet. Feedback from this consultation was published and the next step is to carry out a REFIT (the Commission's Regulatory Fitness and Performance program) evaluation of the Directive.

The EU is not only fostering a common European audiovisual space through regulation but also through incentives. The EU is investing 1,4 billion Euros in the audiovisual and cultural sectors through a program called Creative Europe. The goal of this program is to foster the production and distribution of European audiovisual content.

Last but not least, it is important to mention the effort put forth by the European institutions on public service broadcasting as they recognize their responsibility to provide for democratic, social and cultural needs that are not met by the market (Treaty of Amsterdam 1990). Government grants to public broadcasters are thusly exempt from the EU's strict rules on state subsidies, as long as the funding is to be used for public service goals and does not unfairly disadvantage private sector broadcasters.

## 3.4. Past European initiatives in fostering the European communication

Considering the absence of European mass media—except for a few institutional channels such as Europarl.tv, which until now had remained confined to an elite core of citizens already interested in EU issues—providing information about the EU relies mainly on national mass media. The topic of mass media inadequately covering EU-concerned issues has been widely acknowledged in literature (de Vreese, 2007; Liebert and Trenz, 2010; Bennett, 2012 among many others). When asked to give a tentative explanation of such a phenomenon, Mr. Duch, Head of the European Parliament's Media Unit, identifies two main reasons that might help to explain the reticence of national media in covering EU issues. The first one is a matter of appeal, as "television doesn't like the European Parliament much, as they believe it is a distant and complicated object that doesn't go well with the broadcasting language. Furthermore, televisions usually don't like parliaments in general, because parliaments discuss, vote and are very often too technical". The second reason is to be found in organizational practices of national newspapers, as "a newspaper based in Milan has usually twenty correspondents in Rome

and only one in Bruxelles: it is clear that this is not in line with the present political balance, which is different from the one of twenty years ago".[204]

However distributing information on European matters is crucial for many reasons, as we explained in chapter 2.4. Following the graphs below, I attempted to confirm the following hypothesis: *The more the news speaks about the EU in the news, the more the citizens think they understand how the EU works.* Raw data was taken from 2015 Eurobarometer and the indicators of "Informedness"[205] and "Understand how the EU works" were correlated, which are the two axes of the diagram.
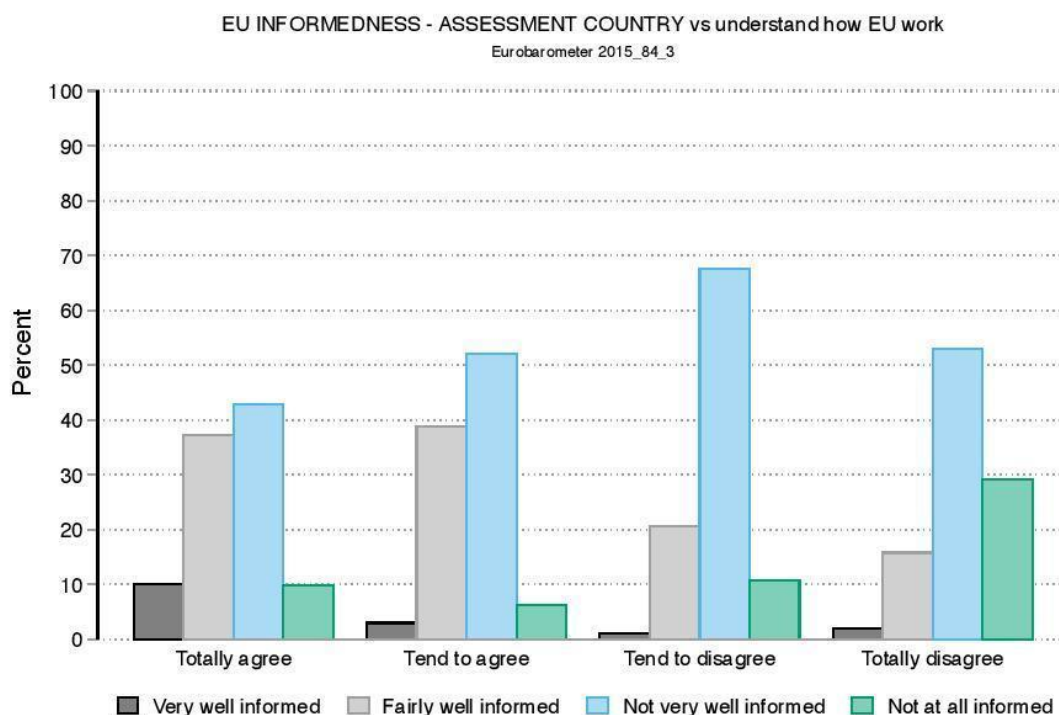


**Figure 3.3: Informedness about EU issues in relation to the understanding the EU**

From the graph we can see that the more people disagree with the statement of understanding how the EU works, the more people think that there is a lack of general

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[204] Arcostanzo, F.; Retfalvi, F.: *When Institutions Go Online: Case Study on the European Parliament's Facebook Fan page.* Bologna, Molino S.p.a 365-387 pp. [2015]
[205] Question of the survey was: Overall, to what extent do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY) people are well informed or not about European matters?

informedness grows. And, the contrary is also quite visible on the graph: as the sense of informedness grows, respondents agree that they understand how the EU works.

As a next step, we can sense a certain correlation between respondents' image of the EU and feeling European. Figure 3.3 shows that more people feel negative about the EU, the more they are attached to their national identity rather than the European one. Also Figure 3.5. supports the hypothesis that *the more you believe in the EU, the more you feel European*, as it shows a significative correlation between feeling positive about the image of the European Union and identifying as European.[206]
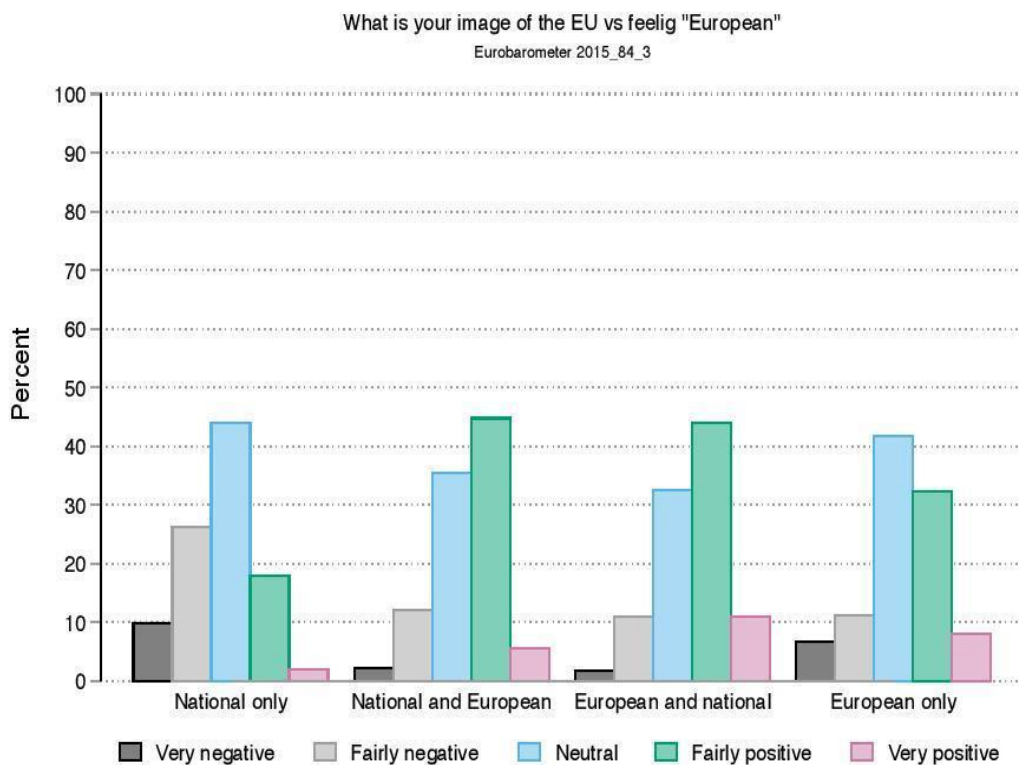


**Figure 3.4: Connection between image of the EU and feeling "European"**

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[206] Questions in the survey for the image of the EU: *In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?* and for feeling European: *Do you see yourself as...?*

How European do you feel vs image of EU
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
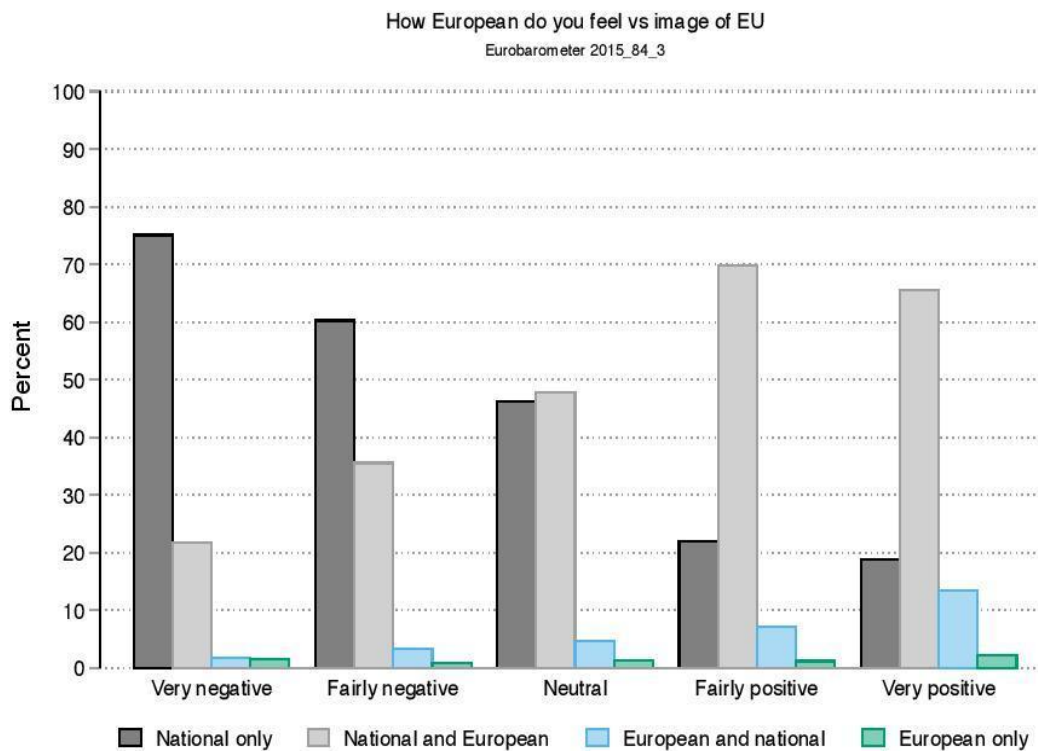
**Figure 3.5: Impact of the level of positivity of the EU image on feeling European**

Assuming that European institutions need to communicate efficiently with their citizens if they want to confirm their legitimacy, I will now shed light on the common initiatives of these institutions, what platforms they operate and which alternative forms of communication they use for transmitting values and informing people about EU policy-making.

### 3.4.1. European policy-making in favor of European programming

The European Commission, besides having the concern of creating a unified European culture, also recognizes the more realistic value of the cultural diversity that characterizes Europe, and they have put effort into maintaining and safeguarding it.[207] When the Single Market was introduced in 1992, a certain fear grew that dominant market leaders with high production of low-cost programs would gain strength, namely that the

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[207] Collins, Broadcasting and Audio-visual Policy in Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: *Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication.* West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

North-American market and large, competitive, neighboring countries would dominate the small countries. This imbalance and vulnerability led to a cultural policy intervention.

The first immediate Eu initiative was the MEDIA program which aimed to support "audio-visual production and distribution by initiating cross-frontier co-operation, prioritizing small and medium-sized operators as well as respecting national differences and cultural identities". The second program was the so called "Audio-visual Eureka". This initiative absorbed cultural and industrial EU policies and created space and market for HDTV. Last but not least, a third program was proposed: "Euroimages" aimed to support and strengthen European film and television production and appearance. [208]

Following these media policies some controversial media quotas were introduced in the 80s. For instance, the French government asked for a quota of 60% European produced programs in the European broadcasting system which intended to supersede a large percentage of non-continental news. This stirred controversy in the common, deregulated and liberal market with its highly protectionist and national regulation.[209]

In opposition, the US government claimed that this quota system introduced in European countries violated the international General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Despite this fact, in 1997 the European quota system was accepted in the "Television without Frontiers" directive that confirmed it until 2002, when it was to be reappraised and, unless modified, to be continued. Individual member states were anyway given some discretion and flexibility in interpreting and implementing the requirements for European programming: "member states shall ensure where practicable and by appropriate means that broadcasters reserve for European works ... a majority proportion of their broadcasting time".[210]

Unfortunately, research shows that European cultural and political integration did not provocate positive results in long term, despite supportive pan-European media channels' cooperation in the production and exchange of program, moreover the European Commission's support to the European Broadcasting to develop two pan-European channels. The Eurikon experiment in 1982 and similarly the Europa TV in 1985 showed already in their first year of existence the unsuccess of international news channels ('"neither viewers nor advertisers were attracted by the channel")[211] while viewers' continued to prefer national broadcasting systems, mostly because the national

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[208] Humphreys, P.: *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*, Manchester University Press, p. 280. [1996]
[209] Hoffmann-Riem W.: *National Identity and Cultural Values: Broadcasting Standards*. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 31, p.55-72. [1987]
[210] European Parliament, 97/36/EC, article 4.
[211] Humphreys, P.: p. 258. [1996]

TV was in their own language.[212] Two later attempts, Eurosport (a joint venture between Sky and EBU members, launched in 1989) and Euronews (launched in 1993), have proven more successful, but both channels play only peripheral roles in terms of audience ratings and are only accessible via satellite and/or cable television.[213]

Due to all of this, the notion of a monolithic, singular and pan-European public sphere has also been largely discarded in light of the evidence where attempts to create pan-European media (including for example the newspaper The European and the heavily subsidized Euronews) have failed.[214] This is perhaps due to initiatives appearing to target specific markets and segments, and are perhaps do not yield an appropriate forum for a larger audience. Since most people don't belong to these specific high-interest groups, the news comes across as boring, particularly in televisual terms, and it almost encourages the audience to change the channel.[215]

These unfulfilled European intentions to provide pan-European TV and newspapers increases the weight of national political communication. As a consequence, not only can European institutions mainly communicate through national media platforms, but also the role of the national parliaments is crucial in providing public media services so that European political debates, for example, can make into the news.[216]

### 3.4.2. Specialized EU media

In this part, I do not aim to debate the merits of the European institutions' agenda-setting techniques, as this will be addressed in the following chapter, but it is important to describe the previous and existing European initiatives related to the broadcasting system.

There are only a few media outlets which specialize in the European Union at a supranational level. However, they effectively address only the "Brussels bubble" of EU officials, Members of the European Parliament, lobbyists, think tanks, political observers, PR companies and a certain elite that follows and understands European jargon and the complex policy-making system. The four most important EU media are Politico Europe, EurActive, New Europe and EUObserver. All these four news-distributors are in charge of

[212] Sepdtrup: *Transnationalisation of Television in Western Europe*. London: John Libbey. [1990]

[213] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J., [2000]

[214] Stepinska, A.: *"The 'Feedback' of Euronews: A Study on an Active International Audience"* in Stepinska, A. (Ed.): News in Europe, Europe on News, Logos, Berlin, p. 143–157. [2011]

de Vreese, C. H.: *Framing Europe: Television News and European Integration*. Aksant Academic Publishers, Amsterdam. [2002]

[215] de Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

[216] Ibid p.26-27

providing information on up-to-date outcomes and ongoing events, to produce news on EU policy-making that can be absorbed both by citizens of the member states and journalists wanting to elaborate on this information.

### 3.4.3. European Broadcast Union

The European Broadcasting Union is the first and most successful European transnational organization; it has around 300 employees and contains 75 organizations of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) from 56 countries in and around Europe. Its main aim is to promote cooperation between PBS broadcasters, lobbies and their interests in Brussels and elsewhere, to be involved in technological developments and, last but not least, to buy collective rights to programming (such as sports events), organize programming exchange and deliver certain types of original programming. The EBU can be called the first successful example of transnational European television, because of both program Eurovision and that it became one of the most important news agencies fostering international news exchange.

*Eurovision song contest*
A few years after the first multinational, live television transmission took place in June 1953, at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the Eurovision program exchange coordination center was established in 1956. 1956 is a highly significant year in the history of European television for another reason: the European Broadcasting Union organized for the first time the Eurovison song contest in Lugano, Switzerland. Eurovision changed the history of European television as it was the first show that addressed a "European" audience at a time when international television broadcasting was still tentative at best. The first countries that participated in this revolutionary event were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and West Germany. Sources claim that these years were highly empirical moments in the life of the television but having such a program as the ESC was rather unusual.[217] Today Eurovision attracts around 100 million viewers from some 40 countries each year.

*Eurosport*
The EBU was also a driving force behind Eurosport, the dominant satellite and cable sports channel on the continent. Eurosport was launched in 1989, eight years after

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[217] Pajala, M.: "*Mapping Europe. Images of Europe in the Eurovision Song Contest*" View Journal of European Television History & Culture, vol. 01, issue 02. [2012]

the thematic channel was first proposed. It represented a commercial turn in European public service television since it was based not only on cooperation but also co-ownership with Rupert Murdoch's News International and its Sky TV.[218] Murdoch pulled out as Sky TV merged with BSB in 1991, and was replaced by the French channel TF1, an EBU member with Bouygues as majority owner. In 2001, TF1 took over ownership completely. Eurosport now reaches 110 million households and 240 million viewers in 59 countries and its program are in 20 different languages.[219]

### News exchange

Last but not least, in 1958 experiments with the exchange of news items began, resulting in daily news exchanges by 1961. The EBU now illustrates the volume of its activities with these figures: 'More than 100,000 transmissions in 2002. 15,000 hours of sport and cultural events transmitted per year. 30,000 individual news items exchanged.' There is, in other words, a lot of communication between European public broadcasters, and so chances are that offerings on television screens across the continent may in a sense be more Europeanized than viewers (and media researchers) are aware of.

### Euronews

Throughout 2013 Euronews (Euronews S.A.) celebrated its 20th anniversary with new programming, a number of special events and the launch of a new image campaign. Euronews was originally launched in January 1993 as the first multilingual news channel to broadcast continuously and simultaneously in five languages (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish). It now has 13 language channels (with Polish audio also available in some cases) and aims to cover world news from a pan-European perspective while also reflecting the integration of governance and economics at the EU level.[220] It employs 800 staff, half of whom are journalists from more than 25 countries. The channel has a daily audience of more than 6.5 million television viewers and reaches them audiences via multi-platform offerings including apps for smartphones and tablets, web radio, a multilingual realtime news website and a VoD service.[221] Euronews, in collaboration with

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[218] Collins, R.: *Supper with the Devil – A case study in private/public collaboration in broadcasting: The genesis of Eurosport.* Media, culture and society 20(4): p. 653-63 [1998]
[219] Gripsrud, J., [2007]
[220] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger, A.: *Television News Channels in Europe*. European Audiovisual Observatory [2013]
[221] 1993-2013 Euronews things big for its 20th Birthday: URL:
http://www.espacedatapresse.com/fil_datapresse/consultation_cp.jsp?idcp=2753983

ABC News, opened a permanent news desk in Washington DC in 2012 in addition to its bureau in Brussels, London, Doha, Cairo, Paris, Moscow and Kiev.

Today, Euronews claims to reach 189 million households in 121 countries all over the globe, broadcasting simultaneously in seven languages. Its reach of 168 million households in Europe beats the competition – CNN reaches 122 million, CNBC 73 million and BBC World 70 million. Based on people meter data, it is calculated that it attracts over 6.5 million daily viewers (about 3.4 million through satellite and cable and an additional 3.1 million through terrestrial distribution in some countries). The corresponding figures for CNN and BBC World are 1.64 million and 0.77 million, respectively.[222]

How does the European Broadcasting Union, its initiatives and existence contribute to the theory of public spheres and in particular the European public sphere? Some are sceptic like Bourdon, who in his article "recounts the numerous attempts to create or promote a European identity through television and explores the reasons for their failure", quoting his own abstract, which ends as follows: "Even when they reached an audience, these attempts failed with respect to their main aim, as they were based on a false, deterministic view of television as a medium and on a dated, communicative view of the nation where media have the power to shape collective identities".  He claims that everything the EBU and others have done related to television has "failed to promote, let alone create, a sense of belonging to a common Europe".[223]

On the other hand, many scholars such as Gripsrund believe that the work of the EBU, from the mundane to the spectacular, and channels such as Eurosport and EuroNews, have actually established in practice a common European public sphere, albeit multilingual and seriously limited in many ways. Moreover, the practice of watching 'foreign' television enjoyed by so many Europeans contributes in the same direction as tv series and formats overtaken in numerous, if not all of the member states can contribute to the establishment of a common memory and a mutual understanding of certain phenomena, therefore it is contributing to an albeit limited, but still existent European public sphere.[224]

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[222] Gripsrud, J., [2007]

[223] Bourdon, J.: *Unhappy engineers of the European Soul: The EBU and the Woes of Pan-European Television.* The International Communication Gazette 69(3): p. 263-80. [2007]
Gripsrud, J., [2007]

[224] Gripsrund, J.: *The Dynasty Years: Hollywood Television and Critical Media Studies.* London and New York: Routledge. [1995]

## 4. Who frames the content of the European news?

In this chapter, I will focus on the content of news. In order to understand whether or not the European public sphere exists, and if yes, in what form, I suggest to examine the frames used in news-production. This chapter will focus on both sides of the dialogue between the European institutions and journalists and correspondents. Therefore, I will first shed light on the various agenda-setting techniques of the European institutions. This is important as the underlying question is not only whether issues are addressed simultaneously, but also how they are discussed. In terms of news framing, European news has been found to be framed both along the lines of conventional journalistic frames and with Europe-issue specific frames.[225] Moreover, scholars make a distinction between the various forms of a certain European public sphere in this sense, as they tackle on the one hand news speaking about the same topic and on the other news speaking about the same topic from the same point of view.

Another interesting question is not only the quality of the European public sphere but also the different aspects of Europeanization. One important difference is between news about the EU, its policies and institutions on the one hand and news about events and issues from other European countries on the other. This distinction has been coined vertical and horizontal Europeanization as previously mentioned.[226] Vertical Europeanization refers to national actors addressing European actors, national actors addressing European issues or European actors partaking in national debates on European issues. Horizontal Europeanization refers to national media covering issues in other EU member states and national actors addressing issues or actors in another EU member state. In order to better understand the dynamics of news-production, from where to where the information flows before arriving to the audience in the form of news, I will review interviews with journalists and editors who will give insight into their world of agenda-setting.

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[225] Lingenberg, S.: *The Audience's Role in Constituting the European Public Sphere: A theoretical approach based on the pragmatic concept of John Dewey.* pp. 121-32 in N. Carpentier et al. (Eds.) *Research Media, Democracy and Participation.* Tartu: Tartu University Press. [2006]
[226] Koopmans, R. and Erbe, J., [2004]
Koopmans, R. and Statham, P. (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention.* Communication, Society and Politics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. [2010]

## 4.1. Framing news, a contextual overview

In the field of media effects, agenda-setting, priming, framing and persuasion as a result of tone are amongst the most utilized concepts to understand media impact on public opinion formation.[227] The basic idea of agenda-setting was formulated in 1963 by Bernard Cohen, who investigated the power of the press to influence public opinion about foreign affairs: "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."[228] Some years later Max McCombs and Donald Shaw were the first academics to advance the agenda-setting hypothesis in 1972,[229] and since more than 200 investigations have provided empirical evidence that the visibility of an issue in the news influences the perceived importance of that issue by the public.[230] Agenda-setting refers specifically to the visibility and perceived importance of a problem or issue due to its visibility or salience in the news. Agenda-setting is limited to visibility and does not include the valence or evaluation of that issue in the news or by the public.

Agenda-setting goes hand by hand with the expression and phenomenon of frames. The definition of frames following Gamson, Williams and Modigliani is as it sounds: "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue." .[231]

However, extant research is divided over the role of salience in the frame-setting process. One perspective suggests that framing does not affect how audiences think about issues "by making aspects of the issue more salient."[232] Another perspective, however, concludes that to frame is essentially about making some aspects of reality more salient.[233] In this vein, framing research has demonstrated how frames make certain

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[227] McLeod, D. M., Kosicki, G. M. and McLeod, J. M.: R*esurveying the boundaries of political communications effects.* in Media effects: Advances in theories and research, (Eds.) Bryant, Jennings, Zillmann, Dolf, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. pp. 215–267. [2002]

[228] Cohen, B.: *The Press and Foreign Policy.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. p. 13. [1963]

[229] McCombs, M. E. and Shaw, D. L.: *The Agenda-setting Function of Mass Media*. Public Opinion Quarterly 36: 176-84. [1972]

[230] For an overview see J.W. Dearing and E.M. Rogers: Agenda-setting. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage [1996]

[231] Gamson, W. A. and Modigliani, A.: *Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach.* American Journal of Sociology 95 [1989]: 1-37 in De Vreese, C.: The Effects of Frames in Political Television News on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterl 81, no. 1: 36. [2004]

[232] Scheufele, D. A.: *Agenda-setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication*. Mass Communications & Society 3: 297-316. [2000]

[233] Entman, R.: Framing: Toward clarification of a factures paradigm. Journal of Communication 43: 51-58 [1993]

considerations more salient for subsequent judgements.[234] It remains an open question whether audiences pick up more from the news frame or the core news facts when conceiving of an issue presented in the news[235], it is inescapable that news frames affect attitudes by stressing specific values, facts, or other considerations and endowing them with greater relevance to an issue than under an alternative possible frame. Therefore I can state that the relative importance of the frame of a news story is generally influential in shaping an individual's direction of thoughts on a political issue.[236]

Differently but accordingly, frames can mean a template for journalists to compose a news story in order to optimize audience accessibility. In turn, news frames are potentially important tools for public thinking about, understanding of, and support for contemporary political and economic issues, such as the EU. As Denis McQuail puts it in the study of de Vreese, "news is presented within frameworks of meaning which derive from the way news is gathered and processed". Standard organizational procedures, work routines, and news values all function as 'guidelines' in the quest for fast and regular news output. News in itself has little value unless embedded in a meaningful framework which organizes and structures it.[237] And for this reason framing is a crucial technique for political actors also as their mobilization attempts constitute their own "agenda-building" or "agenda-setting" activities. [238] Often these are purposeful and strategic attempts to "symbolically package", "frame", and target information at journalists. Such efforts and their reception are discussed in journalism studies as "source strategies".[239]

In light of this, I share the opinion of de Vreese who in connection to the enlargement of the European Union conducted a research on news-frames and wrote: "A news story was manipulated to reflect a conflict frame or an economic consequence frame. The two frames provide direction to the audience's thoughts about the issue but do not yield different levels of policy support. Frames in the news are as important as core

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[234] Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A.; Oxley: *Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance.* American Political Science Review 91: 567-83. [1997]

[235] de Vreese, C.: *The Effects of Frames in Political Television News on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience.* Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 81, no 1: 36 [2004]

[236] McLoad, D. M. and Detenber, B. H.: *Framing Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest*. Journal of Communication 49, Autumn, p. 3-23; [1999]
De Vreese, C., [2004], p. 36

[237] de Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project. p. 20. [2003]

[238] Rogers M. E. and Dearing, J. W.: *Agenda Setting Research: Where Has it Been and Where Is it Going?* in Anderson J. A. (Ed.): *Communication Yearbook 11*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, p. 555–94. [1988]
Hilgartner, S. and Charles, S. B.: *The Rise and Fall of Social Problems: A Public Arenas Model.* American Journal of Sociology 94, no. 1: 53–78. [1988]

[239] Gamson, W. A. and Modigliani, A. [2004]
Schlesinger, P. and Howard, T.: *Reporting Crime.* The Media Politics of Criminal Justice. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [1994]

facts in a news story when citizens conceive of a political issue."[240]

At this point let me introduce another concept, media priming. Whereas agenda-setting is merely concerned with the perceived importance of an issue, media priming goes further by positing that frequently covered issues also become the basis for citizens' evaluations of political parties, leaders and institutions. Media priming emphasizes that what is available in the media and most readily accessible in people's minds is given greater weight in the formation of evaluations. Support for the priming effect has been found in different methodological and topical settings. [241]

However, the context of agenda-setting and media priming should not be forgotten, namely the news-consumption of citizens, as this process can be conditional on individuals' levels of political knowledge, news exposure and trust in sources.[242] In the case of European integration, we know that a referendum on an integrative issue – if salient on the media agenda – can be the prime ingredient by which citizens evaluate the government.[243] Continuing the above-mentioned aspects, I will now examine the agenda-setting initiatives of the European institutions, and journalists, to be able to speak about the perception of news and how news-consumption influences individual opinion.

## 4.2. The importance of the European Institutions in agenda-setting

As introduced in the previous chapter, framing is a term that refers to how journalists shape raw information into stories.[244] News is more than selecting and giving weight to different events and issues. A frame is an emphasis on the salience of some aspects of a topic.[245] Journalists and politicians use frames when they discuss political, economic and social events or issues, by presenting them as alternatives which emphasize contrasting aspects and make the information more interesting and understandable. In

[240] de Vreese, C. [2004] p. 36.

[241] Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D.R.: *News that Matters. Television and American Opinion*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press [1987]
Iyengar, S. and Simon, A.: *News Coverage of the Gulf crisis and Public Opinion. A Study of Agenda-setting, Priming, and Framing*. Communication Research 20, p. 365-383. [1993]
Krosnick, J. A. and Kinder, D.R.: *Altering the Foundations for Support for the President through Priming.* American Political Science Review 84, p. 173-90. [1993]

[242] Miller and Krosnick [2000]
Krosnick and Brannon [1993]

[243] de Vreese, C.H. [2004] pp. 419-36.

[244] Vreese, C.H.: *Framing Europe. Television news and European integration.* Aksant Publihers. Amsterdam [2002]

[245] Ibid

terms of news production, framing refers to the spin given to an issue and a story in the news. Events as such have little intrinsic value, unless they are embedded in a meaningful framework or context that organizes and lends coherence to the interpretation of the event.

Putting this theoretical background in the European context we can see controversial processes happening. Regarding frequency, on the one hand, as political integration is becoming more important and the direct impact on national policy-making is increasing the media visibility is growing. "In terms of visibility and share of EU actors, the trend between 1999 and 2004 is one of increase"—writes Schuck and colleagues. The 2009 European Parliament elections were more prominent in the news than in previous elections.[246] Nevertheless, in the case of European integration, it is known that European issues are generally low on both the media and the public agenda.[247] On the other hand, it is an interesting aspect to investigate to what extent the mere frequency of the coverage of European affairs influences how important European citizens consider those affairs to be. One would expect that the higher the frequency of European affairs is on the media agenda, the higher the perceived importance of those issues will be on the public agenda. Following de Vreese and Semetko, when issues of European integration rise on the media agenda, however, these can become more important to citizens, in particular those heavily exposed to news media.[248] Still, the importance of an issue tells us little about whether or not individuals support integration in either diffuse terms or specific policies.[249]

Next after frequency let me consider the positivity of news. In the same study of Schuck, it was found that media coverage of the 2009 EP elections was more evaluative, polarized, and positive towards the EU compared to previous EP elections. Importantly two different components of this overall evaluation were distinguished: in most countries, news evaluated the EU positively with regard to more utilitarian benefit considerations and, at the same time, negatively with regard to the democratic nature and functioning of the EU.[250] As Schuck et al. (2011a) conclude, the overall picture is highly balanced, but evaluations are clearly polarized into a (positive) benefit and a (negative) democratic

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[246] Schuck, A. R. T., Azrout, R., Boomgaarden, H., Elenbaas, M., van Spanje, J., Vliegenthart, R. and de Vreese, C.H.: *Media Visibility and Framing of the European Parliamentary Elections 2009: A Media Content Analysis in 27 Countries.* in Political Communication in European Parliamentary Elections, (Eds.) Maier, M., Strömbäck, J., Kaid, Lynda L., Ashgate, F. pp. 175–196. [2011a]

[247] De Vreese, C. H. and Boomgaarden, H. G. [2006]

[248] De Vreese and Semetko [2004]

[249] De Vreese, C.H. and Boomgaarden, H. G. [2006] pp. 419-36.

[250] S Schuck, A. R.T., Azrout, R., Boomgaarden, H., Elenbaas, M., van Spanje, J., Vliegenthart, R. and de Vreese, C. H., [2011] p. 175–196

deficit dimension. De Vreese, in his study in which he interviewed Brussels correspondents, writes about how the European institutions aim to influence news in a positive way: "In discussions of how the EU— and the process of European integration more broadly—is communicated, a common assumption is that the best strategy for communicating Europe is to send out rigidly pro-European messages. However, feel-good messages about the benefits of being European do little to solve the communications deficit".[251]

A third aspect of summarizing European news-framing is the dominance of a national point of view. Beyond the lack of information itself, the scarcity of knowledge about European issues is due to national frames being often adopted by news media. Whether highlighting a "national interest" angle of specific EU politics ("what does this mean for our country") or turning specific EU events or developments into a backdrop story for national politics, particularly inter and intra-party conflicts, the adoption of national frames remains constant in EU news coverage.[252]

As mentioned before, journalists, correspondents and editors are highly significant figures in generating a European public sphere as they are ones who produce news that follow certain frames. For this reason, on one hand it is fundamental that editors and journalists are acutely aware of and train to cover European issues, and on the other hand, that they manage to produce information that fit the formats of different media and outlets.[253] And in this second aspect the European institutions play an active role. Firmstone compared Brussels correspondents and EU officials along a communicative dimension and he found that although they are intrinsically different groups, they are interdependent in the sense that their routines are governed by a relation of mutual influence. [254] Firmstone moreover acknowledges that work division in transnational newspapers follows the portfolio division of the Commission. Conversely, the EU seeks to adapt to news media logics (such as newsworthiness criteria and agenda-setting), although its degree of mediatisation is still considered low to moderate.[255] This is due to the fact that a viable public sphere demands from institutions publicity, transparency, accountability and even predictability.[256] The EU's unique and dynamic character raises a

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[251] De Vreese, C.H. [2003]

[252] Arcostanzo, F.; Retfalvi, F.: *When Institutions Go Online: Case Study on the European Parliament's Facebook Fan page.* Bologna, Molino S.p.a 365-387 pp. [2015]
De Wilde, Michailidou and Trenz [2014]

[253] De Vreese, C.H., [2007]

[254] Firmstone, J.: *Approaches of the transnational press to reporting Europe*. Journalism 9, no. 4: 423–42.  [2008]

[255] Meyer, C.O.: *Does European Union politics become mediatized? The case of the European Commission*. Journal of European Public Policy 16, no. 7: 1047–64. [2009]

[256] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J. E., [2007]

further issue, namely how best to develop a proper understanding of *how* and *under what conditions* institutions can help foster a public sphere, as according to some, institutions are critical vehicles in fostering a European public sphere.

However, our existing knowledge of EU-media relations presents two fundamental constraints. At an institutional level, studies focus either on specific institutions such as the Commission and the Parliament or on the EU as a whole. [257] Reflecting a single-institution and a global standpoint respectively, neither of these approaches primarily seeks a direct comparison between the institutions. Regarding the main actors, EU correspondents and EU officials tend to be addressed separately and their informal contacts neglected.[258] And for this reason this chapter aims to take into account all above-mentioned figures and paint a whole picture.

For every case, the question is of politicians reacting to the media and public agenda. Or do politicians shape the media and public agenda and, if so, how do they try to get their issues and messages across? Agenda-building is mainly a focus on the interrelatedness of policy, media and public agenda, and in this process journalists and news executives play an essential role, as do institutions.[259] Agenda-building and agenda-setting might prove useful for tackling such questions as whether Europeanized politics can produce Europeanized media content (or, possibly, vice versa) and if that translates into a Europeanized public agenda. Another question may center upon whether Europeanized politics are mediated or are mediatized politics and to what extent the European policy agenda and public agendas differ.[260] These are the questions of the following chapters, but before addressing them let me examine the initiatives the various European institutions have to prove their agenda-setting capacity.

[257] Meyer, C.O.: *Political legitimacy and the invisibility of politics: exploring the European Union's communication deficit*. Journal of Common Market Studies 37, no. 4: 617–39. [1999]

Anderson, P. and McLeod, A.: *The great non-communicator? the mass communication deficit of the European Parliament and its press directorate.* Journal of Common Market Studies 42, no. 5: 897–917. [2004]

Gleissner, M. and De Vreese, C. H.: *News about the EU Constitution. Journalistic challenges and media portrayal of the European Union Constitution*. Journalism 6, no. 2: 221–42. [2005]

[258] Terzis, G.: *The EU Correspondent.* Journalism 9, no. 4: 537–50. [2008] and Foret, F.: *Advertising Europe: the production of public information by the Commission*. In Politics and the European Commission: actors, interdependence, legitimacy, (Ed.) Smith, A. London: Routledge. [2004] pp. 134–55.

Raeymaeckers, K., L. C. and Deprez, A.: *Reporting the European Union: an analysis of the Brussels press corps and the mechanisms influencing the news flow.* Journalistic Practice 1, no. 1: 102–19. [2007]

[259] Lang, G. E. and Lang K.: *Watergate: An Exploration of the Agenda-building Process* in Wilhoit G. C. and DeBock H. (Eds.): *Mass Communication Review Yearbook* 2. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, p. 447-68. [1981]

De Vreese, C. H.: *Public Broadcasting in Transition: News, Elections and the New Market Place.* (paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, New Orleans, LA, August. [1999]

[260] Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J., [2000]

### 4.2.1. Agenda-setting initiatives of European institutions

The ambivalent position of the EU between the rules of international diplomacy and nationally framed democratic practices[261] underlies Jacques Delors' well-known quip describing it as an "unidentified political object". This sui generis character is compounded by the idiosyncratic institutional triangle at its core: the Council of the EU (decision-making body which represents the member-states); the European Commission (collegial institution with right of initiative aimed at defending general EU interests); and the European Parliament (assembly of representatives elected by EU citizens). The evolution of European policies from a somewhat more consensual regulatory stage to an era of increasingly controversial political subjects has been concomitant with a (re)negotiation of power and competencies between these institutions. As Mak[262] argues, 'over the last couple of years, the discussion has exactly shifted from whether institutions matter to how and how much they matter'.[263] This repositioning process can be seen also in the various institutions' communication policy and how their inner organization tends to gain more visibility without pushing aside the other organizations. Studies show that the institutional set-up and the communicative performance are related to each other. Data proves that not only does the perception of each institution's communication performance differ, but it is also closely tied to their distinct political architecture.[264]

For every case the European Commision, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU are in the spotlight not only because they represent the main actors of EU decision-making processes, but because they have also been identified as the primary communicators in European affairs.[265] Little is known about the interaction between the institutions, i.e. the degree of collaboration and synergies in communication activities of the institutions. The dominant position of the EC may be counterweighted by attempts to foster inter-institutional cooperation.[266] Moreover, some claim that the friction point

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[261] Drake, H.: *Jacques Delors – Perspectives on a European leader.* New York: Routledge. [2000]

[262] Mak, J.: *The role of the European Commission in achieving public acceptance of the euro: an example of internal fragmentation and institutional interest-maximisation.* Paper prepared for the workshop 'Political Logistics within the European Commission', ECPR Joint Sessions, Grenoble, 6–11 April [2001]

[263] Martins, I. A., Lecheler, S. and De Vreese, C.H.: *Information Flow and Communication Deficit: Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU officials,* Journal of European Integration 34, no. 4: 305-322. [2012]

[264] Ibid

[265] APCO Worldwide: *Media relations and Europe – from the journalist's perspective.* http://www. apcoworldwide.com/ (accessed 10 September 2010). [2008]

[266] Gavin, N.: *British journalists in the spotlight. Europe and media research.* Journalism 2, no. 3, p. 299–314. [2001]
Baisnee, O.: *The politics of the Commission as an information source*. In Smith, A. (Ed.): *Politics and the European Commission: actors, interdependence, legitimacy*. London: Routledge, p. 134–55. [2004].

between news practitioners and officials lies in the overlapping agendas of the European institutions. In a study of Martins, Lecheler and de Vreese, a newspaper correspondent mentions that "I've missed important Council meetings because they coincided with the EP Strasbourg week." In the first institution, the simultaneous broadcast of the Presidency press conference and national ministers' press conferences is another example of the same criticism.[267]

Although we found an unexpected negative evaluation towards institutional interaction, most officials recognize an improvement brought about by the professionalization of EU communication staff (a trend which was absent in the journalists' discourse).[268] It is very important to state that European institutions always attempted to create authentic and first-handed information sources for the mainstream that nevertheless remained peripherical and only partially implemented by the national broadcasting channels (see chapter 3.4). For this reason, the EU has started to put effort in providing material to national correspondents and citizens who might want to get information about EU policies.

In the name of transparency and availability, all the EU institutions offer free of charge the services of live streaming, recorded materials, press conferences and press releases to support the distribution of the information, and each of the institutions give individual support to the journalists through their own communication channels. Journalists and local correspondents get also production support from each institution, which mean they can use TV and radio studios, online streaming connections, various technical tools, editing facilities, online streaming connections, camera crews. This way broadcasters and journalists don't even need to set up their own, sometimes expensive infrastructure if they are only occasionally reporting from Brussels or Strasbourg.

Naturally, the institutions offer their press releases online as well. The permanently updated EU Newsroom is the ultimate source of official information of the European Union across all institutions and bodies. It is complemented by each institution's own database of press releases, speeches and statements that permits individuals to subscribe and receive information about the interested areas by email or RSS. Another important database offered and operated by the European institutions is Eurostat, which offers extensive quantitative information on various topics and policies.

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EC – European Commission. Communicating Europe in partnership. http://www.eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0568en01.pdf [2007]

[267] Martins, I. A., Lecheler, S. and De Vreese, C.H. [2012] pp. 305-322.

[268] Ibid

Citing Jaume Duch, Spokesperson and Head of Communication for the European Parliament, we see the following: "*…we have to work a lot for facilitating the journalists, with underlining the televisive anchors, assure always different pictures and images. It is an important and difficult job, with a modest success for the moment. Respectively to 20 years ago, nowadays the amount of news broadcasted on television about the European Parliament has increased significantly, and this increase is also related to the growing importance of this institution. Today if there is news, it will be surely broadcasted.*" Still there are some challenges that the European institutions need to face, this is what I will now elaborate more in detail.

## 4.2.2. Challenges of the European information diffusion

Without considering the general opinion of journalists and editors on the information that European institutions share, nor how they do it (this will be discussed later), let me only describe the challenges the EU has to face in communicating.

The initial issue is complex information. One of the most widely recognized challenges of the European communication lies in the complexity of EU politics itself, as it is often interpreted in technical and hardly comprehensible press materials[269]. This ongoing tendency is also due to the deepening and widening of EU-policies and policy-areas and so European topics must be tackled in multiple news-sections—foreign and domestic policy-making. [270] The complexity of information gives correspondents a hard time as they are overwhelmed by information from the European institutions, and to able to explain certain European issues they need to be highly specialized in the regarding material. It is also a real challenge to find the most efficient way not only to explain European decisions and decision-making mechanisms, but also to make it become an appealing story consumed by viewers and readers.[271] As Thibault Lesenecal, Head of Web Communication of the European Parliament said: "It is normal and natural that it is complex, I mean, you can't play with 28 member states in a simple way. I mean it has to be complex."

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[269] Gleissner, M. and De Vreese, C. H.: *News about the EU Constitution. Journalistic challenges and media portrayal of the European Union Constitution.* Journalism 6, no. 2, p. 221–42. [2005]
Lecheler, S.: *EU membership and the press: an analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member states.* Journalism 9, no. 4, p. 443–64. [2008]
[270] Kevin, D.: *Europe in the media – A comparison of reporting representation and rhetoric in national media systems in Europe.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. [2003]
[271] Gleissner, M. and De Vreese, C. H. [2005] pp. 537–50.

The second challenge is voluminous information. Numerous correspondents interviewed in other studies identified the amount of information emanated by the European bureaucracy too high to be shared completely. As mentioned before, the increasing amount of information, according to Statham, causes concerns amongst news practitioners about the quality of its political content. As a consequence the newsworthiness of European matters can decrease.[272]

Correspondents, interviewed in the research of Martins, Lecherer and de Vreese, complained about the voluminous information flow, depicted as "heaven for a journalist from a monthly magazine and hell for a journalist from a daily broadsheet". In order to facilitate this problem, materials and contact lists are distributed according to subjects. Nevertheless, a Head of Unit notes that "this screening exercise lives in permanent tension with the somewhat individualist ambition of different services to capture media attention".[273] Also Justyna Kurczabinska from the European Broadcasting Union added: "They [the institutions] have huge statistical data. So if they could translate some of this data and flag it out, I am sure journalists would pick up these stories, at least within the network of the European Broadcasting Union. So I would say that if the institutions want to create an impact, they really have to start telling stories and also start to think how they can already pre-filter or flag the data which is useful for the journalists."

The third challenge is scattered information. Another obstacle lies in the EU threefold institutional model, which has been notorious for provoking internal competition and a struggle for media attention.[274] Numerous reports acknowledge the need of major coordination within institutions and services in order to improve communication and its impact.[275] In the study of Baisne and also Meyer as well, interviewees showed their dissatisfaction concerning EU efforts to foster interinstitutional cooperation (cf. EC 2007), considered to be undermined by overlapping agendas and the endemic prevalence of the Commission.[276] And nevertheless in theory the DG COMM,

[272] Raeymaeckers, K., Cosijn L., and Deprez, A.: *Reporting the European Union: an analysis of the Brussels press corps and the mechanisms influencing the news flow*. Journalistic Practice 1, no. 1, p. 102–19. [2007]
Statham, P.: *Making Europe news: how journalists view their role and performance.* Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism 9, no. 4: 398–422. [2008]
De Vreese, C.H. [2003] pp. 183–98.
[273] Martins, I. A., Lecheler, S. and De Vreese, C. H. [2012] pp. 305-322.
[274] Raeymaeckers, K., L. C., and Deprez, A. [2007] pp. 102–19.
Gavin, N.: *British journalists in the spotlight. Europe and media research.* Journalism 2, no. 3, p. 299–314. [2001].
[275] Anderson, P. and McLeod, A.: *The great non-communicator? the mass communication deficit of the European Parliament and its press directorate*. Journal of Common Market Studies 42, no. 5, p. 897–917. [2004]
[276] Baisnée, O.: The politics of the Commission as an information source. In Politics and the European Commission: actors, interdependence, legitimacy, (Ed.) Smith, A. London: Routledge. pp. 134–55. [2004]
Meyer, C.O. [2009] pp. 1047–64.

Directorate General for Communication within the European Commission is assigned to plan strategically and centralize information flows, the common communication is jeopardized by the autonomy of each institution. [277]

The final challenge is two-step communication. The European institutions admit to having limited direct channels to address European citizens and that the European issues are shared and discussed mainly on national media platforms. This contributes to conflicting interpretations of the same news and therefore news tends to become mostly negative. Based on the media data collected by the EU, Norris concluded that the directional bias of television and newspapers is consistently negative and that "the coverage of the European Community in newspapers and on television therefore often proved anti-Europe".[278] This conclusion is partially supported by the study of EU news conducted throughout the year 2000 reported by de Vreese that says television news is generally neutral, but if slanted, then most often slightly negatively. [279] We will discuss further figures in this issue in chapter 5, but now let us discuss the communication of the European institutions.

### 4.2.3. How do the European institutions communicate?

*European Commission*

As mentioned before the three different institutions—Parliament, Commission and Council—have different roles in European policy-making, and their decision-making mechanisms involve different administratives and their topics have various levels of importance for the various member states, and therefore even their communication will tend to differ in the selection topics and the way of presenting them. It is undeniable that communication officials aim to increase their reach out both in quantity (people reached) and in quality (the depth of information) and tend to recognize the opportunities of doing better. In order to reach their goals, the European Union offers many services to broadcasters and journalists who want to follow EU news. The European Commission, for example, operates the Audiovisual Service of the European Commission, also known as the Europe by Satellite (EbS), which offers live streaming of press conferences and

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[277] EC – European Commission. Action plan to improve communicating Europe, http://www.ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/pdf/communication_com_en.pdf (accessed 22 February 2011). [2005] Gavin, N. [2001] pp. 299–314.
[278] Norris, P.: *Virtuous Circle*: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies. Cambridge University Press [2000].
[279] De Vreese, C.H. [2003] p. 19.

recorded material about committee meetings, European events, parliamentary sessions, etc.

The DG COMM, the Directorate General for Communication, is responsible for strategic planning in communication and also for the coordination with the other institutions increased its impact in these two matters. Nevertheless, insiders tend to regard the DG COMM as fragile in fulfilling its mission, as according to their opinion, the responsibilities among the communications units of other DGs and the Spokesperson's Service is not clearly assigned nor distributed well among each other. This makes it volatile and impotent. A Head of Unit acknowledges: "COMM doesn't own the message. The message is owned by the remainder DGs. Guess who the Spokes are going to talk to". [280]

Others criticize the Commission that it "suffers from the fragmentation of political authority, a pervading technocratic mindset and a lack of adequate staffing".[281] And also that there is a lack of "juicy" topics due to its consensus-striving nature.[282] This is also due to the previously mentioned role of the EC in decision-making, as it is more technical and bureaucratic than the European Parliament. However general opinion both among researchers and correspondents tends toward the "Commission-Parliament comparison," in which all EP press officers considered their services to be of better quality than those of the Commission. This dovetails with the insights provided by the journalists. [283] Moreover there are academics, such as Smith and Curtin, who agree on the relative failure of the Commission to communicate effectively with its key-mediators, correspondents, and key national audiences. [284] Respective to 2007 when this mentioned study was made, and when the two researchers expressed their opinion on the effects of an information strategy that had low priority, the activity of the DG COMM gained more importance especially in the last election period and is still committed to a transparent information regime, a commitment shared also by the Council and the Parliament.

*European Parliament*

"Initially, the Parliament has been ridiculed for its lack of political authority. But even though competences have shifted to the Parliament, the institution, its activities,

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[280] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H. [2012]
[281] Meyer, C. [1999] p. 617-639.
[282] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H. [2012]
[283] Ibid
[284] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007]

and its representatives are still seen as peripheral by journalists and news editors," wrote Meyer in 1999.[285] Since then the Parliament gained not only significant importance in decision-making but also a visible advantage in its communication. This is due to various reasons. First the EP has higher organizational freedom, according to interviews with EC officials in a study by Martins, Lecheler and de Vreese. This undercuts the production of institutional material as the templates used for communication by the Commission limit their capacity in selling stories. A Head of Unit notes in this study that "it's much easier for an MEP to come up with a sexy press release, because they can write whatever they like." [286]

We have to add that the Parliament's decision-making dynamics are easier to narrate than the highly administrative Commission. For this reason, the Parliament is rated in a more positive light by correspondents and officials, as its dimension of party politics leads to media-tailored press releases. Among many others, Statham also defines the EP's communication as 'media-friendly'. [287]

Among operating several social platforms and websites, the European Parliament is keen on communicating with the press through press conferences, press releases, and the role of the Spokesperson. Moreover, it operates the audiovisual service EuroparlTV, which covers sessions, committee meetings and press briefings live. They also offer free recordings and background videos. For this reason, the European Parliament manages to emerge as a strong public. According to Liebert's analysis the EP's "communicative practices, not least the focus it provides for networking across different levels of the EU, has indeed allowed it to function as a strong public that is in the process of building a wider general public, mainly along the lines of the second federal model." [288]

*European Council*

The Council has a paradoxical communicative situation. Schlesinger and Fossum assert that "The Council's complex role as both legislature and executive – and one that has obtained greater executive functions over time – places it in between our two models,

[285] Meyer, C. [1999]
[286] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H. [2012]
[287] Statham, P.: *Making Europe news: how journalists view their role and performance.* Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism 9, no. 4, p. 398–422. [2008]
[288] Schlesinger, P; Fossum, J.E. [2007]

with divergent expectations about its public sphere promoting role."[289] This is due in part to its everyday work being rather invisible, also because the matters tackled by the Council of Permanent Representations are an important reference for Bruxelles-based press corps. [290] To the contrary, Council meetings are easier to communicate on a national level as they embrace high-level decisions aimed directly at national policy-making tendencies. Still the Council suffers from being an institution in flux. This is because the core communication activities are largely at the discretion of the incumbent EU presidency, and the different member states use different standards and techniques in their presidency communication. This discontinuity does little to advance coherent and professional communication efforts. [291] Also the European Council, just like the Parliament and the Commission, offers services for journalists through live streaming press conferences of public Council sessions. It also offers a database of videos and photos that can be used for live coverage and can be reused by media.

## 4.3. What do journalists, editors and EU communication officers think?

This chapter is dedicated to the qualitative evaluation of the information flow between the European institutions as message senders, and correspondents and editors as message receivers. I have interviewed various figures from the European communication space in order to gain insight into the various aspects of the publishing, elaboration and distribution of the news. Among the interviewees I have had representatives of the European institutions, such as from European media providers and news agencies, and journalists and editors from private and state television channels both from European member countries – Eastern and Western – and extra-European countries. My interviewees were: Alan Quartly, Assignment editor at BBC; Róbert Kollár, Editor-in-chief of news at RTL Hungary (private channel); Anna Radnóti, Editor of foreign news at RTL Hungary (private channel); Adam Renyi, former communication director of two private, national television channels; Gamal Abdullatif, reporter for France 24 and France 24 Arabic; Abdalkarim Elhag, freelancer journalist and news-producer; Jaume Duch, Spokesperson and Director-General for Communication of the European Parliament; Thibault Lesenecal, the Acting Head of the European Parliament's Web Communication;

[289] Ibid
[290]Meyer, C.O., [1999]
Martins, I. A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C. H., [2012]
[291] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

Karolina Wozniak, EP Social Media Coordinator ; Mr. Carbajo, Head of Audiovisual Unit of the European Parliament  and Justyna Kurczabinska, Head of Eurovision News Exchange.

 I retained the variety of interviewees important not only because it enables the understanding of the dynamics of such dialogue, but also because such representatives explain better influencing factors in the editorial line.

Semi-structured interviews with unstructured interview elements were conducted in between 2015 and 2016, where main topics and certain questions were repeated in each interview in order to enable the examination of common views, or to depict the different opinions of general issues, but I have always left the freedom to the interviewees to drive the conversation to topics they wanted to cover in order to gain a deeper and a more detailed insight in European news-production and -broadcasting.

Many other researchers have focused on this topic already: Statham[292] on role conceptions, Cornia[293] on journalistic cultures, Gleissner, de Vreese and Lecheler[294] on editorial policies and readership demands and also Mak and Foret who have focused on officials' views of EU communication. [295] All these external factors and editorial lines are important to be examined as they contribute or block the formation of a European public sphere.

According to the previously written concept of the Europeanization of national public spheres also viewed as the European public sphere, I have seen that the current knowledge leads to diverging conclusions with respect to extent, scope, nature of this phenomenon. One of the key-indicators according to de Vreese is the visibility of European topics and their European perspective, their common interpretation.[296] Risse and van de Steeg retain that corresponding media coverage in different countries with shared points of reference are also among the criteria: "speakers and listeners recognize each other as legitimate participants in a common discourse that frames the particular issues as

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[292] Statham, P.: *Making Europe news: journalism and media performance.* In Koopmans, R. and Statham P. (Eds.): *The making of a European public sphere: media discourse and political contention*. Cambridge: University Press. P. 125 – 50. [2010]

[293] Cornia, A*.: The Europeanization of Mediterranean journalistic practices and the Italianization of Brussels: dynamics of the interaction between EU institutions and national journalistic cultures.* European Journal of Communication 25, no. 4, p. 366–81. [2010]

[294] Gleissner, M. and de Vreese C. H.:  *News about the EU Constitution. Journalistic challenges and media portrayal of the European Union Constitution*. Journalism 6, no. 2, p. 221–42.  [2005]
Lecheler, S.: *EU membership and the press: an analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member states*. Journalism 9, no. 4: 443–64.  [2008]

[295] Foret, F.: *Advertising Europe: the production of public information by the Commission*. In Smith, A. (Eds.): *Politics and the European Commission: actors, interdependence, legitimacy*. London: Routledge,   p. 134–55. [2004].

[296] de Vreese 2002; de Vreese et al. 2006; Schuck and de Vreese [2011]

common European problems". [297] Also Koopmans and Statham list visibility and inclusiveness among the criteria of the public sphere.[298] So European news defines the European public sphere in television and for this reason it is indispensable to understand how those who produce this news operate.

Journalists are defined as those who make decisions directly affecting news content. Editors and reporters influence information flow and they transmit messages and news by selecting the relevant information. "Journalists work within news organizations that operate within constraints and opportunities shaped by commercial and institutional factors, including ownership, market share, and a nationally specific relationship between the media and political systems," explain Hallin and Mancini[299]. Although news organizations have specific and clear relationships with the public administration, very often we can identify some political leaning (both left and right) in their messages and agenda-setting that has a direct impact on public. [300] As Adam Renyi, former communication director of two private, national television channels said: "The state can play with its demand of social advertisements, and through this also has an impact on the behavior of market participants. Therefore, let's say there is a big company, who has paid for advertisements at one channel...but to maintain good relations with the state, for reasons of lobby will change to the television channel where the state is involved." And he added also that "beforehand broadcasters had also another type of dependency from politics. In those times you had ground frequencies, and postponing the validity of the license of frequencies was a state decision, this meant a certain dependency from power." Such factors have an impact on the organizational culture and editorial line of certain media providers, a set of values with which journalists working at certain broadcasters can identify with.[301]

These and many other aspects will be discussed followingly in order to better understand elaborate the mechanism behind the scenes that shapes news and through news the general opinion and the European public sphere itself. Therefore interviews will discuss news production logic in general in the first place, only later they are addressing the specificities of the EU news, the EU topics and EU news.

[297] Risse and van de Steeg [2003] pp 22

[298] Koopmans, R. and Statham P., [2010]

[299] Hallin, Daniel C. and Paolo Mancini: Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [2004]

[300] Blumler, J. G. and Gurevitch M. (Eds): *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London: Routledge. [1995]

[301] Statham,P.: *Making Europe news. How journalists view their role and media performance.* SAGE Publications Vol9(4): 398-422 [2008]

### 4.3.1. Operating, making, elaborating

When meeting with journalists and editors, we wanted to know more about the aspects mentioned before: namely how much editorial lines influence journalists work? How defined are the leaning political views within the news-production? And how do editorial decisions influence the agenda?

1. **Daily routine**

Nevertheless among the interviewees there are journalists, editors, news-producers, private and public channel representatives and European institution officials who gave me an insight into their everyday work they agreed on certain aspects. The first thing in common was that in each case there was a team to decide about the agenda, which news will be presented and with what content they will fill the time at their disposal. For example, at BBC foreign news are elaborated in the following way, according to Alan Quartly, Assignment editor at BBC: "I am an assignment editor for foreign news. My boss is the formal editor and he has 4 assistants and I am one of them. So my job is to deploy people stories around the world. So we talk to bureau chiefs about what stories we need to give to correspondents around the world. Sometimes they come to us and say: 'OK, in Washington this is the hot topic and what we need to know is this and that' or sometimes we go to them to tell what they need to do. It depends. Information goes in both ways." The news department at BBC has an editorial meeting every day at 9 o'clock, where the director gives guidance to editors about important stories that day. Editors collaborate with journalists in making suggestions and then elaborate news. "The reason we have a large network of reporters all around the world is that we have people who are experts in the countries, they might even speak the language, you know we have Russian, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish speakers and that means that they can actually tell you how a situation is seen in that country and why it is seen like that," adds Mr. Quartly.

Also at RTL, the international television group that operates private channels in Hungary, the Editor-in-chief Róbert Kollár and Editor of foreign news, Anna Radnóti explained that they have a daily briefing just like the BBC. Usually they receive all the potential news from reporters and then they decide in a team which to use that day: "All the materials arrive and then we start to elaborate them. So one needs to prepare more material," said Ms. Radnóti. Mr. Kollár added: "Usually we do more or less 3 big materials and 7 demos. And this is only the foreign affairs section."

## 2. Sources

One interesting preliminary aspect is where journalists take their information from, as information sources already segment what goes into the news. According to some, a European public sphere should reflect national media reporting on the same topic using common sources, including EU sources and sources from other EU countries.[302] Therefore, sources are an important asset both to agenda-setting and to the fostering of the European public sphere.

Alan Quartly said in this regard that the BBC bases their agenda on input gained from local media, Twitter and also sometimes phone calls: "Before Twitter it was more popular getting phone calls, but it is still happening. We have sources in the government, in military, hospitals increasingly like I said there are a lot of activist journalists in a place like Syria for example. It's dangerous we know that there are very carefully controlled circumstances so we check these people who put their own videos online." For Abdalkarim Elhag, a freelance news producer, news agencies are the main source of information, and as he said: "…not every journalist is in the field, not every journalist had access to information. In many cases we are not first case witnesses. 90% of journalists are sitting behind a desk in front of computers. So maybe less than 10% are in the field." Gamal Abdullatif, reporter for France 24 and France 24 Arabic also added: "You had the translation as the core of the story and you'll have your own imports in it. […] you have access to the local news channel, gather this information and write something in-house. This is not from the field, this is from the newsroom itself." But he also complains about the news agencies being unbalanced and sometimes unfair in specific countries and for this reason not being 100% reliable.

## 3. Other than news agencies

This is why journalists tend to ask people from the ground: "Local media and people on the ground because I mean, people from the Pacific area have their own contacts on the ground. Maybe friends, maybe journalists, maybe families they know, maybe their own family in order to get the feel and the people how they are dealing or reacting to this story," says Mr. Abdullatif, who shared very interesting thoughts on how

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[302] de Vreese, C.H. [2007] pp. 12

to put together the narrative by using sources. For example, you can interview just one person and in order to avoid unbalancing the picture, you can use the interview as a case study. Another way of interviewing local people is doing the so-called vox-pop, asking people from the street and trying to get a wider picture.

Another way to overcome the partial reliability of the news agencies is an inner system of news-exchange. For example, RTL Hungary, according to Róbert Kollár, has an own internal news-exchange platform that is operated by the colleagues from the different countries. "The RTL Group has an internal group, where we put all we have. In the RTL Group there are quite a few channels, more than 30 from the various parts of the world. And it is divided that when there is morning in Australia, then it's their turn and they are collecting the news from all over the world; when there is daytime in Europe, it is Luxenburg; and after when it comes to America, it is somewhere in South-America where they collect common news. So we actually operate as news agency, but we do it in house." However, Adam Renyi, former director of communication of RTL Group Hungary, reminds us of the limitations of this: "…journalists are human beings, and most probably they have an own opinion, that they can't exclude completely."

When it comes to news about formal institutions, like the EU, press releases and informal sources are often more useful. Journalists and correspondents asked in the study of Martins, Lecheler and de Vreese said that non-official channels are the primary asset for communication.[303] According to others, the 'behind-the-scenes' interaction is common in the Brussels bubble. And according to APCO Worldwide, private contacts represent Brussels journalists' most useful source.[304] This is also common as EU officials tend to promote their own interests and so informal channels are also preferred by administrators.[305] From the study of Martins, Lecheler and de Vreese, according to a journalist from an online media source: "my private network has become routine in the sense that I don't use it just to get scoops, but often as a shortcut that saves me hours of digging through endless documents." Conversely, some civil servants admit that they "have a group of regular customers" amongst the Brussels media.[306] Interestingly some journalists admit that also press releases are useful mainly to contextualise the "authentic

[303] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H. [2012]

[304] APCO Worldwide. Media relations and Europe – from the journalist's perspective, http://www. apcoworldwide.com/ (accessed 10 September 2010). [2008]

[305] Balcytiene, A. K., Raeymaeckers, E., De Bens, A., Vinciuniene, and Schroder, R.: *Understanding the complexity of EU communication: the spokespersons' perspective. In Understanding the logic of EU reporting from Brussels. Analysis of interviews with EU correspondents and spokespersons*. AIM Research Consortium, 1–4. Bochum/Freiburg: Projekt Verlag. [2007]

[306] Martins, I.A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C.H.: *Information Flow and Communication Deficit: Perceptions of Brussels-Based Correspondents and EU officials,* Journal of European Integration, 34:4, 305-322. [2012]

information" provided by other means. "EU institutional material is as good to find information as it is bad to find the truth."[307]

## 4. Does nationality count?

Last but not least an interesting question to be answered is whether or not nationality is an influencing factor in gaining information. Some say that nationality and "outlet"[308] are factors that determine access to some information. Nevertheless both officials and journalists who deny this: For instance, the Portuguese correspondents interviewed denied that they had gained more access to information sources under Barroso's Presidency. They claim that subject-driven communication made nationality peripheral.[309] Accordingly the changing news-consumption habits and the rise of social media foster the disappearing weight of nationality.

## 5. Social media as news-source?

Social media and the diffusion among citizens was already addressed in this dissertation, and according to some researchers it provides a unique platform for the establishment of a European public sphere. But social media is also an interesting topic from a news-gathering point of view. Jaume Duch, Spokesperson and Director-General for Communication of the European Parliament expressed his views on this matter: "…it is very interesting to see that when there is an argument on a certain topic it is not the national difference that emerges, […] but they are all individuals, not related to their nationality. There is a notable discussion on the national public opinion and the European public opinion: Facebook is very useful and assures very interesting data that show that we all are members of a local, national and also European public opinion." Actually, for the European institutions, just like for politicians and news sites, the importance of social

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[307] Ibid.
[308] Morgan, D.: *British media and European Union news: the Brussels beat and its problems.* Euro- pean Journal of Communication 10, no. 3, p. 321–43. [1995]
Gavin, N., [2001]
Raeymaeckers, K., Cosijn, L. and Deprez, A. [2007]
Lecheler, S., [2008]
[309]Martins, I. A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C. H., [2012]

media as an information source is growing. Thibault Lesenecal, the Acting Head of the European Parliament's Web Communication stated that now social media is gaining importance, the EP is present on 7 different platforms of which Youtube, as the only audiovisual media platform existing in 2008 was then was adpoted by the EPTV. This is due to the growing interest on these platforms of individuals regarding European topics.

Still, is social media a news-source? Anna Radnóti, editor of international news on RTL Hungary retains that social media doesn't operate as a news site, even if it shares content: "We can witness some evolution in this regard, also on Facebook for instance, there appears always more information that seem to be official news. So it is not only sharing the broadcasted news as it is, but producing news specifically for that site. For example a page of a news-site works completely differently as the online site of a television." But to the question of whether social media can be cited as official news source she and her colleague, Róbert Kollár, Editor in chief of news replied immediately 'no'. But they also added that if there is a parliamentary session continuing in the night then an MEP tweeting something can be a piece of the content shared as news.

### *4.3.2. What influences the editorial decision-making?*

Journalism and journalists play a crucial role in the evolution of the European public sphere, as media content is an explicit manifestation of the public sphere. For this reason, if we want to understand the quality of the European public sphere, we need to examine factors that influence the editorial decision-making. Morgan did so when analyzing EU correspondents and points such as access, constraints and sources defining EU news. [310] Bijsmans and Altides, Martins, Meyer and Morgan have examined the relationship between EU institutions and journalists. And numerous studies have addressed the role of journalism in European integration. [311] It is needless to say that editorial gatekeepers and journalists have a certain power in influencing public opinion, political institutions and issues through the daily process of news selection and presentation.[312] In the view of Adam Renyi, in Hungary journalism has given up its power to content-production and the decision of what kind of content will be produced is not taken by journalists. Journalism, however, and professional news shall act always as opposition to ruling politics. As the BBC editor Alan Quartly said: "There is a kind of planning rule that you know as a journalist in a particular country that you need to cover like as I said because you have to be aware of the territory as a journalist and you have to know what to cover." The noble mission of journalism notwithstanding, the media's role in society can be viewed as pure market driven business, a "business with a public interest" or a special business that requires government intervention, legislation and provisions. In other words, ideas ranging from a notion of the media as acting in "self-interest" to the

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[310] Morgan, D., [1995]
De Vreese, C. H.: *Television Reporting of Second-Order Elections.* Journalism Studies, vol. 4, no 2, p. 183–198. [2003]
[311] Bijsmans, P. and Altides, C.: *Bridging the Gap' between EU Politics and Citizens? The European Commission, National Media and EU Affairs in the Public Sphere*. Journal of European Integration, vol 29, no 3, p. 323–340. [2007]
Martins, I. A.; Lecheler, S.; de Vreese, C. H., [2012]
Meyer, C.: *Political Legitimacy and the Invisibility of Politics: Exploring the European Union's Communication Deficit.* Journal of Common Market Studies, vol 37, no 4, p. 617–639. [1999]
Morgan, D., [1995]
Baisnee, O.: *Can political journalism exist at the EU level?* in Kuhn, R.; Neveu, E. (Eds.): *Political Journalism: New challenges, new practices*vol. Routledge/ECPR Studies in European Political Science, vol 26, p. 108–128. [2002]
Balcytiene˙, A. and Vinciuniene, A.: *Assessing Conditions for the Homogenisation of the European Public Sphere: How Journalists Report, and Could Report, on Europe* in Bee, C.; Bozzini, E. (Eds.): Mapping the European Public Sphere: Institutions, Media and Civil Society, Ashgate, Farnham, UK, p. 141–158. [2010] Gleissner, M. and de Vreese, C. H.: *News about the EU Constitution: Journalistic challenges and media portrayal of the European Union Constitution.* Journalism, vol 6, no 2, p. 221–242. [2005]
Statham, P.: [2008] Statham, P.: [2010] Lecheler, S.: [2008]
[312] For a historical discussion of news coverage of politics in the US see, for example, T. Patterson, Out of Order (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1993).

media acting in the "public interest", according to McQuail.[313] Therefore, broadcasters today pay more attention to what the audience demands, whereas the public service ethos in the past meant a greater emphasis on educating and informing the electorate with special attention to what politicians had to offer.[314] However, according to Mr. Renyi, the demand of the audience is a very flexible thing.

So what are the aspects taken into account when making editorial decisions? Alan Quartly explained the following: "We might have a lot of different news stories being suggested to the correspondents but we don't have the space to put everything so there must be some editorial decision-making done, like what is the priority that day." He also added: "Sometimes it is less obvious and there are discussions which story is more important and it might be the different editors, different programs decide on different talk stories. That's a kind of relative decision making." This relative decision-making process was confirmed also by Mr. Renyi, who said that "sensation" is still a keyword at private broadcasting news-production. This results in a certain "with us or against us" narrative is used that makes news become more comprehensible and sensational, even when covering something as consequential as politics. According to Justyna Kurczabinska, Head of Eurovision News Exchange, in order to show and explain events, stories of everyday people are told by the media rather than mere pictures of talking heads from the institutions and governments. Gamal Abdullatif, editor at France 24, added very interesting statements on what affects editorial decision, such as the language the reporter is using, the guests they are inviting and the pictures chosen. For this reason, if an event is covered by multiple news-producers, editors and journalists need to follow the editorial policies of their company. This is also why technical details are becoming more important when comparing the presentation of news of various broadcasters. However, we can agree with Abdalkarim Elhag, journalist and news-producer, that journalists and editors can't completely isolate themselves from who they are: "so consciously or subconsciously I will always forward a British point of view. As a provider of news, I am also influenced by the news that I read then I see and my sources of information."

## 1. Framing process in the "newsroom"

And here we can get back to the beginning of this chapter, when speaking about the agenda-setting capacity of news in everyday politics, as political events and news

[313] McQuail, D.: *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest.* London, Sage. [1992]
[314] Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J.,[2000]

inevitably interact. News shall be a continuous opposition to political power[315], a public sphere that puts political legitimacy under scrutiny, according to many.[316] The framing process, therefore, plays a key-role in the production of news already at the level of framing the "newsroom." This means that because journalists have to tell a story within limited time or space, they need certain frames to simplify and give meaning to the flow of events, and to keep audiences interested. Frames guide journalists, editors, and news executives to structure and organize news stories, and framing helps audiences to make sense of the information provided.[317] Actually, as mentioned before, the selection of the events tackled in the news itself is a framing, as journalists are filtering information from publics.

According to Mazzoleni and Schultz, in the "mediatized politics" era,[318] journalists are confronted by a barrage of competing claims, from which only a small number appear in print due to limited carrying capacity. Thus, the political discourse carried by the media is a competitive field where collective actors engage in acts of "strategic political communication" (Kriesi, 2004)[319] to gain influence.[320] For this reason it is important for political figures to engage with the press.

However frames are chosen also to satisfy the audience's demand. Anna Radnóti of RTL explained that very often international news is also framed from a national perspective as they need to keep in mind the national connection and local impact of certain international events. Also European institutions work following frames in order to offer information to the publics in an appealing way that will be consumed by the mainstream. Mr. Lesenecal, Head of the European Parliament's Web Communication Department said: "So that is why we try to target and identify more and more auditor issues and to follow those issues, because we know that for each issue (and topic) we have an audience out there."

According to Cappela and Jamieson, in order to correctly study these frames and their effects, one must systematically collect evidence of the way events and issues are framed in the news. The scholars suggested that frames must have identifiable conceptual

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[315] *Interview with Adam Renyi, former communication director of TV2 and RTL Group, two private television channels in Hungary*

[316] Fossum, E. J., and Schlesinger P., [2007]

[317] De Vreese, C.H. [2003]

[318] Mazzoleni, G. and Schulz W.: *Mediatization of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?* Political Communication, vol 16, no 3, p. 247–62. [1999]

[319] Hanspeter, K.: *Strategic Political Communication: Mobilizing Public Opinion in Audience Democracies.* In Esser F. and Pfetsch B. (Eds.): *Comparing Political Communication: Theories, Cases and Challenges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 184–212. [2004]

[320] Statham, P. [2008]

and linguistic characteristics and be commonly observed in journalistic practice.[321] And actually studying frames is crucial for all the participants of news-production. Mr. Renyi said: "So if someone finds a news that he or she elaborated and frames it, others are quoting it, it grows big and forms public opinion, so politics needs to react to it and so on. This works like this usually. So the political agenda, or better to say the agenda of public knowledge is defined quite significantly by the media. How important to society one topic can become, depends on how long the news can stay on the agenda or vanishes in 1-2 days." Psychology of news is crucial. Also Alan Quartly from BBC added how important it is to frame and sometimes re-frame the news in order to keep it alive until the public interest erodes. "There is a point where if you do a story everyday it stops feeling new. This is a question about news psycho and at some point it will start to fade away. An important fact in every news report around the world is that who is reading it and listening to it and if you are not getting the numbers, if people are not engaged than you need to move on to something else because that means that the people will look at something else."

Getting the numbers—this can be the thought that connects us to the next topic: what are the influencing factors of defining an editorial line and how does objectivity and balance come to the picture?


## 2. Influencing factors


As always, the agenda-setting and the editorial line need to be examined within their contexts: the demand of the public, the dynamics of the market and also the interdependence with other organizations, institutions, parties. For this reason, in communication science it has been forcefully demonstrated that effects of the different news media outlets are conditioned by their actual contents.[322] This also resonates with what our interviewees said about both the editorial line and the journalistic thinking being influenced by these factors. For example Gamal Adbullatif, from France 24 said: "The national channels has this very clear editorial policy. While the private channels, they understand it. I mean, being part of the social system, the founding, the origin, they understand that the origin now wants these things to be happened and they have, I think, some kind of guidelines to follow." In this sense broadcasters need to keep in mind where

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[321] Cappella and Jamieson: *Spiral of Cynicism; Shanto Iyengar, Is Anone Responsible*? Chicago: Chicago University Press [1991]
[322] De Vreese, C. H., Boomgaarden, H. G.: [2006]

their funds are coming from, whether there are public contributions and what the demand is related to this. This idea was supported by the opinion of journalist and news-producer Adbalkarim Elhag that journalists actually go in line with the editorial leanings of certain broadcasters or newspapers: "Other journalists will always have an agenda depending on what organization they are working for. If the Daily Mirror has a totally different agenda and totally different type of journalists from The Sun. It's obvious, The Sun is right-wing, Daily Mirror is center-left." Justyna Kurczabinska from the EBU explains this phenomenon: "But I think problem is of the size of Europe. We are a combination of so many countries and the national broadcasters are very you know… in a way they are protective of the market so I think they want to protect their own culture and individuality."

However the common topic that appeared quite often within the discussions was objectivity and balance of the news. How important are they? How you can assure these principles are practiced? How you can manipulate these principles? These are the questions that will be explored in the following chapter.

## 3. Objectivity and balance

Framing news is a fundamental means at the disposal of both editors and journalists, and also European institutions. The framing activities of the European institutions has been discussed previously, nevertheless it is important to shed light on the connection between one of the main journalistic principles, objectivity, and framing. Given that journalists belong to a social group sharing a common orientation and ethos that affects how they see their profession,[323] their views are a potentially rich data source.

Many scholars suggest that framing news consists of using varied but specific "framing devices" (e.g., headlines, introductions, lead-outs etc.). [324] These studies explicitly define the news frame as distinct from other elements in the news.[325] News frames have an impact on the perception of the information shared as news, as they stress specific values, facts, or other considerations and sometimes imbue issues, or pieces of

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[323] Tumber, H. and Prentoulis, M.: '*Journalism and the Making of a Profession'*, in Hugo de Burgh (ed.) *Making Journalists*, pp. 58–74. London: Routledge. [2005]
Statham, P.: *Making Europe news. How journalists view their role and media performance.* SAGE Publications Vol9(4): 398-422 [2008]
[324] Tankard, J.: *The empirical approach to the study of media framing*. In S. Reese, O. Gandy, & A. Grant (Eds.), Framing public life. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, pp. 95-106 [2001]
[325] De Vreese, C. H.: *The Effects of Frames in Political Television News on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience*. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Spring; vol 81, no 1, p. 36. [2004]

issues, with greater relevance than would alternative frames.[326] It is commonly known that news values point to the importance of conflict.[327] The presence of conflict fosters the news story and makes that piece of news go on air if the story is told well, at least partially because it "sells",[328] but also because it supposedly meets the standards of balanced reporting.

According to Gamal Abdullatif, journalist and editor, news frames consist of the following elements: language, context, guests and visual. These are also the indexes of objectivity and balance. Objectivity and balance are not only journalistic principles but also basic values in the communication policy of the European institutions: "So in my compass, what is important for the media directorate on this level is the use of the directorate. This is a guideline, we are transparent. We are objective, we quote each political group. And we are particularly balanced. […] We are accurate. And we are fulfilling the right of the citizen to know what is happening in this house. And we want to be interesting. So those are our values," said Mr. Lesenecal, the Acting Head of the Web Communication Unit of the European Parliament. "We provide all the content we try to be as transparent as possible but the end of the day they put it or not," adds Mr. Fernando Carbajo, the Head of the Audiovisual Unit of the Directorate of Media at the EP. Despite these intentions, Jaume Duch, the Head of the Communication Department explains that even with the aim of being transparent and highly balanced, broadcasters tend to frame the objective information from a national, or even a patriotic point of view as this is what better connects to viewers. And to make news more national, journalists make interviews with the representatives of their nation who tend to communicate in an unbalanced way: "...for example, if I am the Minister of Agriculture, and I go to Bruxelles and there is a positive decision than it was my decision. But if it is negative, it is Bruxelles's decision," explains Mr. Duch. For this reason the framing-capacity of journalists is considered highly valuable in contributing to the homogenic European understanding.

In relation to this, balance and objectivity are important guidelines within the journalistic and editorial circles as well. As Alan Quartly, Assignment Editor at BBC said: "As a publicly funded broadcasting platform balance is very important and this is very different from the British newspaper where you know that if you read the Telegraph or the Guardian you get a totally different point of view. The BBC is straight down in the middle so we are not putting only our point of view but for us objectivity is very important

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[326] Ibid.

[327] Price, V.: *Social Identification and Public Opinion: Effects of Communicating Group Conflict.* Public Opinion Quarterly 53, p. 197-224 [1989]

[328]  McManus, J. N.: *Market-driven Journalism Let the Citizen Beware*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, [1994]

especially on the issue of the European Union […] So our Brussels correspondents spend a lot of time advising everybody in this room." Róbert Kollár, Editor of foreign affairs at RTL television has underlined the same thought when asking him about the importance and effects of the terminology, the wording of migrants and refugees within news. They personally were using the wording "refugees", as they did not want to get into a political narrative by using the negative-sounding wording with political power. Mr. Kollár confirmed our hypothesis that terminology mirrors political views.

On the other hand, terminology, just as interviewees, pictures and contest can be used for manipulating objectivity: "We show 2 sides but one side more than the other. You can give them the idea of balance, …, this is what I think," said Mr. Abdalkarim Elhag. He also added: "I mean like anywhere else the agenda is always set by the channel. They don't have to say it explicitly, it can be implicit, they don't have to write it down for you, but you know that what you will sell to Fox will be different from what you are going to sell to the BBC or from what are going to sell to Sky."

### 4.3.1    How do European institutions communicate?

In this chapter I intend to compare how the European institutions think they communicate, and what is effectively perceived by news-production actors. Here it is important to underscore that European institutions aim to communicate with citizens, both who are interested in European matters and those whose attention they try to catch. For example, the EP's communication addresses people outside the "Bruxelles bubble." Mr. Lesenecal explains that "on Facebook, you should know, that 95% of the fans are outside Belgium. 95%. That means that we have only 5% of our fans that are in Bruxelles or Belgium. Because you will always hear about the Bruxelles-bubble, and it does not exist on Facebook. And it has always been the case. I think that we are even above 95%." He says that he doesn't believe in the existence of a European elite, but rather europhiles and eurosceptics. To the contrary, Adam Renyi claims that the European institutions don't put enough effort in establishing and fostering a direct contact with the European citizens: "…about the EU, in a way, Hungary communicates. But actually, there is no direct communication from the EU. So, that the EU speaks to Hungarian people, is not existing." The truth likely lies somewhere in between.

## 1. What is the main editorial line of the European agenda-setting?

Staying to the goal of getting to citizens that, as previously described, characterise the intentions of the European institutions, addressing the information well is crucial. This means that European affairs need to appear interesting in the eyes of a very heterogeneous audience, so European news being varied and targeted becomes crucial. According to Mr. Lesenecal: "I think there is a cliché, that people think it is European Affair, so you have to communicate of Europe. But no. You have to communicate to targeted audiences, about they subject they are interested in. So if you discuss fishery policy, there is a huge audience out there that is interested in fishery policy because they live from it. And so it is very important for them and they would like to know more about it. But they might not be interested at all in immigrations, or the pipeline in the Baltic states or energy. Whereas other people would be extremely interested in these. So that is why we try to target and identify more and more auditor issues and to follow those issues, because we know that for each issue (and topic) we have an audience out there." This resonates with the point of view of Ms. Karolina Wozniak: "I don't think there is one image… but there is not even one image that the Parliament wants to transmit. Of course we want to be seen as transparent, and democratically elected institution, these are the big values that we have as an institution, but generally speaking there are so many political groups, so many opinions in the Parliament… so I don't think there is one image."

Targeting is possible through various ways. First by use of language. Second by using adequate content for the various platforms through which the institutions can communicate. Also the Web Communication Unit of the EP sometime choses different topics and issues to cover on the different platforms they are present. Ms. Wozniak explains: "so let's say we have 2 or 3 post per day, we try to have a mix of serious things with some lighter things because we know that not everyone on our page is interested just in politics." Or messages can be targeted by finding the right frames and point of view. According to Mr. Lesenecal, it is an interesting process to find the various anchors of presenting information: the human anchor, the political anchor, the conflict anchor or just simply presenting the benefits for citizens. This resonates with the opinion of Mr. Carbajo, Head of Audiovisual Unit of the European Parliament, who said that "The main principle is always what we are doing for an average citizen. And we have to know that the citizens are not really interested in the Institutional functions, they are interested in daily life and they have to be involved. So the message has to be very clear. We have to repeat our

message. The citizens are not interested in Institutional buildings. The citizens are interested in daily life and we need to have an impact on their daily life."

Parallel with the fragmentation of new interpretation and the diversification of targeting, coordination and coherence are other main principles. The Director General of Communication of the European Parliament, Mr. Jaume Duch is keen on planning while keeping in mind editorial coherence and compatibility among the various communication channels, in addition to using proper language for each channel. It should not only be the coordination and editorial coherence among the various communication channels, but also among the European institutions, says Mr. Carbajo, Head of the Audiovisual Unit of the European Parliament: "each Institution needs to have its own means [of communication]. But at the end of the day […] we noticed that we have to work all together with the same ideas if we really want to inform and engage citizens. It is all about Europe and all about our future and all about the European Union." Unfortunately this kind of coordination still does not seem not be functioning: "…for us European Parliament and European Commission are two really separated audiovisual, they have separated audiovisual departments so they all kind of existing on their own," says Justyna Kurczabinska, from the News Exchange department. Later on we will see what journalists think about the coordination among the institutions.


## 2. How do European institution monitor their results?

In order to target the messages well and find the right audience, the European institutions need to monitor their communication and how the transmitted messages are interpreted within national media. For this reason the European institutions are investing much effort in following up their messages with content analysis, surveys and the watermark system. The latter is a method that entails to maintaining an up-to-date database on where the audiovisual material offered by the European institutions was used and for how long. With this watermark monitoring the European Parliament and Commission coordinate their work and the shared system allows them to monitor the use of pictures and audiovisual material of more than 280 broadcasters within the EU. This represents more or less 80% of the total audience. "We can go in this database and see how long they use it, how they lend it. Which are the countries that use more images, the members, and the audience. So the time can give an objective feedback but also how our images were used regarding a particular topic. As I said we have a lot of live events and then 1-2 hour long debate going live in the TV channels. For example we are always

present on the 24 hour TV channels. They use it a lot when we have state of the union debate," explains Mr. Carbajo. Ms. Justyna Kurczabinska adds that "…the watermark is quite powerful because you can see that the story which is really exciting is used immediately for example by 30 or 40 channels and then it's aired, you know, a thousand times. So, you know, and it's very no-brainer, good pictures or very strong pictures, they always get to the top." Anna Radnóti, the editor of foreign news at RTL, channels confirms the utility of these materials. They often use available, pre-recorded visual materials but they also connect to the live streaming services to air live sessions and important events.

While monitoring the use of audiovisual content within broadcasters gives a certain feedback of the utility of shared material, it is not necessarily examining the positivity or objectivity of the narrative. As previously mentioned, visual is just one fundamental element of agenda-setting, the others are language, context and interviewees. However their effectiveness can be measured only through surveys providing secondary results.

### 3. Challenges the EU institutions find in communicating?

Now let us consider the challenges and obstacles that the European institutions face within their communication, according our interviewees. Mr. Lesenecal stated the following: "It is normal and natural that it [the European Union] is complex, I mean, you can't play with 28 member states in a simple way. I mean it has to be complex." For this reason, besides informing the public on the ultimate updates of European matters, European communication also needs to evolve into an active role in education and basic information sharing. According to Alan Quartly, BBC: "The biggest problem is that most of the people in Britain have no idea how the EU works. They don't know what the European Parliament is and what it is for. They don't understand and talk about Brussels as one word. And there might be that Brussels is referring to the European commission which is basically the civil service of the Union which works out and suggests a policy. If Jean-Claud Juncker says something it doesn't mean that will happen but it often gets reported as the EU says we must do that." In other words: "there is a lack of information even if the information is all there."

This causes European matters to be a difficult topic to cover. As Jaume Duch, EP Head of Communication has put, television does not like Europe very much as they think this subject is distant and difficult, and that it does not go well with the televised narratives. In his opinion television does not like parliaments. Despite the regular use of conflict-narratives in television when speaking about parliamentary affairs, this topic can

easily become too technical for television to be interesting. That European matters are difficult, and communicating Europe is difficult, was confirmed also by researchers also, not only officials and journalists. Statham in his overview[329] concluded that journalists still find the EU to be a difficult topic to cover and to entice editors and audiences about.[330] Also according to Adam Renyi, for private, national tv channels, the EU is not quite apt for simple narratives. On the one hand there are numerous talking heads and figures representing European issues, on the other hand the organigram of the institutions and their everyday functioning is not easily comprehensible for citizens as they are significantly different from the national political and administrative standards. Mr. Renyi also adds that this low understanding is also caused by the private channels not fulfilling the mission of educating publics. Consequences can be observed in the low participation at the elections.

The European Union is not only difficult but also abstract: "And the biggest thing is that European Union is something very abstract so unless you translate it in a very… what is means for an individual, how it impacts on the individual, nobody understands, it's functioning," asserts Justyna Kurczabinska. She also adds: "So we don't know if they cooperate between one and other, for us they are separate. […] I think that if they wanna really have the impact then they should produce stories and not only do corporate coverage."

To conclude, we refer to the DG of Communication of the EP, who explains that the biggest challenge of communicating European matters is to reach those who are not interested in European affairs. "If someone wants to know about European matters, it is easy to communicate. But the real challenge is not this 5% of European society, but how to arrive to the other 95% who is not really interested, nor keen on national or local politics. […] Media needs to be used to reach out to those, who are not coming closer to you on their own."

### 4. How important the national point of view is?

While journalists' own perceptions of the roles of news media have remained broadly similar in the US over the past decade, differences in the role perceptions have

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[329] Statham, P.: "*Making Europe News: Journalism and Media Performance*", in The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention, (Eds.) Koopmans, Ruud, Statham, Paul, Communication, Society and Politics, pp. 125–150, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. [2010].
[330] De Vreese, C.H.: *The EU as a public sphere.* Living Reviews in European Governance, Vol. 2, No. 3 [2007]

been observed in several European countries.[331] This has important implications for the way in which both domestic and European politics are covered in the news. [332] This evolution is also due to the increasing intensity of European integration and the widening of political topics to be tackled by European decision-makers that have a direct impact on national policy-making processes.

European institutions aim to find the balance between targeting information and addressing all Europeans. Ms. Wozniak says "the thing is that for us it's always difficult to define our target because for us the target is all Europeans basically. So we always try to engage with as many people as possible…." According to Mr. Lesenecal, the European institutions' communication, besides addressing all citizens, aims to foster the recognition of the operation and its impact on them. "We want people to realize that the European Parliament is extremely important in their life. That this is the only democratically elected institution. And it is very important for them to engage; at least on the subject to be consent; because it has been elected by the people and takes decisions in their name. […] We want them to see that it is not a decision that comes… you know… it is not that Bruxelles has decided. No, it is the council, and the parliament."

However European institutions and journalists both admit that news on European matters becomes mainstream rather through a national point of view. According to Jaume Duch, EP, "there are two different aspects: one is regarding the decision of informing or not informing of what is happening in the EU or on a European level, and the other aspect is how to inform of informing, if informing from a national or a European perspective. […] and if there is not this national prospective it is more difficult to pull the interest of the public to the news." Also from a journalistic side, as Gamal Abdullatif, France 24, puts it: "either you have local story from international perspective or international stories from local perspective" and also Abdalkarim Elhag, freelancer, puts it this way "There is a national sight to every channel, a patriotic sight."

This national perspective manifests itself, for example, through the speakers a journalist chooses. National politicians explaining European affairs can explain reliably what impact European decisions can have on the member states' citizens. As Jaume Duch mentioned, today the European institutions are very important as "they take such decisions that change the conditions of citizens regarding economics, budget, social politics, labor, health, jurisdiction, immigration, terrorism. These are not technical politics

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[331] For the US, see D.H. Weaver and G.C. Wilhoit, The American Journalist: *A Portrait of US News People and their Work* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 3rd ed. 1996). For an international comparison see Weaver and Wei Wu (eds.), The Global Journalist.
[332] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J. [2000]

anymore, but they are politics with the big P, the same politics that are also discussed on a national level." However Jaume Duch, the DG of communication for the European Parliament aims to communicate that European decisions are as important as national parliamentary decisions. Journalists referring to their audience have a different view as they retain European decision-making distant from the national level and so "people are interested in the results. What is the decision? And this decision what kind of consequences has on his or her life? That's all," as Róbert Kollár says. Anna Radnóti adds: "So if there is no real decision, we usually don't report on such issues." This is why, according to Mr. Abdullatif, the interpretation of the news-story shall focus on the region but without losing touch with the original message. For example if someone interviews a local person in order to prove with a case study the core message, or to color it, it should only be done to foster and support the principle meaning.

As we can notice, there is a certain contradiction in communicating European decisions, of which one side is represented by the opinion of Mr. Duch, namely that European decisions are like national ones and shall communicated similarly as such, the other side, according to interviewees involved in news production, European matters need to be interpreted from a national point of view, otherwise it is not relevant. However, we should not forget one very important fact: regardless how much effort European institutions put into direct communication, citizens still gain their information from national news sources.

### 5. Journalist covering EU news

As the European integration becomes more decisive in national policy-making, the press needs to dedicate more attention and allocate time and resources to elaborate European affairs more in detail, as European decision-making has a direct impact on the everyday life of the public. In concordance all national parliaments in the member states have established some kind of European affairs committee (EAC) within themselves to improve parliamentary scrutiny of their own government's decision-making concerning EU matters. These committees typically focus on the negotiating positions taken by the national governments in Council of Ministers meetings.[333]

Different broadcasters and newspapers have different means to cover EU news. For example the BBC, according to Mr. Quartly, has an international press centre, where

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[333] De Vreese, C.H. [2003]

international broadcasters have their offices. BBC has 4 permanent correspondents and additional 6 periodic political correspondents due to the British referendum. On the contrary, Róbert Kollár, RTL, claims not to have any local representative as it is too expensive and not reasonable. RTL has Belgian partners who offers them materials, beside all the materials offered by the European institutions. Anna Radnóti, the editor of foreign affairs at RTL adds that she gets all her information out of these materials as she is deleting without opening and deleting all the emails that the European institutions send.

"In the past 5-7 years 80-90% of the information on the EU, was information about the crisis. It is normal that a citizen associates the European Union with the crisis, with the cause of the crisis. Therefore citizens prefer that Bruxelles is far away. This could have happened also because the means of communication continue to work with Bruxelles as years ago in third countries: the correspondent goes to Bruxelles, as it goes to Rio or Paris. The correspondent goes to Paris once a week and appears on television to explain what is happening in Paris" comments Jaume Duch regarding having correspondents at the European institutions. Mr. Carbajo, concerning the topic of correspondent explained that the European institutions, especially the EP, works a lot with the correspondents in a close manner. In his opinion we could witness a positive tendency in communication with journalists in the times when the European Commission was dominating the European communication was more distant and technical. The Parliament managed to fill the gaps, in his view. Transparency and attracting the media are the two main pillars on which the EP's communication is based.

Despite this optimistic view, we could hear from journalists and editors that they are not investing in correspondents, moreover they don't even use the releases and newsletters the EP emits as information sources. This is also because the EU appears as an unknown power, at least in the Hungarian media according to Mr. Renyi. Following to Justyna Kurczabinska, the public and thus the media could relate to the European institutions better if there were not only talking heads, but also personal stories told from the bottom to the top of the citizenry and people of the European Union. European communication could be also fostered "…if we'd let citizens to contact the institutions, to speak to MEP, to create a dialogue. This seems to be very important, just as informing journalists, help their work, activating platforms where we permit citizens to dialogue with decision-makers," explains Mr. Duch. The goals set by the Director General of Communication are clear: the European institutions have the mission to explain and help citizens understand that European policy-making is nothing more than a particular level of decision-making. Just as at the city, the region, and the state, there is a European level of decision-making. It is nothing more.

## 5. Analyzing the audience and the main factors of the European public sphere

After examining the underlying tendencies that define the agenda setting strategies, I will focus on the reception and perception of this news and therefore the characteristics and facts that influence the information-consumption of the audience.

However, I need to state that there is very limited data regarding the audiences of news channels. News channels are niche channels that do not attract large audiences and with the digitization and expansion of the multi-channel television this audience has become further fragmented, as the choice of the channels to view increased.

Nevertheless, the Europeanization of the national public spheres can be measured by the news media coverage of European matters,[334] the perception of the news and how they form public opinion is crucial in defining the form and existence of the European public sphere.

### 5.1. Introduction: Contextualization of data-analysis

There is a common notion in defining correlation between the regularity and overlapping content of European content within national news-broadcasting and the existence of the European public sphere and its quality. Mass media becomes even more important in cases, just as the European Union's, when speakers are unable to reach their audience and democratic political entities need mechanisms to link the political arenas. In these cases, the media function as 'glue' for the segmented public spheres. [335]

In order to define the quality of Europeanness and the European public sphere we need to follow the suggested methodology of the classification of topics, actors, degree of cross-references, and the framing of issues or visibility, inclusiveness and contestation.[336] According to de Vreese, who claims that "the notion of Europeanized national public spheres has found most resonance in large scale comparative studies of

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[334] De Vreese, C.H. [2007] pp. 10

[335] Erbe, J.: *What Do the Papers Say? How Press Reviews Link National Media Arenas in Europe.* Javnost - The Public, vol 12, no 2, p. 75–92. URL (accessed 31 July 2012): http://javnost-thepublic.org/article/2005/2/5/ [2005]

[336] De Vreese, C. H.: *Framing Europe: Television News and European Integration*. Aksant Academic Publishers, Amsterdam. [2002]
Koopmans, R. and Statham, P. (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention, Communication, Society and Politics.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. [2010]

the media's coverage of European integration and political issues in Europe," [337] the media coverage of European affairs shows a constant flow of news and can be described as cyclical, with occasional peaks and long periods of little news. [338] This is seen also when key events happen, such as national referendums on EU issues (e.g, de Vreese and Semetko 2004;[339] Hobolt 2009[340]), EU summits (de Vreese and Boomgaarden 2006[341]; van der Brug et al. 2007[342]), and European Parliament elections can take up a substantial part of the news (de Vreese et al. 2006[343]; Maier and Maier 2008[344]; Schuck et al. 2011b[345]).

Despite that most of the news is seen through the prism of the nation state, European integration and the EU are not only present in news coverage of genuinely European issues, but also are increasingly an integral part of national political and economic coverage. [346] Reflecting on this thought we can refer to Habermas, who wrote that the European political public space spans sovereign states and their national public spaces within a common system and with shared messages and meanings occupying this space.[347] Other researchers have defined the same phenomena by "distinguishing segmented transnational public spheres which have been conceptualized as issue-specific communicative spaces, largely dominated by political and economic elites".[348] Therefore

[337] De Vreese, C. H., Peter, J. and Semetko, H. A.: F*raming Politics at the Launch of the Euro: A cross-national Comparative Study of Frames in the News.* Political Communication, vol 18, no 2, p. 107–122. Online version (accessed 17 December 2007): http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html. [2001]

[338] Peter, J. and de Vreese, C. H.: *In Search of Europe: A Cross-national Comparative Study of the European Union in National Television News.* Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, vol 9, no 4, p. 3–24. [2004]

[339] De Vreese, C. H. and Semetko, H. A.: *News Matters: Influences on the Vote in the Danish 2000 Euro Referendum Campaign*. European Journal of Political Research, vol 43, no 5, p. 699–722. Online version: http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html. [2004]

[340] Hobolt, S. B.: *Europe in Question: Referendums on European Integration*. Oxford University Press, Oxford; New York. [2009]

[341] De Vreese, C. H. and Boomgaarden, H. G.: Media Effects on Public Opinion about the En- largement of the European Union. Journal of Common Market Studies, vol 44, no 2, p. 419–36. Online version http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html. [2006]

[342] Van der Brug, W., Semetko, H. A. and Valkenburg, P. M.: *Media Priming in a Multi- Party Context: A Controlled Naturalistic Study in Political Communication.* Political Behavior, vol 29, no 1, p. 115–141. [2007]

[343] De Vreese, C. H., Banducci, S. A., Semetko, H. A. and Boomgaarden, H. G.: The News Coverage of the 2004 European Parliamentary Election Campaign in 25 Countries. European Union Politics, vol 7, no 4, p. 477–504. [2006] Online version: http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html

[344] Maier, M. and Maier, J.: *News coverage of EU Parliamentary elections* in The Handbook of Election News Coverage Around the World, (Eds.) Strömback, J., Kaid, L.L., ICA Handbook Series, pp. 403–420, Routledge, New York. [2008]

[345] Schuck, A. R. T., Xezonakis, G., Elenbaas, M., Banducci, S. A. and de Vreese, C. H.: *Party contestation and Europe on the news agenda: The 2009 European Parlia- mentary Elections.* Electoral Studies, vol 30, no 1, p. 41–52. [2011]

[346] Semetko, H.A.; de Vreese, C.H.; Peter, J.: Europeanized politics – Europeanized media? European integration and political communication. West European Politics, 23:4, 121-141 [2000]

[347] De Vreese, C. H.: p. 5. [2007]

[348] Eder, K.: Zur Transformation nationalstaatlicher Öffentlichkeit in Europa. Berliner Journal für Soziologie, vol 2, p. 167–184. [2000]

I can say that European news becoming national shows the increasing impact of European decisions on national affairs.

Not only does overlapping content and a nationalized European communication drive our attention toward the creation of a "European audience", so do figures, as statistics show that Europe has a large audience for transnational television. "On average, 37 percent of respondents in the Eurobarometer 189a survey said they watch television channels from other European countries. Of course, the proportion varies enormously between the 25 member states. In Luxembourg and Malta, watching television channels from elsewhere is simply the norm. The proportion is also high in states where the country's borders do not coincide with linguistic ones, such as Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. A majority of viewers in Slovenia and Denmark claim to watch foreign channels regularly, and the same applies to half of the viewers in Germany, Portugal, Estonia and Ireland – no doubt for a variety of reasons. At the other end of the scale, the survey found that in the UK, Spain, Italy and Greece the overwhelming majority watch nothing but national channels." [349] These figures are important in the aspect of the public perception of the news and the European issues, by perceiving the same information about a common issue through another national prism. This phenomenon alters the European public opinion and so the European public sphere.

The public sphere, in other words, consists of a cultural and a political part where the cultural part also has fundamental political importance. Any quality newspaper demonstrates in its contents how the public sphere encompasses both politics and culture, and the same can certainly be said about broadcasting, at least the sort known as public service broadcasting (PSB) – devoted, according to Lord Reith's classic formula, not only to the provision of information and education, but also of entertainment.[350]

And so, to continue the widening of the concept, we need to say that analyzing the public perceptions of the common issues, framing analysis "expands beyond agenda-setting research into what people talk or think about by examining how they think and talk about issues in the news".[351] These frames select particular aspects of reality, organize aspects around that central idea, and, thus emphasize the mainstream opinion by allocating values through aspects.[352] Framing effects refer to changes in evaluations,

[349] Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol22(4): 479-492. [2007]
[350] Ibid
[351] Pan, Z. and Kosicki, G. M.: *Framing Analysis: An Approach to News Discourse*. Political Communication 10, p. 59-79. [1993]
[352] Entman, R. M.: Framing: *Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*. Journal of Communication 43, p. 51-8. [1993]
Gitlin, T.: *The Whole World is Watching*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, p. 7. [1980]

judgements and interpretations as the result of aspects made salient through selection, organization and emphasis. There is a linkage between the framing concept and public opinion that has an impact also on the European integration. Consequently, it can be asked whether the frames the media apply to European affairs translate into patterns the public uses to interpret those affairs.[353] And for this reason, some academics, just as Hands, criticize the European identity and the European public sphere. In his view, February 15, 2003, the day of the mass demonstrations can't be seen as the birth of European public sphere, rather a manifestation of the 'maturing of global civil society' and not an expression of a European public sphere. [354]

Therefore, in this chapter let me step aside from framing and content-analysis and let me view the perception of the audience, by analyzing the broadcasting space, the offer of information-sources, the role of trust and informedness in measuring general opinion.

## 5.2. News channels in nation states and their accessibility

It is indispensable to analyze the context of news, namely the offer of television channels, the broadcasting market and tendencies on it, in order to understand better news-consumption of viewers. For this reason, with the basic assumption that television has a central role in informing public about the EU,[355] I will focus on the growth of the market, the diversification of it and the Europeanization (or better to say internationalization) of the broadcasting space.

### 5.2.1. Growth of the broadcasting market

With the rise and diffusion of various communication platforms that can be used also as information sources, the public got used to consuming news in a different way than before. This evolution can also be seen on the broadcasting space where the main tendencies are an increasing number of tv channels, the appearance and join of additional news-platforms such as digital TV and internet channels, the increasing market share and

Goffmann, E.: *Frame Analysis*. New York: Harper & Row. [1974]
Neuman, W. R.; Just, M. R. and Crigler, A. N.: *Common Knowledge*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, p. 63. [1992]
Tuchman, G.: *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York: Free Press.
[353] Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J., [2000]
[354] Hands, Joss: "Civil society, cosmopolitics and the net: The legacy of 15 February 2003", Information, Communication & Society, 9(2): 225–243, [2006].
[355] De Vreese, C. H., [2003]

geographic diffusion of international news channels, and the growing demand of on-demand tv channels.

Based on the statistics gathered in the MAVISE Extra on linear and on-demand audiovisual services in Europe[356] we can put the above-mentioned observations in numbers in the following figure:

Table 7: Number of on-demand audiovisual media services established in the EU 28

| Country | TOTAL 2013 | TOTAL 2015 | 2015 vs. 2013 |
|---|---|---|---|
| AT | 66 | 118 | 79% |
| BE | 92 | 115 | 25% |
| BG | 22 | 25 | 14% |
| CY | 22 | 22 | 0% |
| CZ | 96 | 125 | 30% |
| DE | 274 | 330 | 20% |
| DK | 43 | 51 | 19% |
| EE | 11 | 14 | 27% |
| ES | 97 | 109 | 12% |
| FI | 25 | 28 | 12% |
| FR | 412 | 434 | 5% |
| GB | 515 | 682 | 32% |
| GR | 35 | 39 | 11% |
| HR | 14 | 16 | 14% |
| HU | 78 | 90 | 15% |
| IE | 23 | 26 | 13% |
| IT | 96 | 151 | 57% |
| LT | 14 | 15 | 7% |
| LU | 113 | 121 | 7% |
| LV | 19 | 21 | 11% |
| MT | 4 | 8 | 100% |
| NL | 110 | 120 | 9% |
| PL | 107 | 112 | 5% |
| PT | 39 | 40 | 3% |
| RO | 40 | 52 | 30% |
| SE | 144 | 153 | 6% |
| SI | 19 | 20 | 5% |
| SK | 33 | 51 | 55% |
| TOTAL EU 28 | 2563 | 3088 | 20% |

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / MAVISE database

**Figure 5.2.1: Number of on-demand audiovisual services established in the EU28**

From the table it can be seen that the on-demand audiovisual services were increasing significantly. There is no European country in which there was a decrease regarding the variety and number of channels. This is due to the growth of national

[356] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G.: *Mavise Extra: Linear and on-demand audiovisual media services in Europe 2015* [2016]

channels and the wider accessibility of foreign channels, moreover the expanding distribution platforms. Almost two thirds of all TV channels established in the EU in 2015 were divided between six major genres: HD (22%), entertainment/TV fiction/games (13%), sport (11%), film (7%), culture/education/documentary (6%) and music channels (6%).

This positive development is also due to technological innovations such as the digitization of cable and satellite platforms which allows for more space for additional channels. Also, the implementation of digital terrestrial television (DTT) has played an important role in increasing capacity for channel distribution, about which we will write more in detail later.[357]

The following table, of which the data was taken from the online dataset called "Statista", shows the number of TV channels per country that is followed by the table of number of TV channel by citizen, which show very interesting differences.
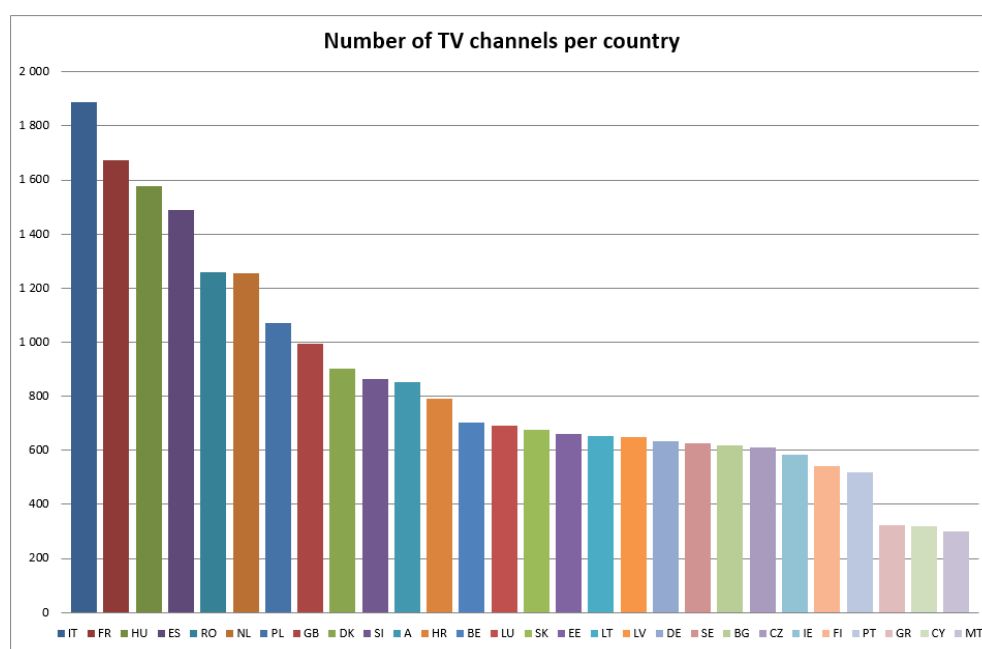


**Figure 5.2.2: Number of TV channels per country EU 28 [www.statista.com]**

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[357] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: *Television News Channels in Europe.* European Audiovisual Observatory [2013]
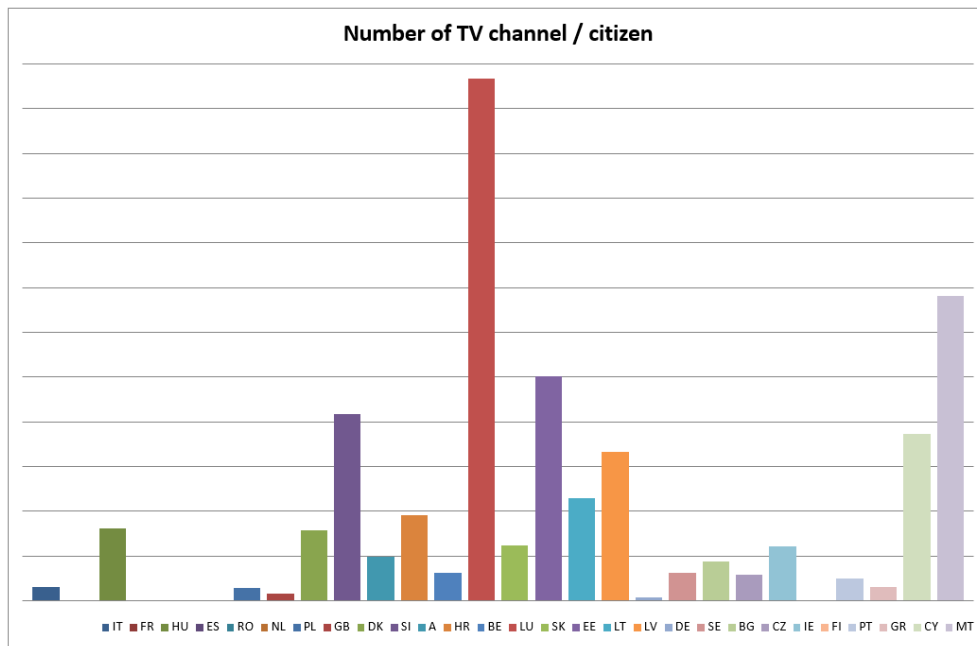
**Figure 5.2.3: Number of TV channel / citizen EU 28 [www.statista.com]**

Nevertheless, Italy shows the highest number of TV channels per country, this quantity related to the number of citizens appears to be quite low compared to other countries. Not like in Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Estonia that relative to the number of their citizens have a significant offer of broadcasting channels. These countries, especially Malta, have the lowest number of channel on a European level but this difference can be explained by their size and the number of foreign languages the public understands, as this enables the accessibility of foreign channels.

The expansion could be witnessed not only among TV channels in general, but also among news channels. This can be seen in the following figure:

Figure 1    The Growth of the market for television news channels in Europe.
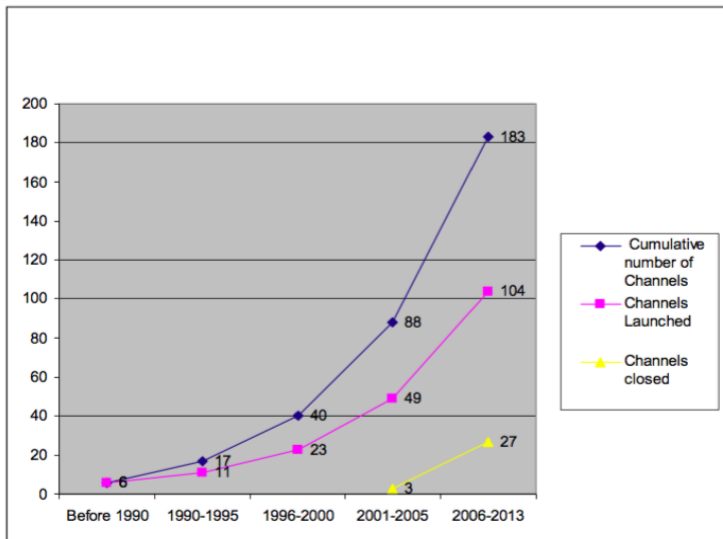
Source: MAVISE database 2013

**Figure 5.2.4: The growth of the market for television news channels in Europe**

Despite the economic crisis, 28 news channels have been launched between 2010 and 2013 that include several language versions of Euronews.[358] And now let me give an insight in the two main reasons of expansion: the appearance of digital TV and the availability of foreign channels.

### 5.2.2. Appearance of Digital TV

First of all, I need to state that the scope and scale of the circulation of audiovisual media services in Europe has largely been facilitated by the digitization and convergence of interactive platforms. As Schneeberger and Fontaine write: "The transition to digital television since the early 1990s has led to a spectacular increase in the number of television channels available, reducing operating costs and facilitating access to interactive services through the convergence of previously separated communications networks and services. Digital satellite television for example, which was first introduced in France in March 1996, offers up to 500 extra channels and so does digital cable which

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[358] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A., [2013]

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was launched in Europe shortly after."[359]   The near completion of the digitization of terrestrial television in Europe and the continuing launch of various IPTV services is further adding to the rise of the circulation of TV channels on all major distribution platforms. This increased capacity for offering more channels has provided television news channels (both national, but more particularly international) with the opportunity to expand their distribution throughout Europe, in particular when it comes to DTT networks (digital terrestrial television). As write Kevin, Pellicano and Schneeberger: "During a previous analysis of news channel distribution, carried out in 2009, we noted that there were 16 news channels available on DTT networks (free and pay). In September 2012, there were 45 news channels available on the free to air DTT networks in Europe (including several that appear in different countries) and in September 2013 there are 43. International news channels are provided in Belgium, Cyprus, Hungary, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. The Euronews channels appear on the Free DTT networks in Belgium, Cyprus, Germany (only in certain Länder), and Hungary. They appear on pay DTT networks in Estonia, Latvia and Malta".[360]

However, there are occasional examples where the number of news channels over particular distribution platforms have been reduced, especially regarding languages. Reasons are not clear, but one issue might be the dominance of other types of TV channels in the broadcasting space as mentioned in the previous section.

Moreover "despite the incredible push towards HD in the European television markets, news channels didn't seem to be particularly taken up in this hype" write Kevin, Pellicano and Schneeberger, who have identified eight news channels which now have HD simulcasts: A HABER HD, CNN Türk HD, BFM TV HD, NHK World TV HD, RT (Russia Today) HD, TA3 HD, TV4 News HD, and ZDF Infokanal HD.[361]

I can say that the digitalization fosters the increase of news channels and also their reach, even if high definition is not boosting this growth, nor does the shrinking linguistic availability. But than how do foreign channels behave on the European market?

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[359] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G.: *Mavise Extra: Linear and on-demand audiovisual media services in Europe 2015*. p. 15 [2016] pp.18
[360] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A., [2013]
[361] Ibid

### 5.2.3. The diffusion of foreign channels

As written previously, innovation and the use of digital platforms in broadcasting fostered the geographic outreach of foreign channels. This meant that the variety of broadcasting channels within the European countries increased as foreign channels—both in foreign and native languages—offered services which also include versions of brand channels that are established in one country and which broadcast to various other national markets. As a result, today, according to MAVISE Extra report, the majority of TV channels available on average in a given country are foreign channels: "In the years 2009 and 2015, the share of foreign channels available was 50% and higher in 24 EU countries; in four countries (DE, ES, IT, GB) the share of foreign channels was below the 50% threshold ranging from just 9% in the United Kingdom to 41% in Germany in 2015. All four countries are counted among the major EU television markets with a significant number of channels licensed under their respective national licensing regimes".[362]

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[362] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G. [2016] pp.18

Table 4 : Number of foreign TV channels targeting European countries (2009, 2015)

| Country | 2009 | | | 2015 | | | Total 2015 vs. 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public | Private | Total | Public | Private | Total | |
| **EU28** | | | | | | | |
| AT[1] | 0 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 248 | 152 | 2940% |
| BE | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 25% |
| BE (CFB) | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 25% |
| BE (DSG) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| BE (VLG) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | N/A |
| BG | 0 | 25 | 25 | 2 | 49 | 51 | 104% |
| CY[2] | 1 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 28 | 30 | N/A |
| CZ | 0 | 30 | 30 | 2 | 53 | 55 | 83% |
| DE | 2 | 73 | 75 | 2 | 90 | 92 | 23% |
| DK | 2 | 47 | 49 | 2 | 88 | 90 | 84% |
| EE | 2 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 13 | 15 | 7% |
| ES | 3 | 29 | 32 | 5 | 31 | 36 | 13% |
| FI | 0 | 29 | 29 | 2 | 55 | 57 | 97% |
| FR | 2 | 43 | 45 | 2 | 60 | 62 | 38% |
| GB | 3 | 15 | 18 | 3 | 8 | 11 | -39% |
| GR | 2 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 28 | 30 | 131% |
| HR | 0 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 58 | 60 | 567% |
| HU | 2 | 53 | 55 | 2 | 105 | 107 | 95% |
| IE | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 40 | 46 | 820% |
| IT | 3 | 21 | 24 | 50 | 59 | 109 | 354% |
| LT | 2 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 50% |
| LU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | N/A |
| LV | 2 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 12 | 20% |
| MT | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 100% |
| NL | 2 | 34 | 36 | 8 | 60 | 68 | 89% |
| PL | 2 | 69 | 71 | 7 | 133 | 140 | 97% |
| PT | 1 | 37 | 38 | 3 | 55 | 58 | 53% |
| RO | 2 | 40 | 42 | 2 | 56 | 58 | 38% |
| SE | 2 | 39 | 41 | 3 | 62 | 65 | 59% |
| SI | 0 | 17 | 17 | 2 | 57 | 59 | 247% |
| SK | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 53 | 55 | 1275% |
| [1] Including majority of German-language channels available in the country; [2] Data not comparable: 2009 data for the Turkish Cypriot Community and 2015 data for the Republic of Cyprus | | | | | | | |
| **Other countries[3]** | | | | | | | |
| AL | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 200% |
| AM | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| BA | N/A | N/A | N/A | 0 | 7 | 7 | N/A |
| CH | 1 | 39 | 40 | 2 | 10 | 12 | -70% |
| IS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| ME | N/A | N/A | N/A | 0 | 55 | 55 | N/A |
| MK | N/A | N/A | N/A | 0 | 20 | 20 | N/A |
| NO | 0 | 37 | 37 | 0 | 86 | 86 | 132% |
| RU | 0 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 33 | 33 | 136% |
| TR | N/A | N/A | N/A | 1 | 39 | 40 | N/A |
| [3] Countries covered by the European Audiovisual Observatory; no data for LI, MA | | | | | | | |

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / MAVISE database

**Table 5.2.5: Number of foreign TV channels targeting European countries (2009, 2015)**

The previous table shows the foreign television channels targeting European countries. The European Audovisual Observatory gathered data in 2009 and then in 2015[363] that enables us to examine dynamics on the market. We can see from the table that the number of foreign channels by country varies widely: whilst the German-speaking Community of Belgium had none, and Malta only 4, Austria instead had 152 foreign channels and Poland 140. The countries with the highest number of foreign channels targeting their territories are Austria (N=152), Poland (N=140), Italy (N=109), Hungary (N=107).

Approximately two third of the European countries have been targeted by more than 50 foreign channels. Nine European countries out of 31 have more than doubled the number of foreign channels in their country: Austria, Slovakia, Ireland, Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Greece, Bulgaria and Malta. All the other countries in Europe had an increase between 17% and 97%, which are still high numbers and show a general increase all over the continent. Only Switzerland (-70%) and the United Kingdom are exceptions (-39%) as there you could only witness the decrease of the number of foreign channels.

Another interesting result is regarding the distribution of private and public foreign channels: in 2009 there were 39 private channels in the European countries that tripled itself as it became 123 by 2015 out of which 50 (!) were based in Italy. So did the private channels grow by 127% and from 670 (2009) it increased to 1521 (2015).

## 5.2.4. The internationalization of news channels

Sticking to the previous chapter, we can note that just as in average for the television channels, even news channels showed a growth both in variety and geographically. Nevertheless, news channels, such as the international news channels, belong to a niche category in broadcasting that segments its audience notably.[364] From the European Audiovisual Observatory's[365] database we know that there is almost a 50-50 split between national news channels and international/pan-European channels. This distribution is also due to national channels' outreach, and despite their concept and target coverage they behave as international—or at least— pan-European channels. Two growing phenomena are parallel: while national channels become more pan-European, some pan-European channels become more global, such as Euronews, France 24.

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[363] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G. [2016] pp.21
[364] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]
[365]  Ibid

Table 5: Examples of pan-European brand channels that target other markets by country of establishment and group

| Country | Group | Examples of brand channels | Target market |
|---------|-------|----------------------------|---------------|
| **UK** | | | |
| | 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox (US) | History Channel, National Geographic, Baby TV | Europe[1] |
| | AMC Networks (US) | CBS, Extreme Sports, Jimjam | Europe[1] |
| | Discovery Communications (US) | Animal Planet, Discovery Channel, TLC | Europe[1] |
| | Modern Times Group (SE) | Viasat Explore, History, Sport, Motor, Nature | Europe[1] |
| | Scripps Networks (US) | Travel Channel | Europe[1] |
| | Sony Pictures (US) | AXN Europe, Sony Entertainment | Europe[1] |
| | SPI International (NL) | Filmbox | Central Europe |
| | Time Warner (US) | Boomerang, Cartoon Network, TNT | Europe[1] |
| | Viacom (US) | Nick Jr, Nickelodeon | Europe[1] |
| | Walt Disney Company (US) | Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney XD | Europe[1] |
| **FR** | | | |
| | Discovery Communications (US) | Eurosport | Europe[1] |
| | Euronews (FR) | Euronews | Europe[1] |
| | TV5MONDE (FR) | TV5MONDE | International[2] |
| **CZ** | | | |
| | Time Warner (US) | Cinemax, HBO | Central and South Eastern Europe |
| | Viacom (US) | Nickelodeon, VH1, MTV | Central Europe |
| | Walt Disney Company (US) | Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney XD | Central and South Eastern Europe |
| **LU** | | | |
| | 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox (US) | SKY Sport Channels | HR, RS, SI |
| | Bertelsmann (DE) | RTL | BE, HU, NL |
| | Dogan Group (TR) | EURO D, EURO Star | DE (Turkish Community) |
| **NL** | | | |
| | Viacom (US) | MTV, Nickelodeon, Comedy Central | DK, NO, PL, SE |
| | Walt Disney Company (US) | Disney Channel, Disney Junior, Disney XD | BE |
| | *Various adult channels | Penthouse, etc. | BE, BG, CZ, DE, FR, TR |
| **SE** | | | |
| | Bonnier Group (SE) | CMORE | DK, FI, NO |
| | Modern Times Group (SE) | Viasat, TV1000 | DK, FI, NO and Baltics |

[1] Various European countries; [2] Territories in Europe and overseas

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory / MAVISE database

**Table 5.2.6: Examples of pan-European brand channels that target other markets by country of establishment and group**

The table above shows examples of pan-European brand channels that target markets other than their established group. This shows explicitly the changes in market share in this field, also the tendency of internationalization of the broadcasting channels.

These channels in their news, such as specific news channels develop an internal system of distribution of content. This fosters the uniformization and brandization of the channels and therefore contribute to the Europeanization of news. "We have contracts with some news agencies and the RTL Group has an independent internal system, in which we all share with everyone what we have. And in the RTL Group there are quite a lot of channels, if I am correct more than 30 from various parts of the world," said Anna Radnóti. "And so we organize ourselves that when it is daytime in Australia it is Australia's responsibility to collect the materials from all over the world; when it is daytime in Europe than it is Luxembourg's turn; and when in America then from somewhere South-America. So we work as a news agency, only that we collect the audiovisual content from each other."

Without a doubt, the most important international news channels in terms of distribution and presence throughout Europe—available in over 33 countries—are CNN International, BBC World News, RT (Russia Today), Al Jazeera (English) and Euronews (English)—put in an order that mirrors their size in terms of distribution. These are followed by France 24 in English and Deutsche Welle. These top seven form a group of news channels that are most widely accessible. It should be emphasized that the language used in the top six news channels is English. Other languages represented in the lead table of top news channels available in more than 20 countries include French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish.[366] This can be seen also on the table below that shows the distribution of international news channels by country.

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[366] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]

| Channel | Countries | Total |
|---|---|---|
| Table 1 | DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANNELS BY COUNTRY | |
| CNN International | All countries in report | 38 |
| BBC World News | All countries in report except the United Kingdom | 37 |
| RT (Russia Today) | AT, BA, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SE, SI, SK | 35 |
| Al Jazeera (English) | AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB,GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR | 33 |
| Euronews (English) | BA, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR | 33 |
| France 24 (English) | AT, BA, BE, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR | 32 |
| Deutsche Welle | AT, BA, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, ME, MK, MT, PL, PT, RO, RS, SI, SK, TR | 30 |
| France 24 | AT, BA, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, FR, GB, GR, HR, IS, IT, LU, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SI, SK | 27 |
| Sky News International | AT, BA, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, HR, HU, IS, LT, LV, ME, MK, MT, NL, NO, PT, SE, SI, SK, TR | 26 |
| Euronews (Russian) | AT, BE, BG CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MK, NL, NO, PL, RU, SE, TR | 25 |
| CCTV News | AT, BE, BG, CH, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, GB, GR, HR, IE, LU, MT, NL, PT, RO, RU, SE, SI | 21 |
| Euronews (German) | AT, BE, BG, CH CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, TR | 21 |
| Euronews (Italian) | BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, NL, PL, TR | 20 |
| Euronews (French) | BE, BG, CH CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, TR | 19 |
| Euronews (Portuguese) | BE, BG CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT, TR | 17 |
| Canal 24 Horas | AT, BE, BG, CH, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, IT, LU, LV, NO, PL, PT, SE | 17 |
| Euronews (Spanish) | BE, BG CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, TR | 16 |
| Euronews (Arabic) | BE, BG CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, NL, PL, TR | 14 |
| Euronews (Turkish) | BE CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, NL, PL, TR | 12 |
| Al Jazeera (Arabic) | CY, DE, DK, FI, FR, GB, GR, IT, MT, NL, NO, SE | 12 |
| Euronews (Persian) | BE, CY, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, NL | 8 |
| Al Arabiya | BE, CH, DE, DK, FR, IT, NL, SE | 8 |
| Al Jazeera Balkans | BA, HR, ME, MK, RS, SI | 6 |
| Euronews (Ukrainian) | BG, CY, GR, NL, PL, RU | 6 |
| France 24 Arabic | BA, CY, FR, MT, SK | 5 |
| RT en Espagnol | BG, ES, FR, RU | 4 |

Source: MAVISE database, based on channels available in at least 3 countries 2013

**Table 5.2.7: Distribution of international news channels by country**

Such as in the broadcasting market in general, in news channels there was a notable development of hubs of pan-European brand channels by large broadcasting corporations, many of which are of American origin. Despite the economic crisis, 28 news channels have been launched since 2010. These include several new language versions of Euronews (the most recent being Greek and Hungarian), two news channels launched in Romania (2012), and the pan-regional Al Jazeera Balkan in 2012. In addition, new channels have been launched in Albania, Portugal and Poland in 2013; and in Croatia and Poland in 2012.[367]

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[367] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]

The MAVISE Report also states[368]: "Among the number of foreign channels available in a country, a rapidly increasing share is specifically targeting national markets. Two thirds of TV channels established in the UK target other countries: not only did the UK have by far the highest number of channels established among EU member states (N=1030); a total of 66% were broadcasting to a large number of countries in Europe and beyond in 2015. The majority of broadcasting companies that license their channels in the UK for distribution in Europe are of American origin."

In this frame the European Union is present in the following way: out of 214 European channels 46 are the Europe by Satellite channels, provided in 23 languages by the audiovisual services of the European Union. These provide footage over satellite that can be used by national news channels reporting on the European Union. As write Schneeberger, Kevin and Fontaine, out of the rest 110 channels are national channels and 60 have an international, better to say pan-European remit, even if there are numerous national channels with a nearly pan-European outreach.


## 5.3. The role of language in the public sphere

Language is a very interesting factor in examining the European public sphere. This chapter focuses on the language as determining circumstance in general in the first place, rather than in the broadcasting space. Following this aspect, in a certain sense language is a barrier for people to interact within the European space. In general the European institutions are putting significant effort into communicating with the citizens in their native language and not discriminating against anyone. The internet is such a space where people can interact with each other and therefore we can monitor how language influences these interactions. I have interviewed the representatives of the European Parliament's Web Communication Unit, Thibault Lesenecal, the Acting Head of the Unit and Karolina Wozniak, responsible for the EP's Facebook page, who depicted the language issue in the following way.

According to Ms. Wozniak, English is a good solution for overcoming the linguistic limits of European communication: "I think of course that the fact that we are using English is a bit limiting because it's not the only language and the beauty of Europe is that we have all the languages. But I think… we should not maybe officially say it, but people do speak English, so it's the easiest way for them to speak with each others." English is also crucial

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[368] Schneeberger, A., Fontaine, G. [2016] pp.24

for broadcasting channels as the English language ones have the widest reach in Europe, both in the private and the public sector according to the Mavise Report.[369] Ms. Wozniak also adds that language can have also a function in online communication, especially in Facebook targeting: "And sometimes there are moments in which we are targeting either by location or by language some information when we see it's not of any interest for, I don't know, to everyone, but we don't do it on regular basis."

Mr. Thibault Lesenecal on the other hand retains language as a key-strategy in European communication: "It is tough, but I mean it is essential. I think it is the right of the citizen to know what is going on in their languages. And I think we should have more resources for that, if you ask me. […] But it is still an obstacle." For this reason he claims that language and especially the use of all 24 official languages for the communication unit shall be a business strategy as language is an added value and therefore it is necessary to operate numerous pages and Facebook pages to make citizens interested and informed. "But that is a paradox, I mean, on the one hand, to be able to understand what is going on and to discuss it, but if you want them to discuss it among French and German, let's take French and Slovenian, the only common language that they could have is English, or maybe Italian, if we are a little bit lucky. […] So we have to publish in 24 languages the topics, but in each language we should have a national anchor. So we are trying to see what could work better for the EPIO[370]. Because you need to hook better with the national news." And in fact, communicating in the proper language can increase the visibility of the European issues. Nevertheless Mr. Lesenecal mentions a very interesting fact of not only communicating in a proper language but also to follow a national point of view. This thought resonates well with the need of journalists and broadcasters described in chapter 4.3.1.

The following two tables reflect on how language knowledge influences the feeling of being European. It is an interesting examination from the citizens' point of view to see how the knowledge of foreign languages influences the general opinion of the EU, as it enables them to perceive more information.

The first table shows us if there is a connection between respondents view on the usefulness of learning language and the image of the EU.

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[369] Ibid

[370] European Parliament Information Office – the local representation of the European Parliament in the member states
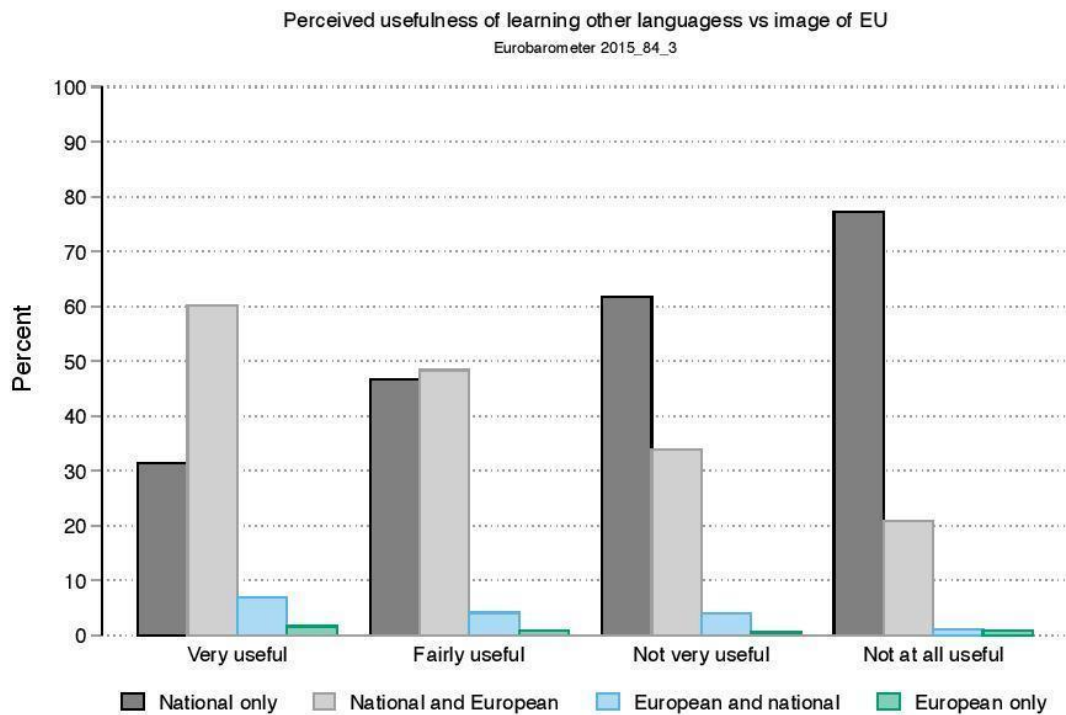
**Figure 5.3.1: Perceived usefulness of learning languages and the image of the EU**[371]

First of all, it is important to note that the national perspective is always more dominant than the European. We can see a correlation between finding the knowledge of languages useful and having a European image, as more useful languages are according to respondents, as the "European and national" judgement increases, just as the "only European" that however is always below the first one. Another interesting connection can be detected, as more respondents think that languages are useful, the more the image of the European Union is becoming European by increasing the portion of the category of "national and European" (it increases from 20% to 60%). On the other hand, the contrary is valid as well, the more people think that languages are not at all useful, the more the national perspective of the European image dominates (it increases from 30% to 78%).

In the second table I was looking for a correlation between the main advantages people learn languages for and their opinion of the EU's image.

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[371] Question in the Eurobarometer: Regarding the image of the EU: *Do you see yourself as… (European/National)?* and regarding the language: *Do you think knowing other languages than your mother tongue is, or could be, very useful, fairly useful, not very useful or not at all useful for you personally?*
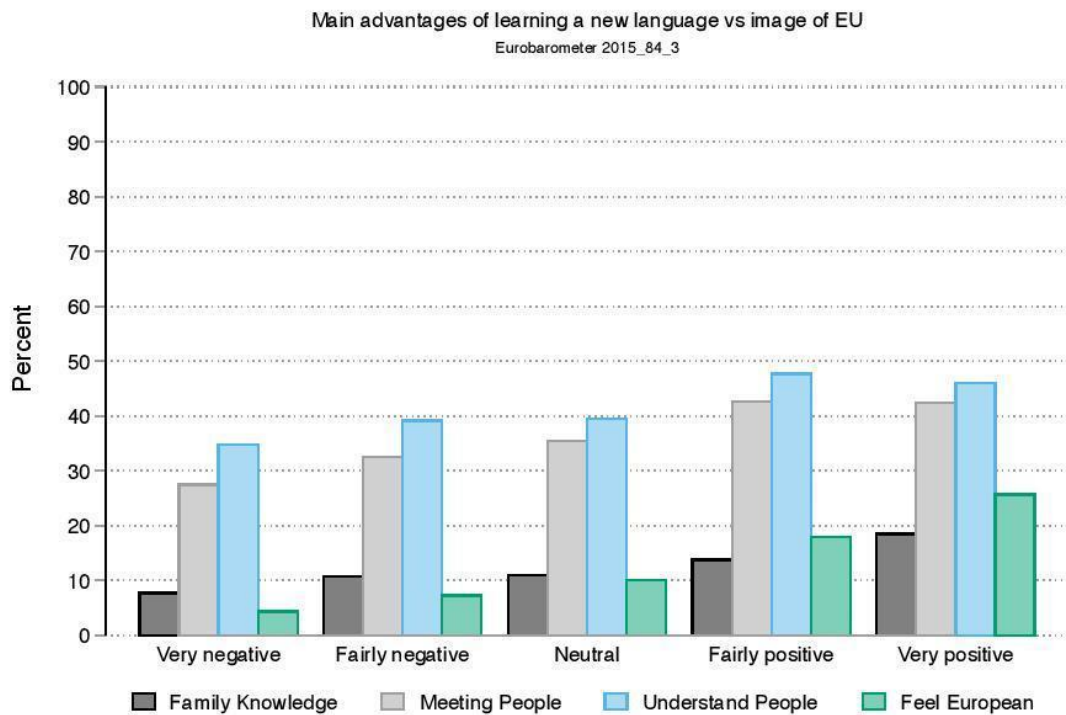
Figure 5.3.2: **Main advantages of learning a new language vs image of EU**

We can see that the highest importance is dedicated to understanding people and meeting people. The most important correlation is that more respondents learn languages as they feel European, the more positive they retain the image of the EU. This category increases from 4% to 25%. Also those who retain family knowledge the main advantage of learning a language retain the image of the EU more positive (increasing from 8% to 19%).
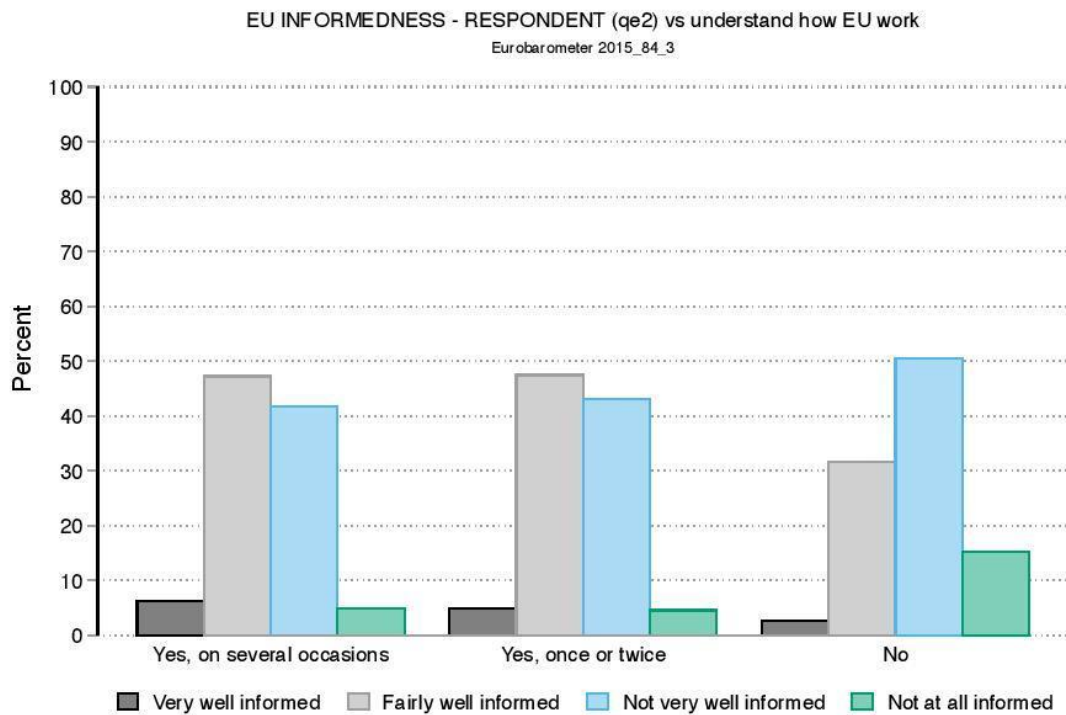
EU INFORMEDNESS - RESPONDENT (qe2) vs understand how EU work
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.3.3: Being informed affects the understanding of the EU**

The third figure reflects the correlation between the regularity of watching television news in foreign languages and the feeling of being informed. We can see, that more respondents watch television news in foreign languages, the more they feel informed on EU matters. In case of watching tv news in foreign languages on several occasions, respondents feel the most "very well informed" and "fairly well informed". Not watching television news in foreign languages causes a significant increase in "not being informed" and "not very well informed".

Concluding, I would like to add Mr. Thibault Lesenecal's thoughts on language within the European communicative space, who said that people of all nationality can come and discuss regardless to languages, therefore there is no actual linguistic barrier for European communication. Nevertheless the real limit of a European public sphere—in which he does not believe—is not language, but content, as content is limiting the widening of the audience. As stated before, news channels are niche channels that determine a niche audience primarily because of their content, rather than the language.

## 5.4. Public and Private ownership of television channels

Tackling ownership, are there any differences between publicly and privately owned channels? Does this influence the European public sphere? Does it have any impact on general opinion? How is the balance on the market?

You could see already in chapter 5.2 on the table 5.2.5 that there is a visible difference in the number of private channels (1521 in 2015) and public ones (123) on the first is more than 10 times as much. Also among the leading international news channels, defined according to the number of countries where they are distributed in the previous chapter, six are privately owned while others (such as the various Euronews language versions and the Chinese CCTV News) have a mixed public-private ownership status. [372] The table below shows 26 channels, out of which 8 are publicly financed.

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[372] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]

| Rank | Channel | Statute | Country of origin | Reach |
|------|---------|---------|-------------------|-------|
| 1 | CNN International | Private | United Kingdom (US channel) | 38 Countries |
| 2 | BBC World News | Public | United Kingdom | 37 countries |
| 3 | RT (Russia Today) | Public | United Kingdom (Russian channel) | 35 countries |
| 4 | Al Jazeera (English) | Private | United Kingdom (Qatar channel) | 33 countries |
| 5 | Euronews (English) | Mixed public-private | France | 33 countries |
| 6 | France 24 (English) | Public | France | 32 countries |
| 7 | Deutsche Welle | Public | Germany | 30 countries |
| 8 | France 24 | Public | France | 27 countries |
| 9 | Sky News International | Private | United Kingdom | 26 countries |
| 10 | Euronews (Russian) | Mixed public-private | France | 25 countries |
| 11 | CCTV News | Mixed public-private | | 21 countries |
| 12 | Euronews (German) | Mixed public-private | France | 21 countries |
| 13 | Euronews (Italian) | Mixed public-private | France | 20 countries |
| 14 | Euronews (French) | Mixed public-private | France | 19 countries |
| 15 | Euronews (Portuguese) | Mixed public-private | France | 17 countries |
| 16 | Euronews (Spanish) | Mixed public-private | France | 17 countries |
| 17 | Canal 24 Horas | Public | Spain | 16 countries |
| 18 | Euronews (Arabic) | Mixed public-private | France | 14 countries |
| 19 | Euronews (Turkish) | Mixed public-private | France | 12 countries |
| 20 | Al Jazeera (Arabic) | Private | Qatar | 12 countries |
| 21 | Euronews (Persian) | Mixed public-private | France | 8 countries |
| 22 | Al Arabiya | Private | Dubai | 8 countries |
| 23 | Al Jazeera Balkans | Private | Bosnia and Herzegovina (Qatar channel) | 6 countries |
| 24 | Euronews (Ukrainian) | Mixed public-private | France | 6 countries |
| 25 | France 24 Arabic | Public | France | 5 countries |
| 26 | RT en Espagnol | Public | Russia | 4 countries |

**Table 1    Statute and country of origin of Top International News Channels**

Source: MAVISE database, based on channels available in at least 3 countries 2013

**Table 5.4.1: Statue and country of origin of top international news channels**

The table 5.4.1., made from of the MAVISE database, lists the major news channels adding information also on their financial state. The most distributed news channel is the privately-owned US channel CNN international (Turner Broadcasting International), licensed in the UK. The second, which follows closely CNN, is BBC World News, which is actually not distributed in the UK. We can see that out of the previously mentioned 7 big news channels half is private and half is public, moreover the importance of the English language can also be seen in the table. [373]

In the next table we can see the news channels listed by each country and grouped in the two groups: public and private.

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[373] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]

| Table 2 | Statute of National News Channels | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Country** | **Public** | **Private** | **Total** |
| Turkey | 1 (TRT Haber) | 16 | 17 |
| Albania | -- | 7 | 7 |
| Romania | 1 TVR News | 6 | 7 |
| Italy | 1 (Rai News 24) | 5 | 6 |
| France | -- | 6 | 6 |
| Russian Federation | 2 (Russia 24, Russia Today) | 4 | 6 |
| Germany | 2 (tagesschau24, ZDF Infokanal) | 3 | 5 |
| United Kingdom | 1 (BBC News 24) | 3 | 4 |
| Spain | 3 (Canal 24 Horas, Canal 3/24, Canal Nou 24) | 1 | 4 |
| Poland | 1 (TVP Info) | 3 | 4 |
| Portugal | 1 (RTP INFORMAÇÃO) | 3 | 4 |
| Croatia | 1 (HRT4) | 3 | 4 |
| Republic of Serbia | -- | 3 | 3 |
| Bulgaria | -- | 3 | 3 |
| Denmark | 1 (TV 2 News) | 2 | 3 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | - - | 2 | 2 |
| Hungary | -- | 2 | 2 |
| Sweden | -- | 2 | 2 |
| Latvia | -- | 2 | 2 |
| The Netherlands | 2 (Journaal 24, Politiek 24) | -- | 2 |
| Latvia | - | 2 | 1 |
| Greece | (NET TV available in Athens) | 1 | 2 |
| Switzerland | 2 RTS INFO, SRF INFO | | 2 |
| Belgium | -- | 1 | 1 |
| Norway | | 1 | 1 |
| Lithuania | -- | 1 | 1 |
| Czech Republic | 1 (CT24) | -- | 1 |
| Ireland | 1 (RTE News Now) | -- | 1 |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | -- | 1 | 1 |
| Slovak Republic | -- | 1 | 1 |
| **Totals** | **Public: 21** | **Private : 84** | **Total: 105** |

Source: MAVISE database 2013

**Table 5.4.2: Statue of national news channels**

When looking at the statute of national news channels in Table 5.4.2.,[374] it can be clear that the privately owned channels dominate over the public ones. From a total of 105 national news channels a majority of 84 are privately owned whilst 21 are public. Only in a few cases can we say that public channels are more prevalent: On the one side there is Spain which has three public channels (Canal 24 Horas, Canal 3/24 and Canal Nou 24). On the other hand we find the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Ireland as they have exclusively public news channels (this was the case also in Greece before).

However private ownership plays a decisive role on the market in most of the European countries in the national television news industry. Private corporations are present and offer a competitive content for viewers in most of the member states. In the

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[374] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: [2013]

case of foreign channels this situation is more balanced (as it could be also seen in chapter 5.2).

As it is written in the report called Television News Channels in Europe: "It should be noted however that public channels represent about 14% of the entire universe of television channels in Europe (contained in MAVISE), whereas public channels represent over 30% of the national and international news channels in Europe. Hence the role of public service television is heightened with regard to news broadcasting."[375]

We have analyzed the distribution and balance of ownership on the broadcasting market as it has an indirect impact on the so-called European public sphere. Studies focusing on the public evaluation of public and private television channels, and search for the reasons and consequences of the high distribution and outreach of privately owned television channels have found for example that the context of availability of cable television and channel preference are key variables in analyzing the information. In a multivariate analysis Holz-Bacha and Norris (2001) found, after controlling for education, that preference for public television was associated with higher levels of political knowledge while preference for commercial television was associated with lower levels of knowledge. In addition, they found a significant—though much weaker—positive relationship between frequent news watching and political knowledge.[376] This is why, according to Peter and de Vreese, we expect public broadcasting television news programs to report more about politics than commercial television news programs and to include more relevant political actors in the news.[377]

Although this research has not found primer data on the various consequences of public television channels being more informative, we can assume that ownership is crucial in defining public knowledge on European affairs. The dynamics and means of gaining market share are different in the two cases as the sources of their financial stability are different. Private channels are more forced to meet market demands and offer content that the mainstream can follow, whereas public television being state-financed can fulfill rather the educative and informative mission as such.

According to an interview done with Adam Renyi, ex-communication director of the media group of TV2, another topic arises that deserves further academic attention: the correlation between ruling political parties and the market share of private channels. Albeit it is not within the scope of this research to get into the merit of depicting these

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[375] Ibid

[376] De Vreese, C.H.; Boomgaarden, H.: *News, Political Knowledge and Participation: The Differential Effects of News Media Exposure on Political Knowledge and Participation*. Acta Politica Vol. 41. Pp. 317-341 [2006]

[377] Ibid

correlations, one interesting element should be underlined: governments do have means to influence information-distribution on European topics. "Content providers were depending on politics in different ways. Referring to the era in which ground frequencies were needed for broadcasting, renewing the channel's permission of broadcasting was due to public administration's decision" says Mr. Renyi. Also, he explains that directing state money towards certain channels in the frame of social advertisements and public information can provide channels with significative income in order to stabilize their market share, especially that (at least in Hungary) companies tend to follow government's moves in this regard.

These interconnections between market demand, statal financial aids and political views alter the development of a European public sphere as they influence the information on European issues and could have an impact on interpreting the European affairs.

## 5.5. Diversity of the content

To continue the thought on how external factors might influence the content, let me view the aspect of the Europeanness of the interpretation of European information. How national the frame is in which European affairs are shared. How much visibility do European news gain. This way we can add another layer to the understanding of the European public sphere. According to de Vreese I can say that the key indicators for assessing the Europeanness of public spheres include the visibility of European topics (and issues with a European perspective) and some degree of mutual observation and quotation, typically in the form of inclusion of EU-actors and actors from other EU countries (see de Vreese 2002[378]; de Vreese et al. 2006[379]; Schuck and de Vreese 2011[380]). As we could see in chapter 2, the research, however, is divided about the extent of Europeanization of national public spheres measured by news media coverage of European matters. I need to distinguish however, two different ways in which common issues become European: in the first case we can talk about matters that need to be

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[378] de Vreese, C.H.: *Framing Europe*: *Television News and European Integration.* Aksant Academic Publishers, Amsterdam [2002]

[379] de Vreese, C.H., Banducci, S. A., Semetko, H. A. and Boomgaarden, H. G., "*The News Coverage of the 2004 European Parliamentary Election Campaign in 25 Countries*", European Union Politics, 7(4): 477–504 http://www.claesdevreese.com/research.html. [2006]

[380] Schuck, A. R. T. and De Vreese, C. H.: *Finding Europe: Mapping and explaining antecedents of 'Europeanness' in news about the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections*. Studies in Communication / Media, no 2, p. 265–294. [2011]

tackled by more member states and so as the issue grows geographically so does the it gains a European face. For example, immigration and refugees were more prominent issues in the media coverage, in particular as the phenomenon was growing. But as political observers have noted, these issues were inherently "Europe-related" as much of the debate on immigration was centered on the impact of the EU-based Schengen agreement. And therefore an issue that initially was more treated in the Balkans became a strictly European Union-related issue also in the news. The other option is when there is a European decision, for example a new law by the European Parliament that has an impact on nation states' inner politics, then the Europeanness of certain issues derives from the European institutions.

These two groups were explained in chapter 2.6, speaking about the vertical and horizontal Europeanization. Vertical Europeanization refers to national actors addressing European actors, national actors addressing European issues or European actors partaking in national debates on European issues. Horizontal Europeanization is referred to as national media covering issues in other EU member states and national actors addressing issues/actors in another EU member state. Issues such as monetary politics and immigration show signs of vertical Europeanization while horizontal Europeanization is virtually absent[381]. For every case we can agree with Statham, by "normalizing" and getting European politics into national politics, we are most likely to see a "legitimate Europeanized public politics" develop.[382]

Another aspect of measuring the Europeanness of news in broadcasting, as line of further research, is the analysis of the audience in this regard, albeit it is difficult to examine the audience as the share is quite low as news channels are niche channels. For example, an average daily audience share of 1.8% in 2012 (Eurodata TV Worldwide) such as that of the French news channel BFM TV (in the multichannel environment) is similar to the audience share of ARTE, and close to the shares of France 4 and the children's channel Gulli (for the same period). Similarly BBC News 24 in the UK had an audience share of 1% (2012, Eurodata TV Worldwide), which is close to the shares of entertainment channels ITV4 and E4 (for the same period).[383]

The most important research on audience analysis is made by the European

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[381] Koopmans, R.: *Integrated Report: Cross-National, Cross-Issue, Cross-Time (WP 2: Analysis of Political Claims in European Print Media).* The Transformation of Political Mobilisation and Communication in European Public Spheres, D 2.4, Europub.com, Berlin. [2004] URL http://europub.wzb.eu/projectreports.en.htm.
[382] Statham, P.: *Making Europe News: Journalism and Media Performance* in Koopmans, R., Statham, P. (Eds.): The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention. Communication, Society and Politics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York. P. 125-150 [2010]
[383] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A., [2013]

Commission. The Eurobarometer is the most representative research due to the high participation of respondents. In 2016 a special Eurobarometer was focusing its questions on media pluralism and democracy[384] of which we would like to introduce 3 questions and their answers concerning the variety of information in the media.

QC1.2    For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) media:
(NATIONALITY) media provide a diversity of views and opinions (% - EU)

It depends (SPONTANEOUS)
1

Don't know
2

Total 'No'
31

Total 'Yes'
66

Total base (N=27,768)
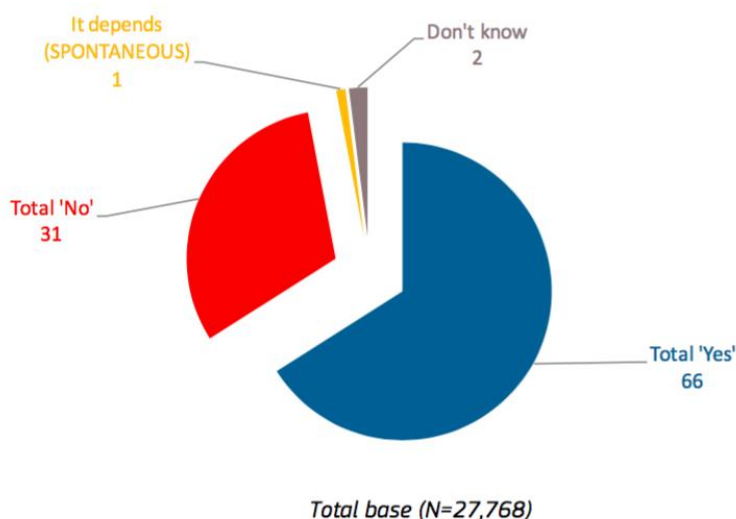
**Graph 5.5.1: Diversity of views and opinion in media**

This first diagram shows in what percentage respondents think that national media assures diversity in its content. Two-thirds of respondents agree that their national media provide a diversity of views and opinions. The majority of respondents (66%) agree their national media provide a diversity of views and opinions. Just under one third (31%) say it does not, while 2% of respondents say they do not know.

The next table shows more background information of the same respondents and might provide some correlations. We can see that age and occupation don't influence people's belief that there is a diversity in media. The other two aspects will be also tackled in this research (in 5.6 – Media Independence and 5.7 – Trust in media) as they are significantly related to the respondent's opinion on diversity: 87% of those who believe that the national media provides trustworthy information think that media provide

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[384] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016

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diversity in the opinions represented. Also 88% of those who think national public media is independent, believe in diversity. These statistics are very interesting in the light of the previous findings about politics and media.

QC1.2    For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) media:
(NATIONALITY) media provide a diversity of views and opinions (% - EU)

| | Total 'Yes' | Total 'No' |
|---|---|---|
| EU28 | 66 | 31 |
| **Age** | | |
| 15-24 | 67 | 30 |
| 25-39 | 63 | 34 |
| 40-54 | 65 | 33 |
| 55 + | 69 | 27 |
| **Socio-professional category** | | |
| Self-employed | 63 | 35 |
| Managers | 67 | 31 |
| Other white collars | 66 | 33 |
| Manual workers | 64 | 33 |
| House persons | 63 | 33 |
| Unemployed | 62 | 35 |
| Retired | 70 | 25 |
| Students | 69 | 29 |
| **National media provide trustworthy information** | | |
| Yes | 87 | 12 |
| No | 44 | 54 |
| **National public media free from political pressure** | | |
| Yes | 88 | 11 |
| No | 55 | 44 |

Total base (N=27,768)

**Table 5.5.2: Diversity of views and opinion in media – distribution by social categories**

The third table[385] makes a periodical comparison asking the respondents about media diversity in 5 years. We can see that almost three out of four respondents stated that national media are providing the same of more diversity of views and opinions, compared to five years ago. 44% say the level of diversity is the same,[386] 29% thinks that the national media provides more diversity than five years ago and 18% says they are providing less. This distribution is quite homogeneous in the various age groups, education level groups and professionality categories.

QC3 Do you think that, in general, compared with five years ago, (NATIONALITY) media (printed, audio-visual, online etc.) are now providing:
(% - EU)

| | More diversity of views and opinions | The same diversity of views and opinions | Less diversity of views and opinions | It depends (SPONTANEOUS) | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU28 | 29 | 44 | 18 | 4 | 5 |
| **Age** | | | | | |
| 15-24 | 34 | 40 | 16 | 3 | 7 |
| 25-39 | 29 | 44 | 19 | 4 | 4 |
| 40-54 | 28 | 45 | 20 | 3 | 4 |
| 55 + | 27 | 45 | 18 | 4 | 6 |
| **Education (End of)** | | | | | |
| 15- | 25 | 45 | 17 | 5 | 8 |
| 16-19 | 29 | 44 | 18 | 4 | 5 |
| 20+ | 29 | 44 | 21 | 3 | 3 |
| Still studying | 36 | 40 | 15 | 2 | 7 |
| **Socio-professional category** | | | | | |
| Self-employed | 28 | 46 | 19 | 3 | 4 |
| Managers | 28 | 43 | 23 | 3 | 3 |
| Other white collars | 30 | 45 | 19 | 3 | 3 |
| Manual workers | 27 | 46 | 19 | 3 | 5 |
| House persons | 30 | 43 | 17 | 4 | 6 |
| Unemployed | 30 | 42 | 19 | 3 | 6 |
| Retired | 28 | 44 | 17 | 4 | 7 |
| Students | 36 | 40 | 15 | 2 | 7 |
| **National media provide trustworthy information** | | | | | |
| Yes | 33 | 49 | 11 | 3 | 4 |
| No | 24 | 39 | 28 | 4 | 5 |
| **National public media free from political pressure** | | | | | |
| Yes | 32 | 51 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| No | 27 | 41 | 24 | 4 | 4 |

Total base (N=27,768)

**Table 5.5.3: Diversity of views and opinion in media - comparison with 5 years ago**

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[385] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016
[386] QC3 Do you think that, in general, compared with five years ago, NATIONALITY) media (printed, audiovisual, online etc.) are now providing: More diversity of views and opinions; the same diversity of views and opinions; less diversity of views and opinions; it depends (SPONTANEOUS)

## 5.6. General opinion about the independence of news

News independence and what people think of the source of information they use to know more about European affairs is crucial in forming the European public space. Since consumers of the information are active parts in the dialogue called communication, they decide on where they take the information from and how they interpret it.

Based on the special Eurobarometer made in 2016[387], we have taken 3 aspects. Firstly the independence of media in general, secondly of public service media and finally the independence compared to five years ago.

### 5.6.1. Independence of the general media

The following map from Eurobarometer 452 shows the general belief of media independence by European member state. The researchers gathered information from around 28 000 people and have found that only the minority of this representative amount of people believes that their national media provide independent information, free from political or commercial pressure. 38% of the respondents think the media provide free information, but the majority, more than the half of the respondents (57%) don't agree.[388]

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[387] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016
[388] Ibid
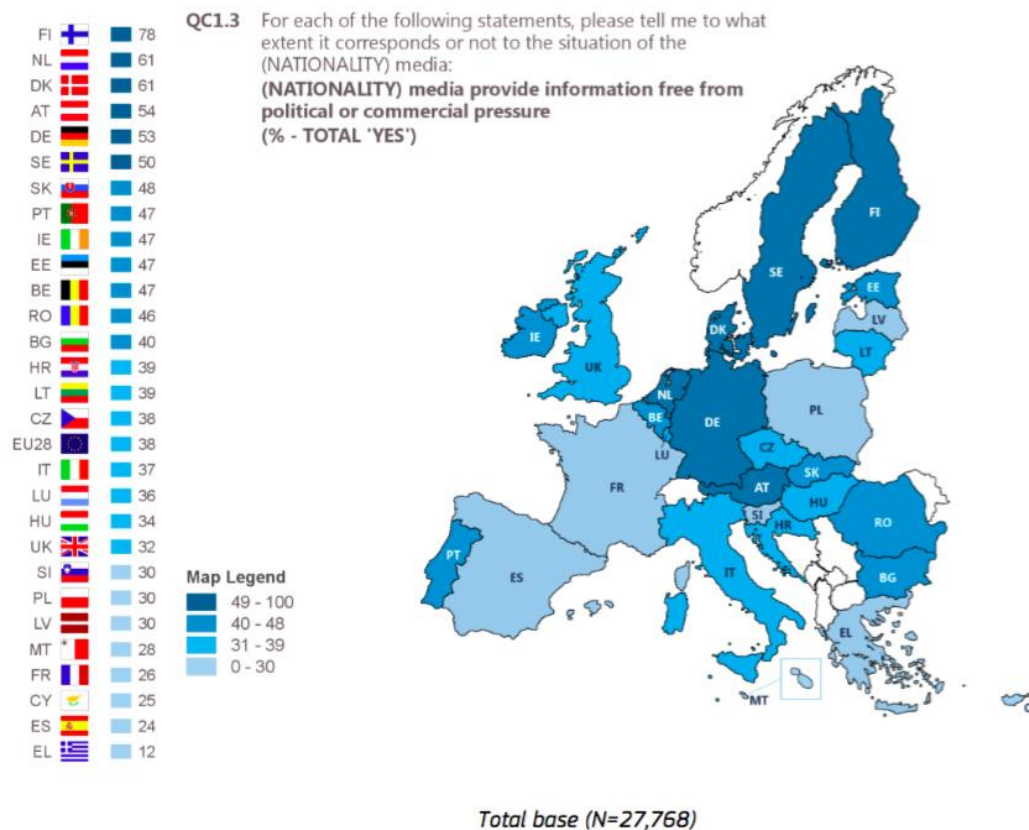
**Figure 5.6.1: Media independence from political or commercial pressure**

Viewing the answers from a member states perspective we can say that in 9 member states the majority thinks that the media provide information free from political or commercial pressure: Finland (78%), the Netherlands, Denmark (both 61%), Austria (54%), Germany (53%), Sweden (50%), Portugal (47% vs. 45%), Estonia (47% vs. 45%) and Ireland (47% vs. 46%). At the other end of the scale, respondents in Greece (12%), Spain (24%) and Cyprus (25%) are the least likely to agree.

Viewing "no" as a reply to the same question we filter the not respondents. From the red map below we can see that the majority of the countries (19 member states) say that their national media do not provide information free from political or commercial pressure. This view is most widely held amongst respondents in Greece (87%), Spain (71%) and France (69%).

At the other end of the scale, respondents in Finland (21%), Denmark (33%) and the Netherlands (35%) are the least likely to hold this view.[389]
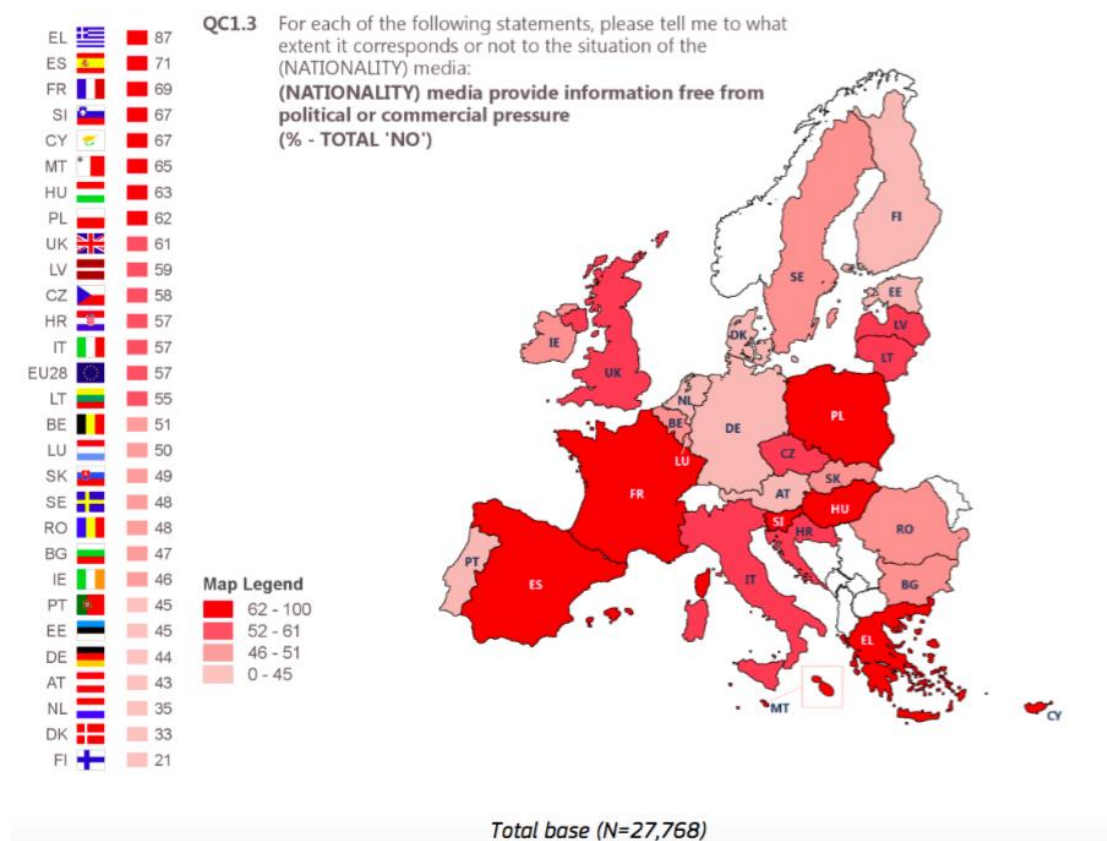


**Figure 5.6.2: Media independence from political or commercial pressure 2.**

[389] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016

## 5.6.2. Independence of the Public Service Media

Measuring the same aspect only among public service media we can find the following diagram as a result.



QC1.4   For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) media:
(NATIONALITY) public service media are free from political pressure (% - EU)

It depends (SPONTANEOUS) 1

Don't know 4

Total 'Yes' 35

Total 'No' 60

Total base (N=27,768)
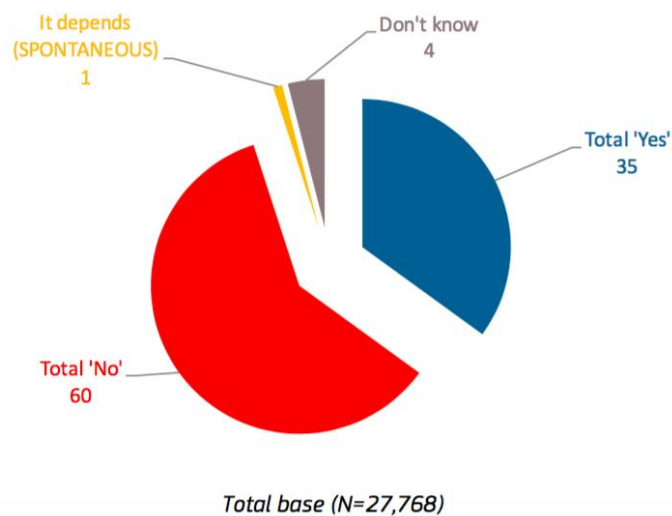
**Figure 5.6.3: Public service media independence from political pressure**

Also in this case, only the minority thinks that the public service media of the country is independent, only 35% said yes. Whereas 60%, more than the half of the respondents disagree.

## 5.6.3. Independence today compared with five years ago

Just as in the chapter on diversity comparing replies with those of five years ago, we can find that 63% say that their national media are at least as free and independent as they were five years ago: 18% say media are more free and independent, and 45% say they are equally free and independent. Only 28% think media are less free and independent.

**QC2** Do you think that, in general, compared with five years ago, (NATIONALITY) media (printed, audio-visual, online etc.) are now:
(%)

| | | More free and independent | Equally free and independent | Less free and independent | It depends (SPONTANEOUS) | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EU28 | | 18 | 45 | 28 | 3 | 6 |
| BE | | 19 | 49 | 27 | 4 | 1 |
| BG | | 18 | 41 | 23 | 5 | 13 |
| CZ | | 15 | 52 | 26 | 2 | 5 |
| DK | | 21 | 51 | 20 | 2 | 6 |
| DE | | 9 | 47 | 27 | 9 | 8 |
| EE | | 25 | 42 | 18 | 6 | 9 |
| IE | | 35 | 41 | 16 | 1 | 7 |
| EL | | 12 | 44 | 37 | 4 | 3 |
| ES | | 21 | 49 | 25 | 1 | 4 |
| FR | | 15 | 40 | 38 | 1 | 6 |
| HR | | 17 | 56 | 21 | 2 | 4 |
| IT | | 22 | 40 | 27 | 5 | 6 |
| CY | | 32 | 38 | 20 | 2 | 8 |
| LV | | 25 | 41 | 25 | 2 | 7 |
| LT | | 27 | 45 | 19 | 4 | 5 |
| LU | | 24 | 52 | 14 | 1 | 9 |
| HU | | 12 | 45 | 37 | 2 | 4 |
| MT | | 48 | 30 | 17 | 2 | 3 |
| NL | | 20 | 51 | 28 | 0 | 1 |
| AT | | 14 | 48 | 28 | 7 | 3 |
| PL | | 15 | 39 | 34 | 3 | 9 |
| PT | | 39 | 44 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| RO | | 27 | 50 | 17 | 1 | 5 |
| SI | | 25 | 39 | 30 | 3 | 3 |
| SK | | 20 | 53 | 19 | 3 | 5 |
| FI | | 22 | 59 | 17 | 0 | 2 |
| SE | | 18 | 51 | 29 | 0 | 2 |
| UK | | 20 | 45 | 27 | 2 | 6 |

| **Highest percentage per country** | | *Lowest percentage per country* |
|---|---|---|
| Highest percentage per item | | Lowest percentage per item |

Total base (N=27,768)

**Table 5.6.4: Media independence from political or commercial pressure - comparison with 5 years ago**

Viewing the previous percentages from a nation state point of view, we can say that in 27 member states, which is a high number, respondents think that their national media are equally free and independent as they were five years ago even if there are only nine member states where at least half think this way. Those in Finland (59%), Croatia (56%) and Slovakia (53%) are the most likely to think the level of media independence is the same as five years ago, while those in Malta (30%), Cyprus (38%), Slovenia and Poland (both 39%) are the least likely to do so.

The only country, in which respondents are most likely to think their national media today are more free and independent than they were five years ago is Malta (48%). Although this number is high also in Portugal 39% and Ireland 35%. Respondents in Germany (9%), Greece and Hungary (both 12%) are the least likely to give this answer.
The countries where people are most likely to think that their national media is less free and independent as it was five years ago are France (38%), Greece and Hungary (both 37%). while those in Portugal (6%), Luxembourg (14%) and Ireland (16%) are the least likely to say so.[390]

## 5.7. Measuring trust in the media

After examining how various factors might influence the European public sphere, such as public and private ownership, diversity, language and news independence, let us view trust in the media as a main topic. Without entering the debate on trust, in the context of measuring trust in the media I will refer to trust in the source of information, trust in television and trust in its overseeing body. These are the three main focus points, where the results gathered in the special Eurobarometer, cited also previously[391], are colored by own graphs made from raw data pursued by the European Commission for further Eurobarometer reports.

### 5.7.1. Trustworthy source of information

Following the previous logic on mapping the member states' respondents according to their view on news independence, researches asked the question on trustworthiness as well. Results are shown on the map below.
Despite 19 member states' citizens agree that their national media provide trustworthy information, result vary on a wide scale. The highest numbers are in Finland,

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[390] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016
[391] Ibid

where 88% of respondents thinks this way, and also in Sweden and Denmark 77%, more than three quarter agree. The lowest numbers are measured in Greece (26%), France (34%) and Spain (38%), where the majority of respondents believe that the national media don't provide trustworthy information.
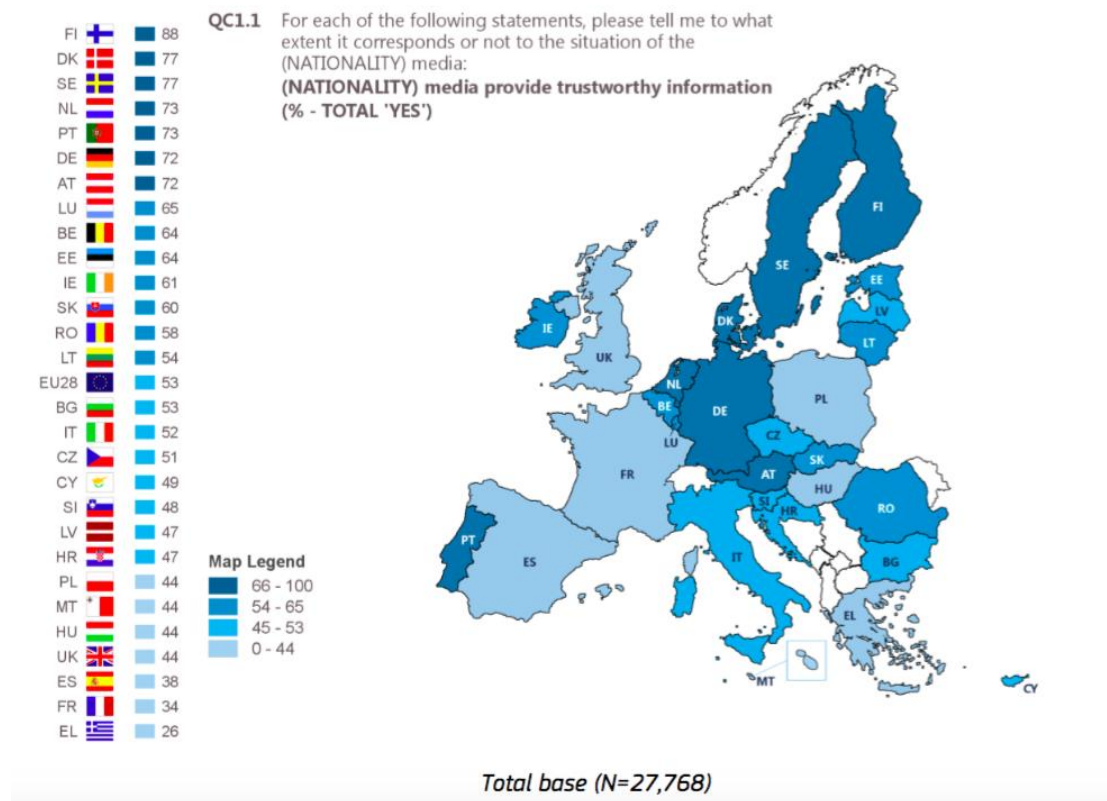


**Figure 5.7.1: Trustworthiness of media**

Trustworthiness is a crucial aspect as it gives an insight in people following media. The next topic shall be the identification of the main sources of information.

### 5.7.2. Trust in the overseeing body

As a side-question we need to take in consideration the general trust in the respective overseeing body in the nation states' mediatic horizont as it might have an impact and connection to people's trust in the trustworthiness of information sources. Therefore, we refer to the map that contains the research results first on the general

knowledge of the overseeing body taken from the special Eurobarometer 2016 cited also previously.

The map shows that in all member states less than half of the respondents are able to name correctly the overseeing body in their country. We can see also that people in the Eastern-European states know more this body, and can more likely nominate the overseeing audiovisual body in their country. 45% in Poland, 41% in Bulgaria and 41% in Greece were able to give the right answer, but on the other end of the scale there are 2% in Spain, 5% in Sweden and 6% in Luxembourg.
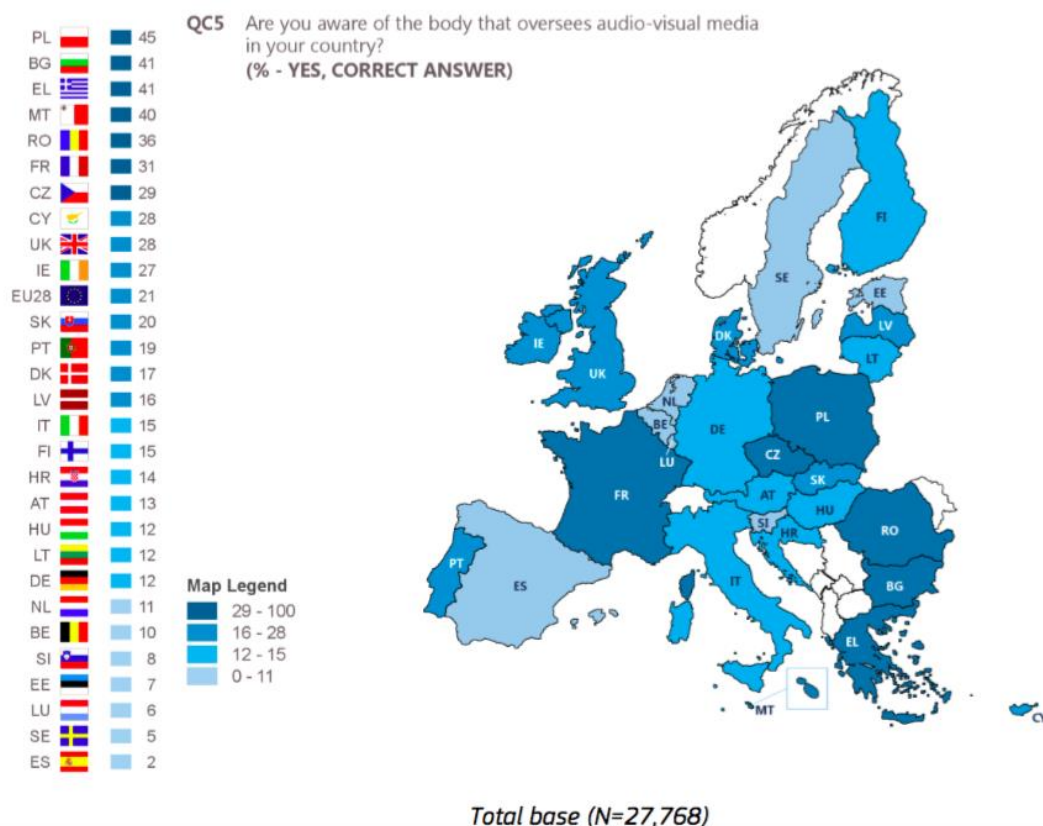


**Figure 5.7.2: General knowledge of the overseeing body**

The next diagram shows results on what general opinion is on the independence of the overseeing body. Respondents were asked about their view whether the overseeing body (like AgCom in Italy or ofCom in the UK) is free and independent from political,

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governmental and commercial pressure.[392] From the diagram we can see clearly that only a minority of respondents agree the national media regulator body is free and independent. 37% of them think the body is independent, 46%, nearly the half of the respondents denies that the body is independent, while 17% don't have a clear opinion in this regard. [393]

QC6    Do you think that [NAME OF AUDIO-VISUAL NATIONAL MEDIA REGULATOR] is free and independent from political, governmental or commercial pressures?
(% - EU)
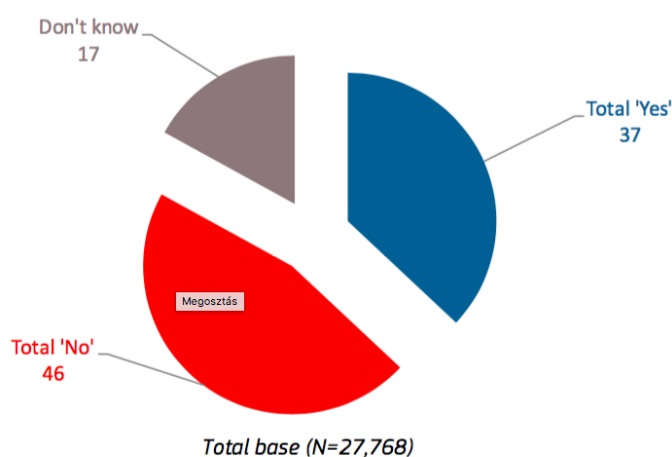


**Figure 5.7.3: Measuring general opinion on media independency**

## 5.7.3. The most reliable information source

There is an interesting tendency of consumer habits. Previously television was named very often as most important source of information. Eurobarometer 46-50 writes: "More than 60 per cent of the citizens across the EU member states name television news and 40 per cent name daily newspapers as the most important sources for acquiring information about European affairs". [394] Also de Vreese in his research "Communicating

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[392] The question of the Eurobarometer survey was the following: *Are you aware of the body that oversees audio-visual media in your country?*
[393] As in Germany each region has a separate body overseeing audiovisual media, in this country respondents were asked about this body in their region.
In Belgium there is a different body that oversees audiovisual media in each linguistic community. Respondents were asked about the body operating in their linguistic community.
[394] European Commission, Eurobarometer 46-50 (Brussels: Directorate-General X 1996-99).

Europe: writes: "But this concentration on the print media is very odd given that television is repeatedly identified as the most important source of information to a majority of citizens and national television news reaches far larger audiences than any printed newspaper. While press coverage is undeniably easier to track, all available data show that it is the broadcast media that really matters."[395]

Changes prevailed as today radio is dominating the information space as it is considered the most reliable form of national media. Results of the 2016 special Eurobarometer can be seen below.
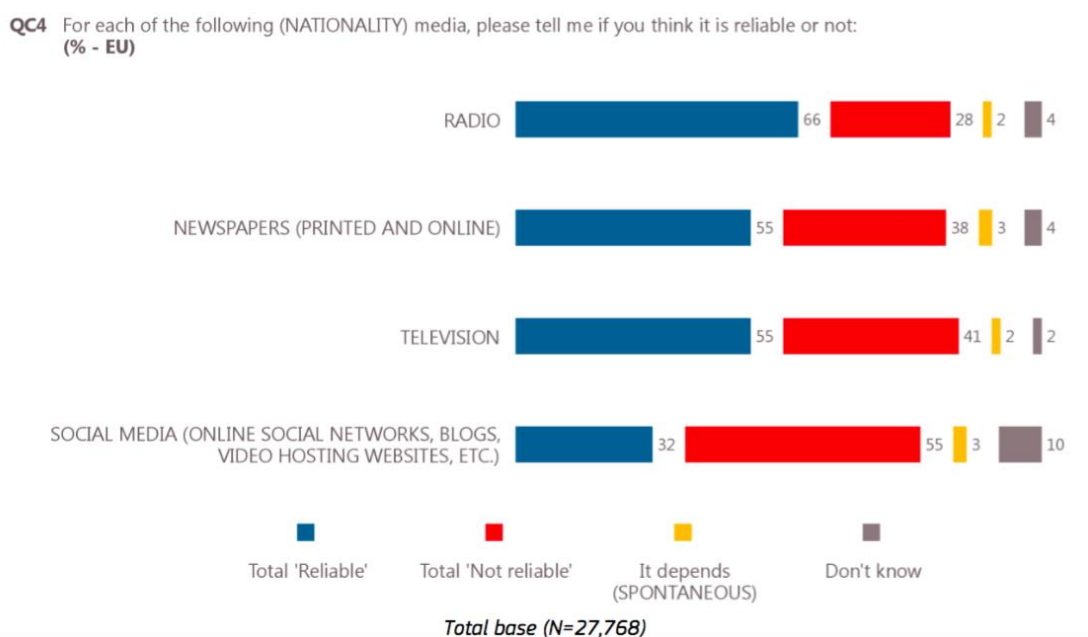


**Figure 5.7.4: Reliability of the media**

On a European level, respondents were asked about the reliability of various forms of national media. Radio is most likely to be considered reliable (66%), followed by television and newspapers (both 55%). Far fewer respondents consider social media to be reliable (32%).

Viewing the same result by each member state, we can see that radio is considered the most reliable media in 25 countries, and television in two countries. In Croatia, both radio and television are equally considered the most reliable media. According to the 2013 European Audiovisual Observatory (2011, EurodataTV Worldwide) it is important to

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[395] De Vreese, C. H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003]

remember that alongside the viewing of news channels and the accessing of news online, a very significant part of the public and indeed the majority of the TV viewers still seek their news on the main news bulletin of the day. [396]

## 5.7.4. Television and trust

According to the previous findings regarding reliability of information sources it is worth not note what de Vreese and Boomgarden have found in their study, where they were collecting previous findings on newspapers' and television's opinion-forming capacity and their influence on general knowledge: *"Some research focuses on the differential effects of newspapers and television. Robinson and Davis (1990) found that newspaper readers are more informed than those who rely on television, while, for example, Graber (1990) demonstrated television news' superiority in terms of audience learning. Carpini and Keeter (1996, 145–146, 183) found positive effects of newspaper reading on political knowledge and no systematic effects of television news watching. Neuman et al. (1992) provide a thorough analysis of the differential effects of television and newspapers as sources of knowledge. They show that whether people learn more from either one of the two sources is contingent upon issue salience and complexity as well as people's' cognitive skills and level of interest in the issue."*[397] Television is undeniably an important factor especially that in 22 member states the majority of the respondents think national television is reliable, can be seen in the figure below. Those in Finland (90%), Denmark (89%) and Sweden (82%) are the most likely to agree with television being reliable. On the other end of the scale we find Greece (16%), Spain (31%) and France (41%). These three countries are also the one where most people think that television is unreliable among the 6 where the majority is on this view: Greece (83%), Spain (65%), France (57%), Poland (49%), Hungary (49%), Croatia (49%). The European average is at 41% believing that television is not reliable, and 55% believing that it is.

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[396] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A.: Television News Channels in Europe, European Audiovisual Observatory [2013]

[397] De Vreese, C. H.; Boomgaarden, H.: *News, Political Knowledge and Participation: The Differential Effects of News Media Exposure on Political Knowledge and Participation*. Acta Politica, vol 41, p. 317-341 [2006]
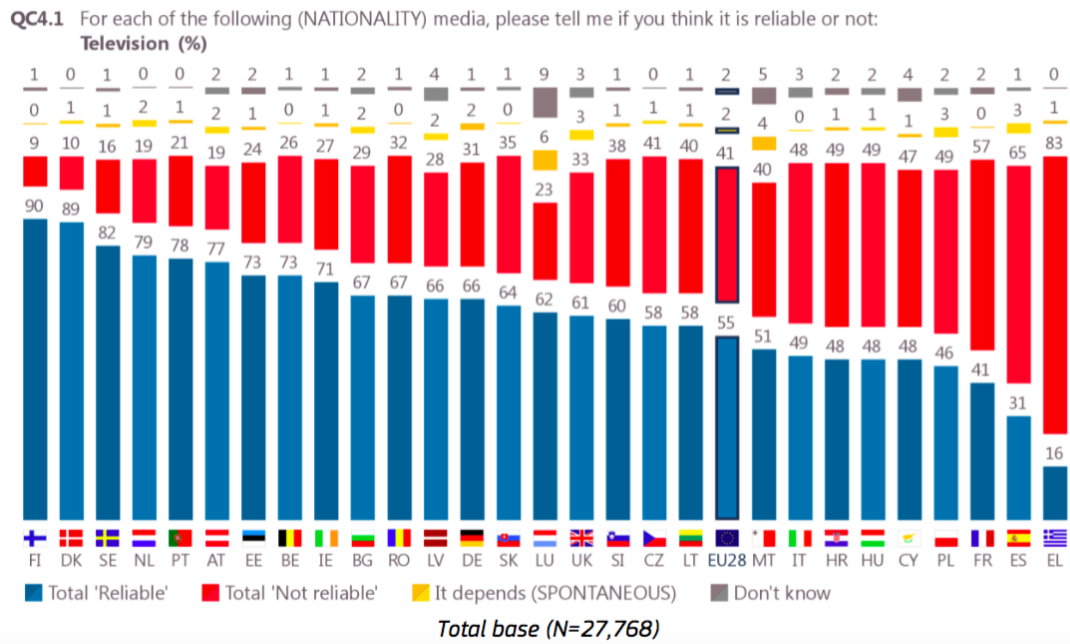
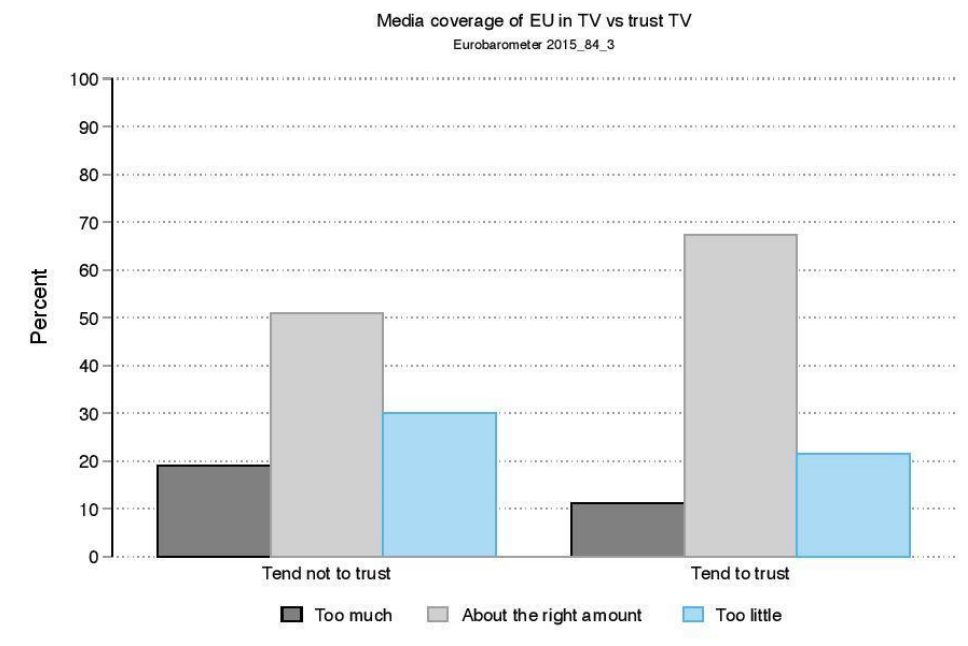**Figure 5.7.5: Reliability of the media EU28**



**Figure 5.7.6: Influence of the trust in TV on the evaluation of media coverage of EU in TV**

The diagram above reviews trust from a mediatic prospective. The hypothesis on which the variables were chosen: the more trust there is in television, the more viewers are satisfied with the amount of information on the EU. The correlation is defined as out of those who tend to trust TV as the main source the majority is satisfied with the amount of information. Moreover, the gap between being satisfied and unsatisfied is much wider than among those respondents who tend not to trust tv.

Along this logic, I have examined how trust in television influences the trust in the EU. And I could see that independently from the information source, from the mean of mediatic communication, if people trust the news source, they tend to trust the EU.
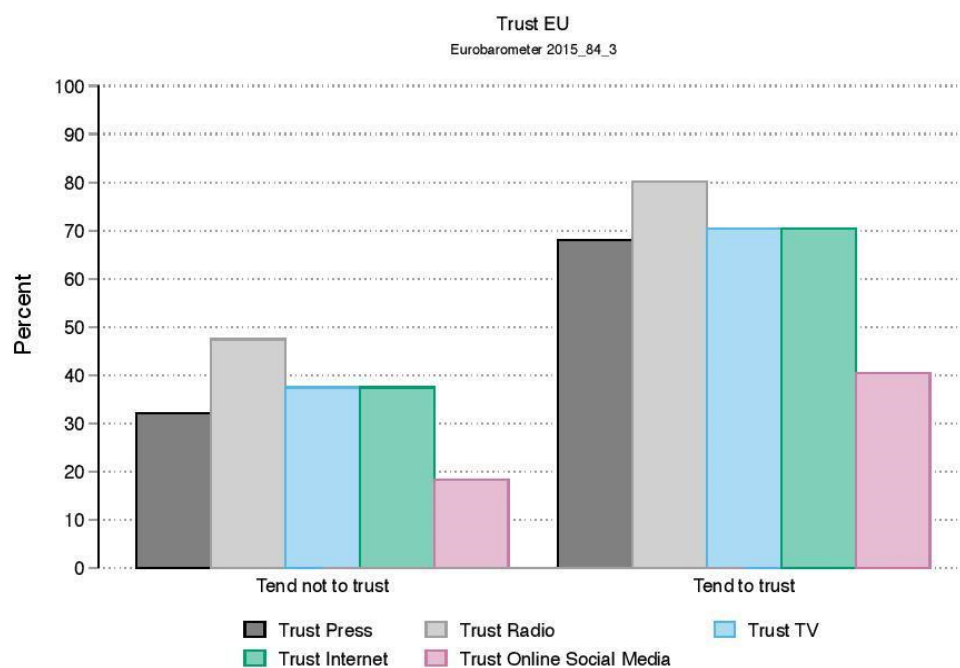


**Figure 5.7.7: Trusting media correlated with trusting the EU**

Regarding the same trust in television with respect to trust in certain European institutions we shall examine the next two figures. In these cases the hypothesis that was asked in order to compare data was: the more television is trusted as main source of information on EU issues, the more people tend to trust the European Parliament / the European Commission.

First and second news source re EU political matters vs EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - TRUST (qa13_1)
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
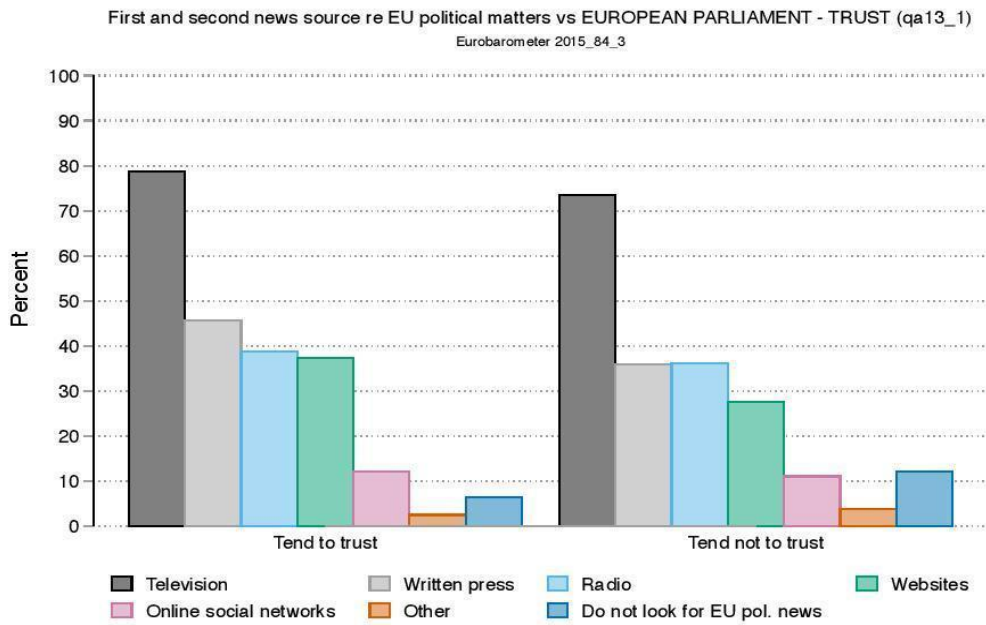
**Figure 5.7.8 Trust in the European Parliament depending on news sources**[398]



First and second news source re EU political matters vs EUROPEAN COMMISSION - TRUST (qa13_2)
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
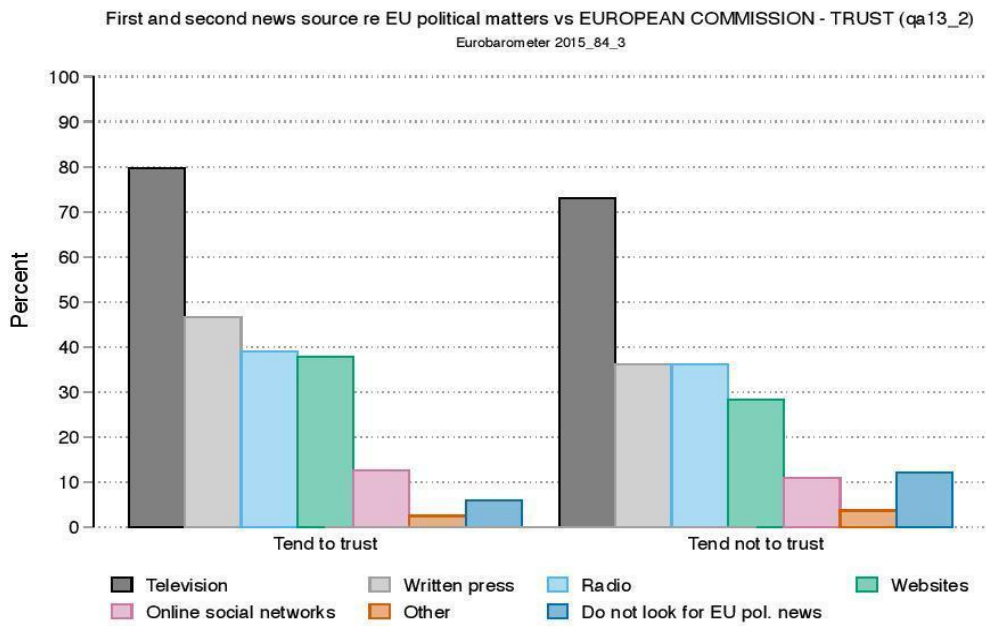
[398] Question of the Eurobarometer for both institution: *And please tell me if you tend to trust or tend not to trust these European institutions. (EP) Where do you get most of your news on European political matters? Firstly? And then?*

**Figure 5.7.9 Trust in the European Commission depending on the news sources**

In both cases an interesting finding is television being the most used information source regarding European political matters, and secondly that there is no significant difference between trusting and not trusting the named institutions from the aspect of used mediatic platforms. Moreover, the tables assure us more information on the chosen information sources than on trust as preferences in media-use are invariable regarding trust. In each cases television is the most dominant, followed by written press and radio, then websites and social media.

### *5.7.5. Television and general opinion on the EU*

The next three figures are related to television as first source to gain information on the EU and how this impacts the general opinion on the EU itself.

In the first figure I was comparing the two indicators of using TV as first information source and understanding how the EU works. First it is important to note that all those who use an information source on EU affairs feel fairly well informed on EU issues, only those who don't look for information on European politics don't understand EU politics. Those who feel very well informed and fairly well-informed use mostly the web and the written press as main information source. 9% of those who use television as first information source feel to understand how the EU works, 45% feel to understand fairly how the EU works, 32% don't understand very well and 12% feels not to be informed at all.

EU STATEMENTS: UNDERSTAND HOW EU WORKS vs first media source
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
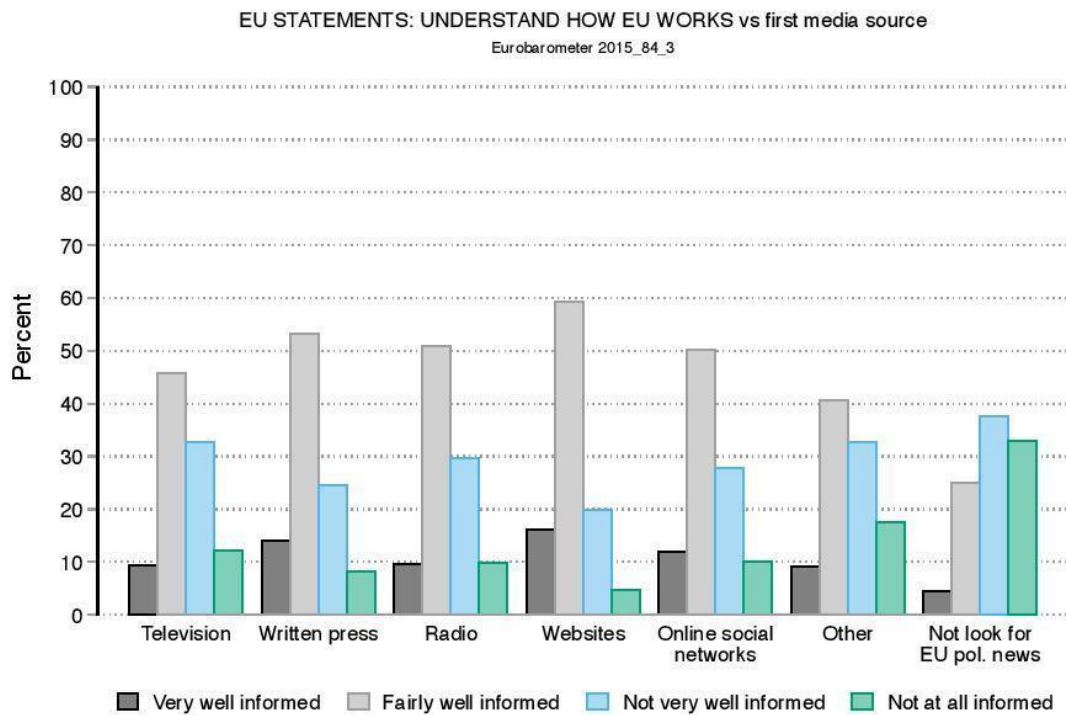


**Figure 5.7.10: Using TV as first source affecting the understanding the EU**

The second figure concerning TV as main information source was based on the hypothesis that more television is used to gather information on the EU, the more likely respondents think that things are going in a good direction. I assumed a certain relation between being informed, understanding how the EU works and being hopeful with the political developments. This hypothesis, just as the previous one, are important in regard the European public sphere in the broadcasting space as they give an insight how decisive television is in shaping the EPS.

**Right direction EU vs EU information source = TV**
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
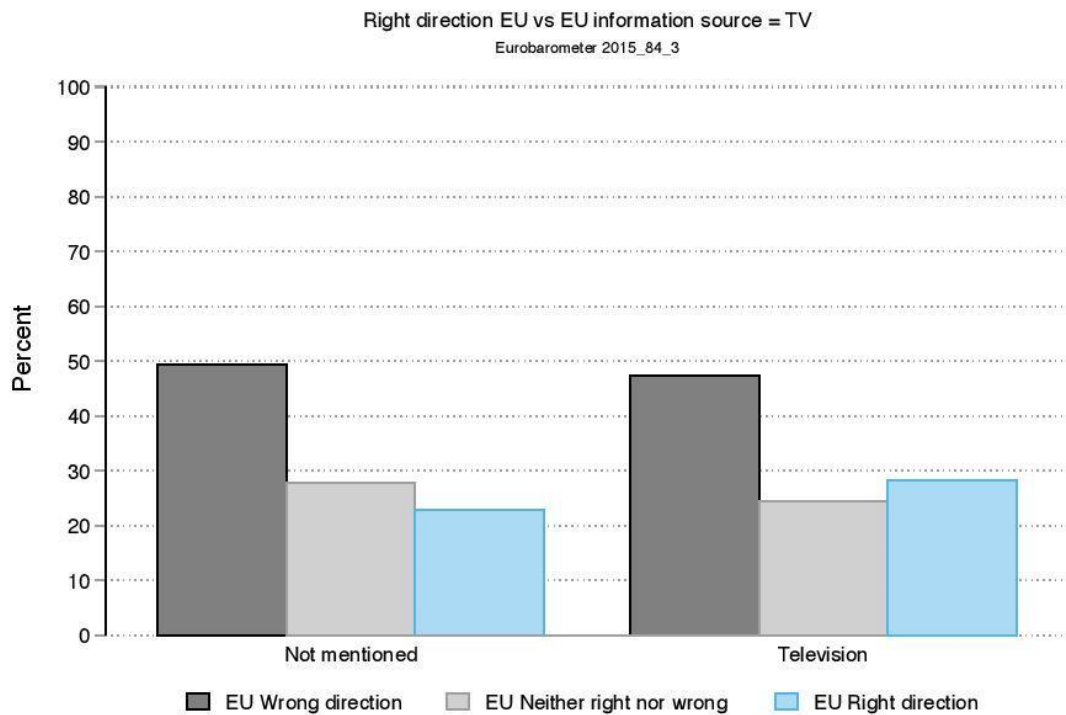
**Figure 5.7.11: Using TV as first source on EU affects the general thinking that EU goes in a good direction**

This time I was examining only those respondents who use television as main information source on EU-affairs. An interesting fact is the independently from where people take their information from, they tend to believe that the EU goes rather in a wrong direction. Nevertheless, a slightly more respondents (29%) who watch television believe that the EU is going into the right direction, respectively to those who gain information from other sources, where only 22% believes so. Therefore, I can say that television as main source of information doesn't have an impact on the general belief of the EU going to the right direction.

**What is your image of the EU vs EU information source = TV**
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
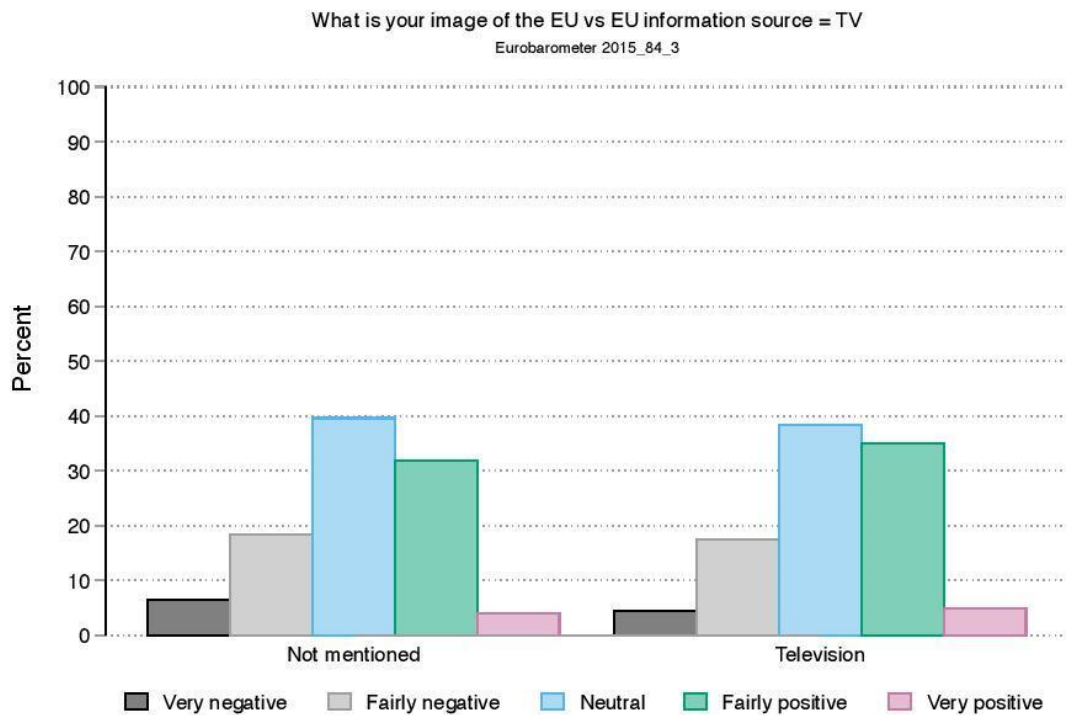
**Figure 5.7.12: Using TV as first source on EU affects the thinking that EU has a positive image**

This last figure focuses on the image of the European Union among those respondents, who use television as main information source. Just as at the figure before, we can't describe a correlation between broadcasting news on the EU and a general evaluation of its image as there is no significant difference in the results of those who use other information channels. In both cases the majority of respondents retain that the EU has a neutral image, and more people think positively than negatively: 31% of those who gain information from other platforms retain that the EU has a fairly positive image, and 37% of those who watch television believe the same.

From these figures which defining role of television in the process of the establishment of the European public sphere, can be questioned as I couldn't find any significant connection between using television as main information source of the European issues and the general opinion on the EU and EU-affairs.

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## 5.8. Informedness influencing the general opinion on the EU

After examining diversity, independence and trust we need to take in consideration informedness: watching habits of news channels, feeling informed and the role of Internet.
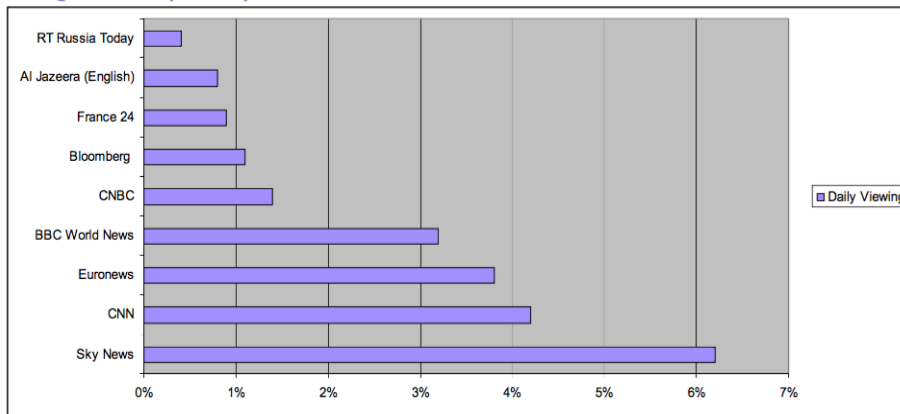
### 5.8.1. Watching news channels

As already mentioned before, such researches face difficulties due to limitations in audience data available for news channels. This is partially because news channels being niche categories there is a limited market share in viewing them. However, some methodology and means were developed in order to gather data, such as the famous EMS, European Media and Marketing Survey.[399] For every case EMS can't be compared to the data of Eurodata TV Worldwide as it follows completely different methodological approach as it examines only 13% of the adult media consumers and measures only 21 countries, thus it provides an overview of viewers habits on watching international news channels.

The figures below focus on the regularity of watching international news channels and puts in order the biggest channels in this prospective. The figures measure respondents watching international news channels on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. In overall we can see that less than 10% watch international news channels on a daily basis, between 10% and 37% are those who watch weekly or monthly. The most viewed channels are CNN, Sky News and Euronews of which the order of diffusion varies depending on viewer habits.

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[399] Homepage of the European Media and Marketing Survey / IPSOS : http://ems.ipsos-nederland.nl

Figure 1    % (EMS21) WHO WATCH AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANNEL DAILY

RT Russia Today

Al Jazeera (English)

France 24

Bloomberg

CNBC

BBC World News

Euronews

CNN

Sky News

□ Daily Viewing

0%    1%    2%    3%    4%    5%    6%    7%
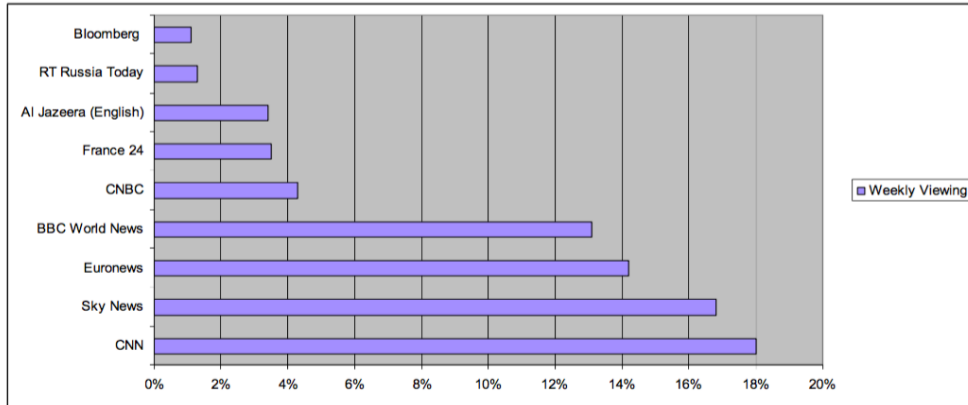
Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.1: Watching international news channels daily**

Sky News, CNN and Euronews are the most viewed channels on a daily basis, that gather between 4-6% of the respondents. To make a comparison with other not news channels with a daily viewing, the most popular pan-European channels are MTV (8,3%), Eurosport (7,9%) and Discovery Channels (6,6%).[400]

Results for weekly viewing CNN moves above Sky News. In overall weekly numbers are significantly higher than the daily ones: CNN is 18%, Sky News 17%, Euronews 14%. To make the same comparison: MTV and Eurosport 27%, Discovery Channel 22%.

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[400] Kevin, D., Pellicano, F., Schneeberger A., [2013]

Figure 2    % (EMS21) WHO WATCH AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANNEL WEEKLY

Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.2: Watching international news channels weekly**

And the third figure on monthly viewing statistics, that show respondents preferences in watching at least once a month an international news channel, show CNN dominating this segment (36%), with BBC World News following as second together with Sky News (around 25%) and Euronews being the fourth most watched news channel by monthly viewing with its 24%. Following the previous reasoning, the most monthly viewed, non news, pan-European channels are always MTV (42,5%) and Eurosport (42%) and Discovery Channels (36%).



Figure 3    % (EMS21) WHO WATCH AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS CHANNEL MONTHLY
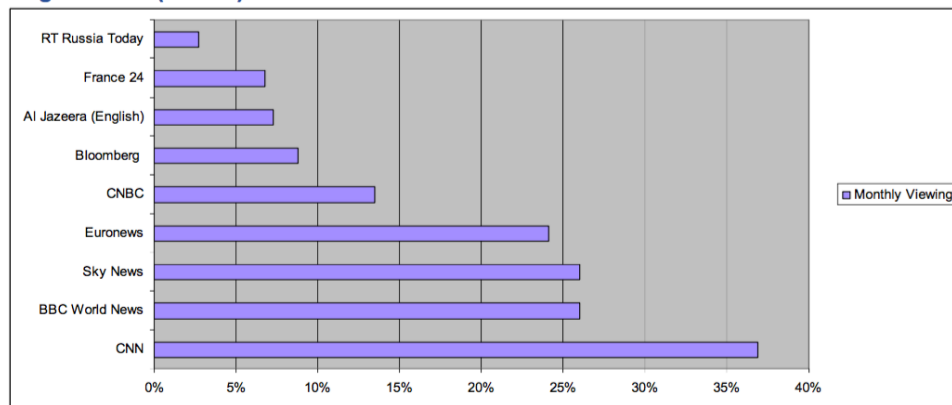
Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.3: Watching international news channels monthly**

Following the average viewing habits of the public, let me get into the depth of how watching television influences their sense of being informed; and does this have any impact on their views on the EU and so the European public sphere.

The following figure shows the correlation between the respondents' sense of being informed on the European Union and their habits of watching television. The hypothesis: the more watch television, the more I feel informed about the EU.
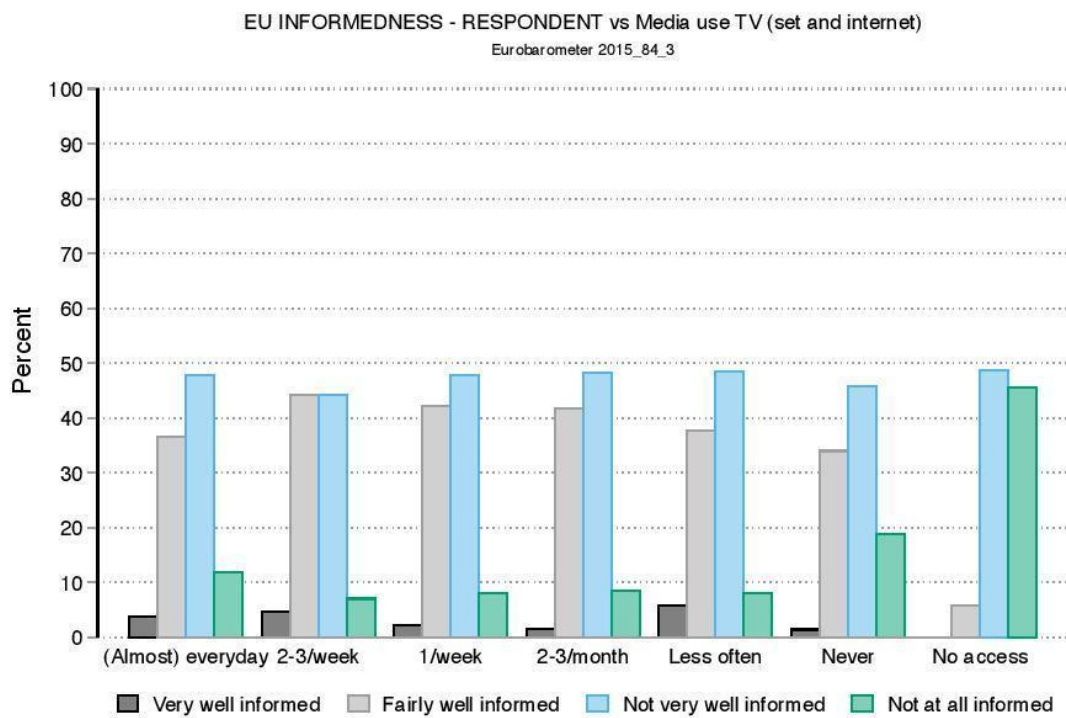


**Figure 5.8.4: Relation between being informed on EU matters and watching television**

As it can be seen, independently of how often one watches television, the majority of the respondents feels uninformed. Only in the case of watching television 2-3 times a week the percentage of feeling fairly well informed and not very well-informed equals. Paradoxically those who feel very well-informed watch television less often than 2-3 times per month. This percentage is followed by those who watch it 2-3 times a week.

In case I categorize respondents not on the basis of nationality, but their assessment country in which they watch news results differ from the previous one. Figure

5.8.4 shows notably higher levels of respondents feeling not very well informed relatively to feeling fairly well informed. I can say that there is a slight correlation between watching television more often and feeling informed, as cumulating respondents positive replies we can see a slight increase, but I could state that respondents who watch television at least once a week, feel almost the same well-informed on European matters regardless how often they watch news channels per week.
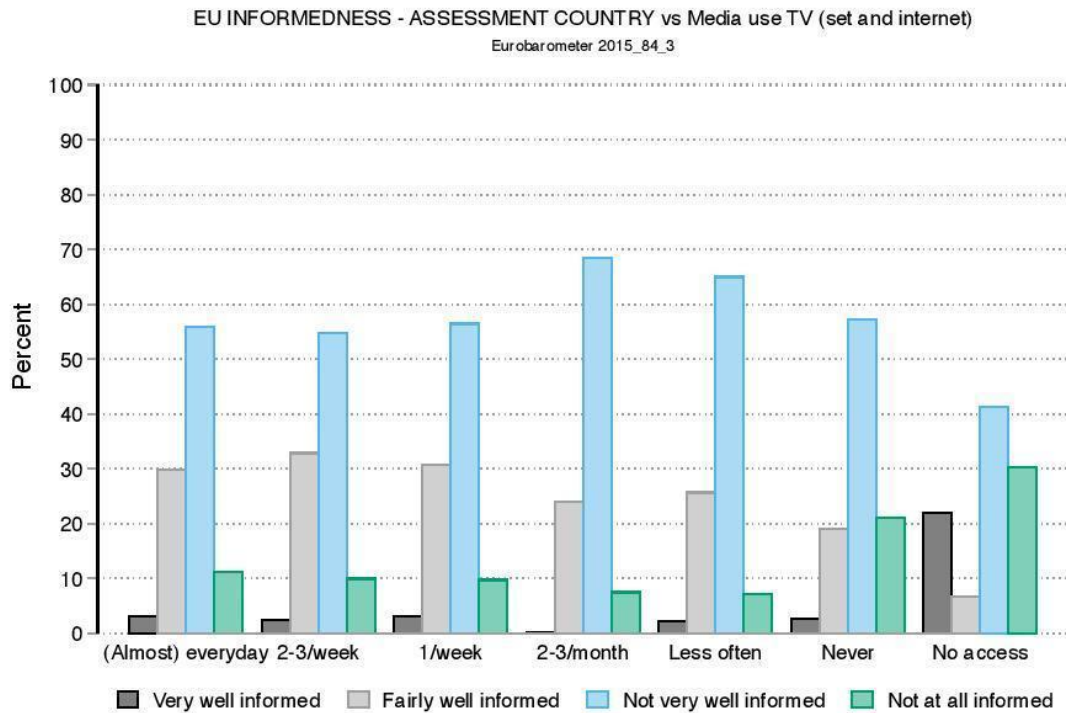


**Figure 5.8.5: Correlation between feeling informed on EU matters and watching TV**

And now let us look into the role of Websites of the news channels in gaining information. Does it have any impact on the public's feeling informed?

## 5.8.2. Using Internet websites of the news channels

When examining the influence and reach out of the internet websites of the news channels themselves, I will follow the same steps just as in the previous chapter: first I will focus on the regularity with which people check the websites and then I will give a look to some of the correlations depicted using raw data of Eurobarometers from the recent years.

Regarding the frequency with which respondents go on the websites of the major news broadcasters, the figures below show how often survey-respondents access online news sources of the news providers.[401] First, it is interesting to see, that despite the viewing data puts Sky News, CNN and Euronews to the first three places when speaking about daily and weekly basis, here BBC World News seem to be the most viewed news websites that contrasts with the position of the TV channel in terms of audiences. So is the low position of Euronews with regard to the visibility of its online platforms.



Figure 4    % (EMS21) USING WEBSITES OF NEWS CHANNELS DAILY
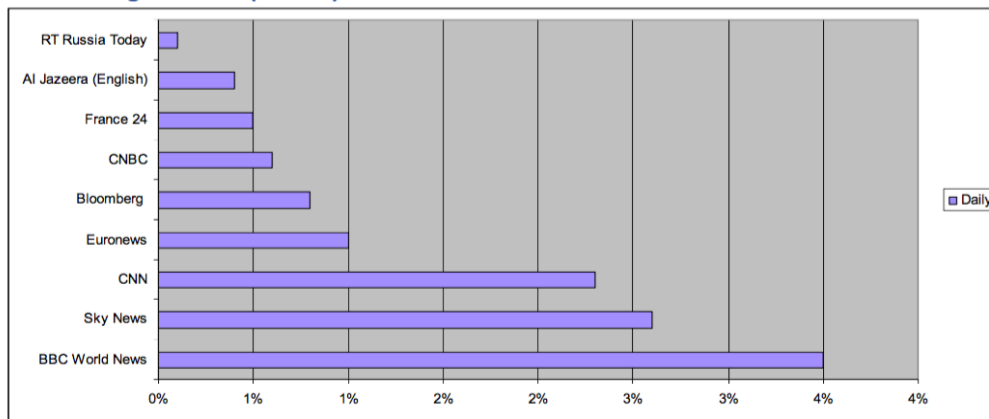
Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.6: Using websites of news channels daily**

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[401] I was using the same data from the IPSOS – European Media and Marketing Survey, just as in the previous chapter, therefore the same limitations need to be taken in consideration.

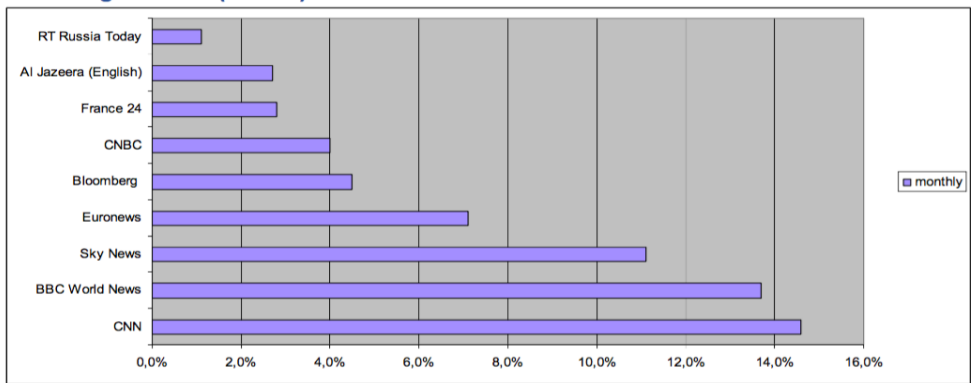**Figure 5   % (EMS21) USING WEBSITES OF NEWS CHANNELS WEEKLY**
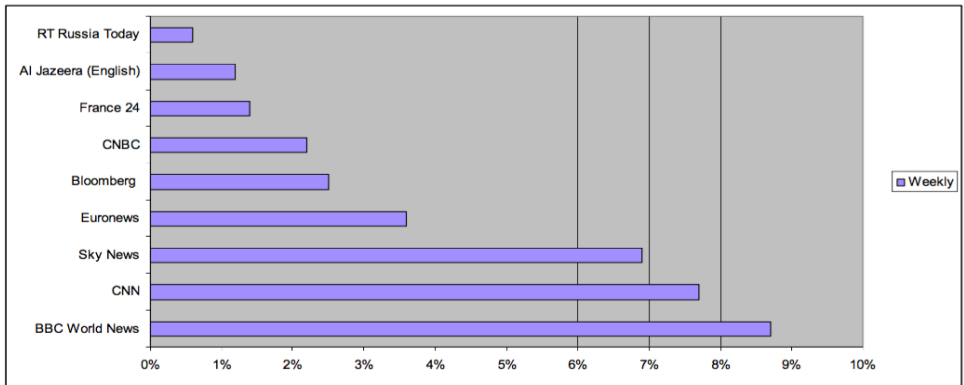
Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.7: Using websites of news channels weekly**

According daily watching BBC represents 4% of all the respondents, whilst in the case of weekly watching it reaches up to almost 9%. In both cases CNN, Sky News and Euronews are on the second, third and fourth place with the first two reaching significantly higher percentages than the latter. In the daily basis CNN and Sky News show around 3-2,5%, whilst Euronews only 1%. On the weekly basis the first two show around 7-7,5%, the last one only the half of it 3,5%.



**Figure 6   % (EMS21) USING WEBSITES OF NEWS CHANNELS MONTHLY**

Source: EMS21 Survey 2012

**Figure 5.8.8: Using websites of news channels monthly**

Generally speaking if we consider that both watching television regularly and accessing the news channels websites require an active behavior from the consumers, I can assume that people are interested in knowing more on these issues. Therefore I have asked the hypothesis saying: *More people are into political discussion, the more they think that things are going into the right direction*. The results are shown on the figure below.
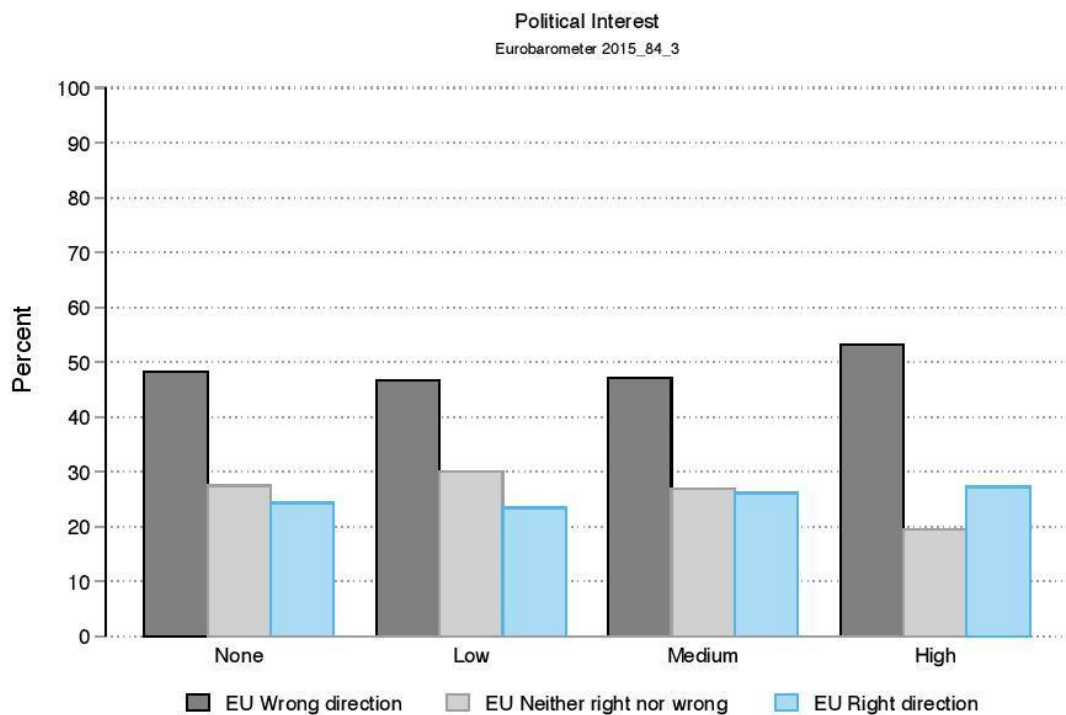


**Political Interest**
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.8.9: Interest in political discussion**[402]

In each case I could see that respondents' general opinion is that the EU is going into the wrong direction, independently from how deep they are involved in political discussions, negative replies are almost double as much as the positive ones.
Replying to the hypothesis I couldn't find an exact and significant correlation between being involved in political discussions and the general opinion on the direction in which

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[402] Question of the Eurobarometer: *When you get together with friends or relatives, would you say you discuss frequently, occasionally or never political matters? At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in…?*

things are going, but we could say that more people are into political discussions the more they have a decisive and defined opinion, as the percentage of those who think the EU is neither going to a right nor to a wrong direction is decreasing.

Consequently the next figures could be related to the previous topic of trust, as they are comparing how informedness influences trust in the European institutions. The first two figures measure this relation regardless of the aspect of the assessment country where the respondents take their information from. In the second two this point of view is taken in consideration. In fact, there is no significant difference between the level of trust of the European Parliament and the European Commission in neither cases.

In the cases of figures 5.8.10. and 5.8.11, when we don't consider the assessment country we can see that more the people are informed, the more they trust the institution. Moreover the percentage of those who feel informed or fairly well informed is higher than those who don't in both cases.
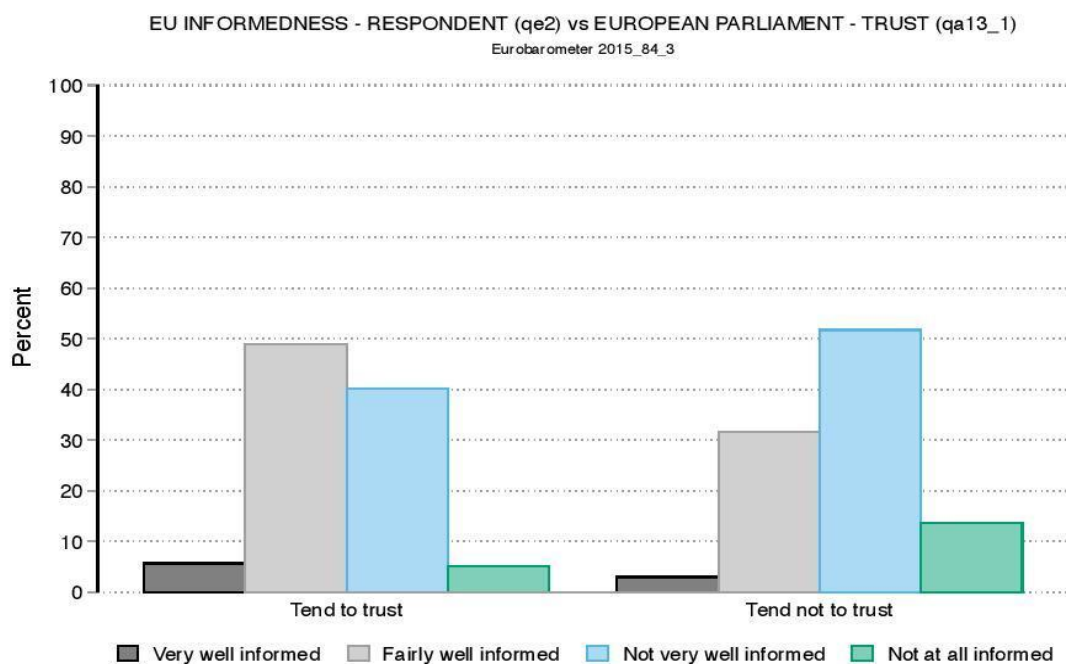


**Figure 5.8.10: Feeling informed influences trust in the European Parliament**

**EU INFORMEDNESS - RESPONDENT (qe2) vs EUROPEAN COMMISSION - TRUST (qa13_2)**
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

Legend: Very well informed | Fairly well informed | Not very well informed | Not at all informed
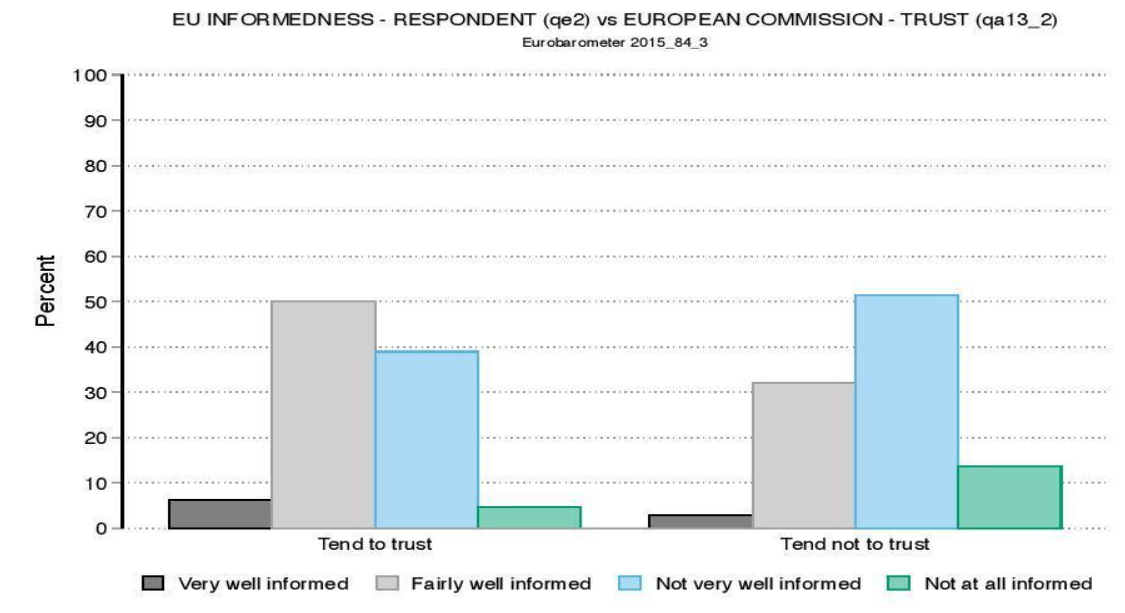
**Figure 5.8.11: Feeling informed influences trust in the European Commission**

Not like in the next two figures, where the differences can be depicted in case of the public's feeling informed. In figure 5.8.12. and figure 5.8.13. the majority of respondents tend to feel uninformed independently from trusting the institution or not. Nevertheless, there are more respondents who feel well-informed that trust the European Parliament and Commission in these cases.
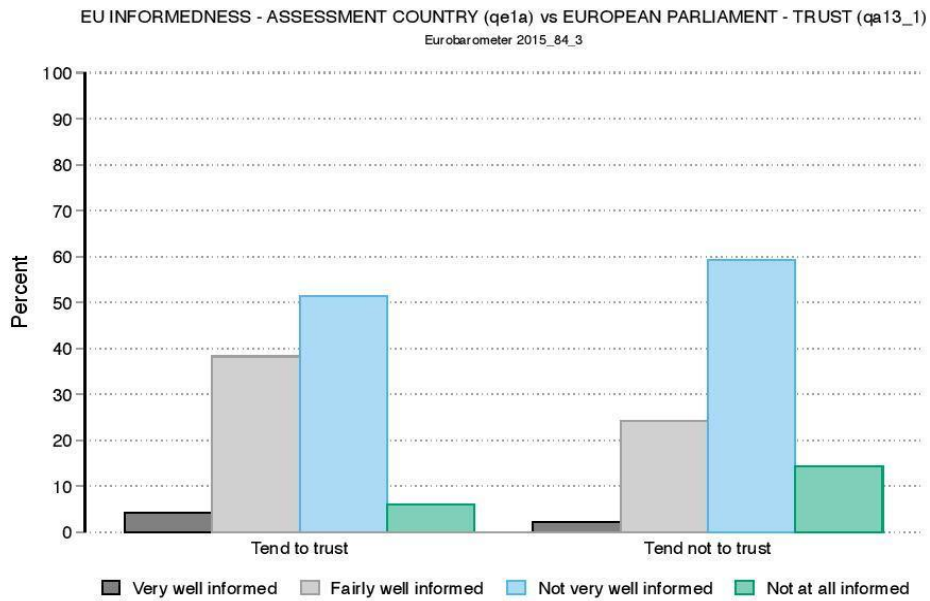
165

EU INFORMEDNESS - ASSESSMENT COUNTRY (qe1a) vs EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - TRUST (qa13_1)
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.8.12: Feeling informed - trusting the European Parliament 2.**



EU INFORMEDNESS - ASSESSMENT COUNTRY (qe1a) vs EUROPEAN COMMISSION - TRUST (qa13_2)
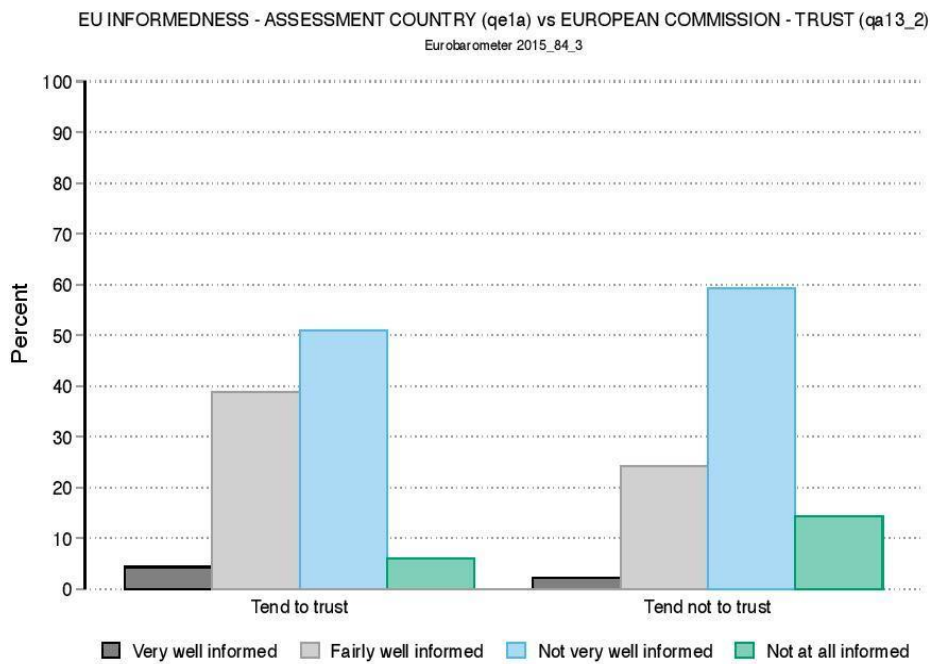Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.8.13: Feeling informed - trusting the European Commission 2.**

This means that informedness is significant in measuring people's relation to political discussions and European institutions. It is not necessarily the regularity of consuming information on EU-affairs, rather platforms and channels that increase the sense of informedness in general. Informedness has a positive impact on trust towards things going into a good direction and trust towards both the European Union, and the European institutions. Therefore let us dedicate the next chapter to the general opinion that is affected by these two: trust and informedness.

## 5.9. Measuring general opinion on the EU based on trust and informedness

In this chapter I will examine the connection between trust and the various aspect of the general feeling towards the EU, such as the evaluation of its image, the feeling as a citizen and how much individuals' voice counts. These are important features also to examine the texture of the European public sphere in this regard by focusing also on the impact and role television news have.

### 5.9.1. The image of the European Union in the general opinion

According to the Eurobarometer from 2015 the image of the European Union is changing through years. Respondents when answering the question on how positive/neutral/negative they find the image of the EU, tend to see it neutral again, just as it was back in 2010. Following the figure below we can see that this neutrality is stable (38%) whilst there was a change in positivity to 2014 and 2015, is it was decreasing by -4% to become 37% in autumn 2015. The proportion of Europeans for whom the EU conjures up a negative image has risen to 23% (+4); before this, it had declined continuously in the four previous surveys.[403]

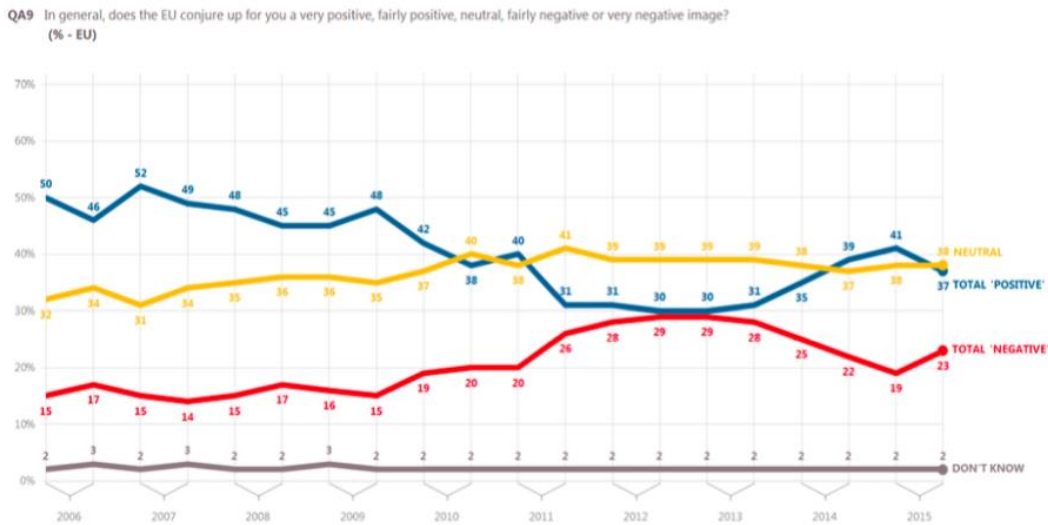---

[403] Standard Eurobarometer 84, Autumn 2015

**Figure 5.9.1: Image of the EU**

If we watch these percentages on a country basis we can see that 11 member states conjure up a positive image in spring 2015, according to Eurobarometer. The countries where respondents are most likely to %have a positive image of the EU are Romania (57%), Poland (55%), Ireland (54%), Lithuania (53%) and Croatia (51%). However for the majority of the country's (15 member states) retain the image of the European Union neutral. Austria and Cyprus are the two countries that conjure up the EU negatively, just as in spring 2015. If we would like to explain where the EU has lost percentages in the average opinion, we can say that in 24 member states the image of the EU has lost ground, most significantly in Estonia (-13%), Germany (-11%) and the Czech Republic (-10%).[404]

I was curious whether news have a role on the perception of the image of the EU, therefore we have correlated the image of the EU with other two variables gained from the raw database of Eurobarometer 84.3 (2015): media coverage of EU issues in television (figure 5.9.2) and media presentation of the EU in television (figure .5.9.3).

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[404] Standard Eurobarometer 84, Autumn 2015

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**Image EU vs MEDIA COVERAGE EU ISSUES: TELEVISION**
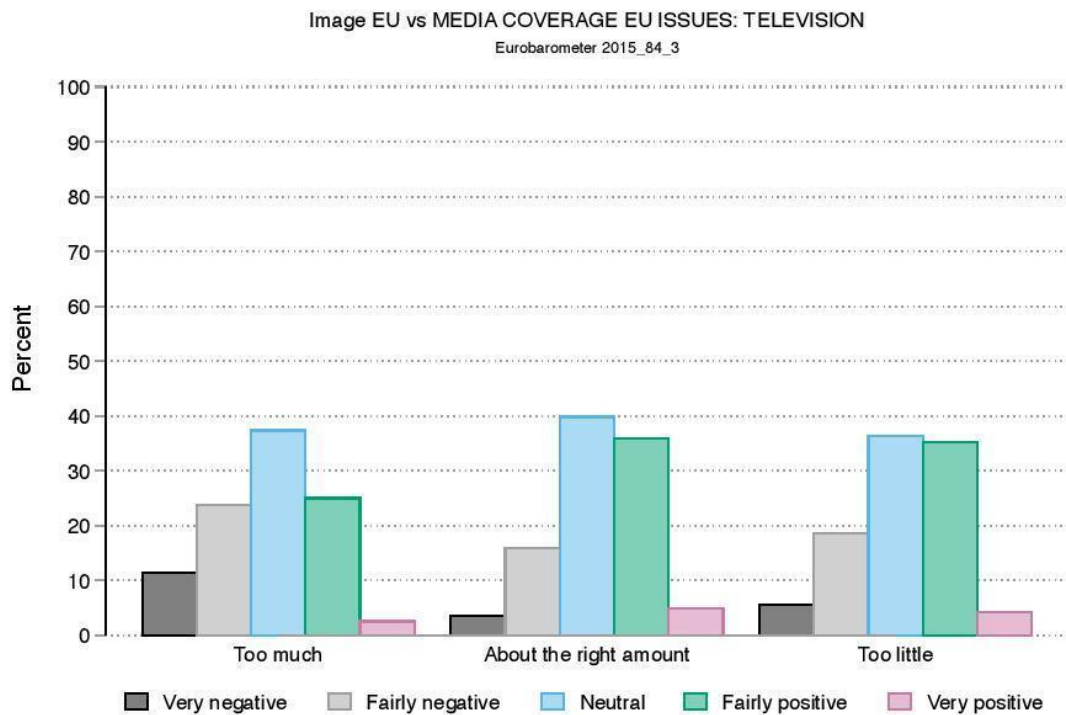Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.9.2: Image of the EU - news speaking about the EU[405]**

In this figure above, we can see that the more media covers the EU issues the more respondents have a negative image of it. Logically when there is a right amount of coverage of the EU, people have a more positive image, even if neutrality is the highest also in this case (40%). Another interesting fact—according to figure 5.9.2.—is that neutrality is always the highest, independently from the amount of information. However the results above don't take into consideration whether respondents would desire more or less news about the EU or how much the EU is covered in general by news. These aspects could be developed in further research.

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[405] Question of the Eurobarometer: *Do you think that the (NATIONALITY) ... present(s) the EU too positively, objectively or too negatively?*

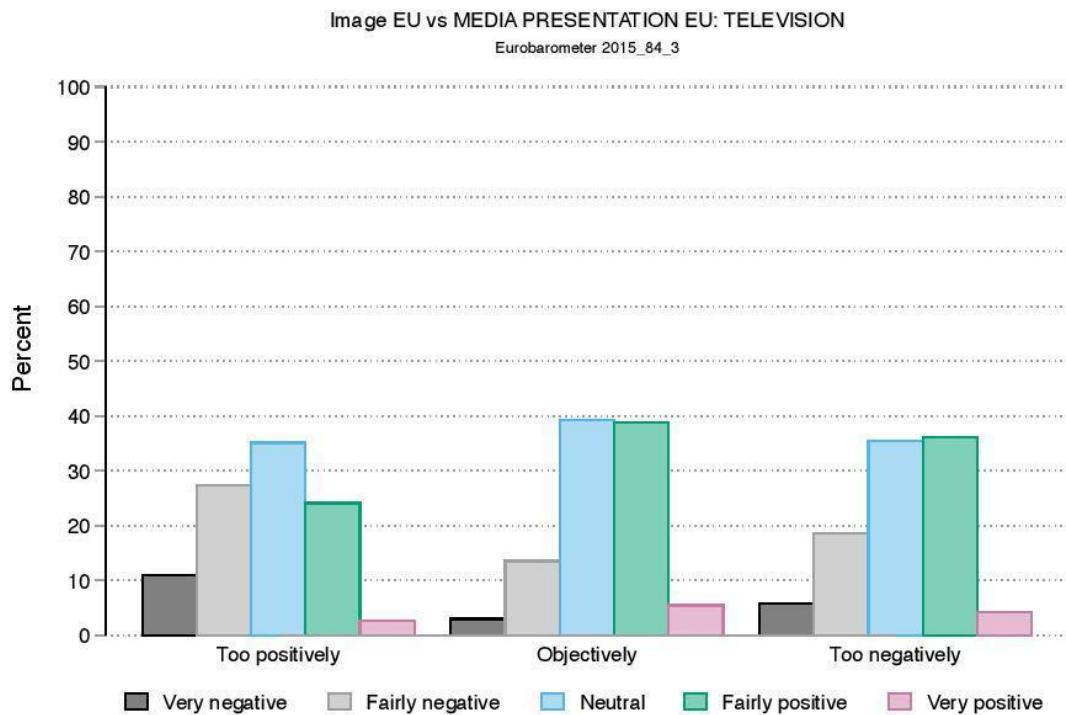Image EU vs MEDIA PRESENTATION EU: TELEVISION
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.9.3: Image of the EU - news speaking about the EU 2.**

Figure 5.9.3 focuses on the objectivity rather than the regularity of appearance of the EU in television news. We can see that neutral image of the EU is the highest independently from the media representation of the EU. Interestingly, the second most common answer is falling into the category of the EU having a 'fairly positive' image. Only in case that people retain the media representation too positive, we can see the highest negative image ratio. This means that people having a negative image of the EU, retain news too positive of it.

The next two figure focus on the same topic from two aspects. In the first case, I have compared the amount of appearance of EU issues in media with the general feeling of attachment to it. The main question was, whether people feel more attached to the EU if they see more positive image of the EU in television? I could see a negative correlation, which is logical. This means that the feeling of 'not very attached' and 'not at all attached' are higher when retaining that there is too much information on the EU. Not like the 'fairly well attached' and 'very attached' categories that are higher among those who retain that there is too little information on EU affairs in television, and also among those who retain that there is the right amount of information.

Also in the second case, in Figure 5.9.5, we can see this opposite correlation that explains that more people are attached to the EU, the more they think the media depicts EU issues negatively.
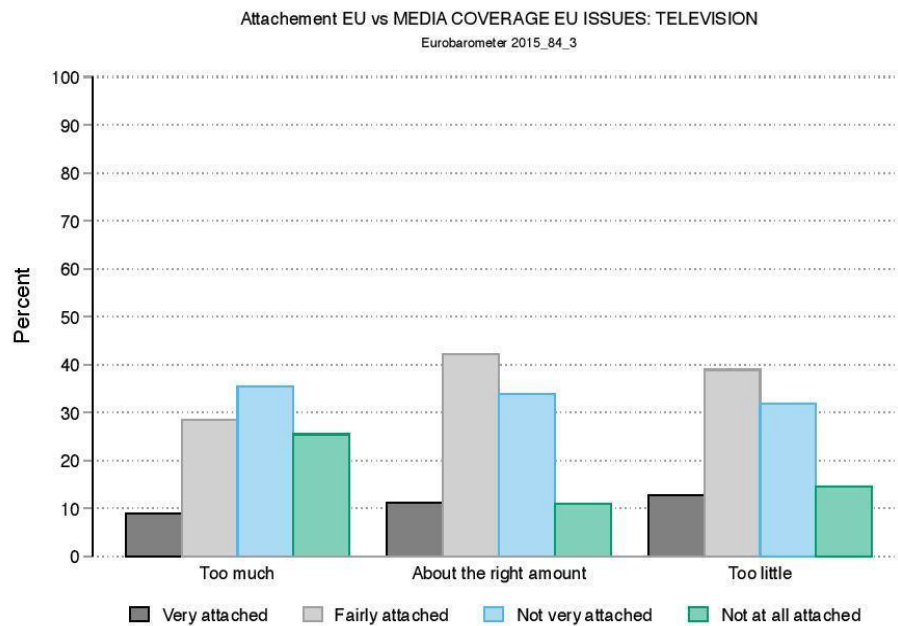
Attachement EU vs MEDIA COVERAGE EU ISSUES: TELEVISION
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.9.4: Media coverage of EU issues in TV - Attachement EU**

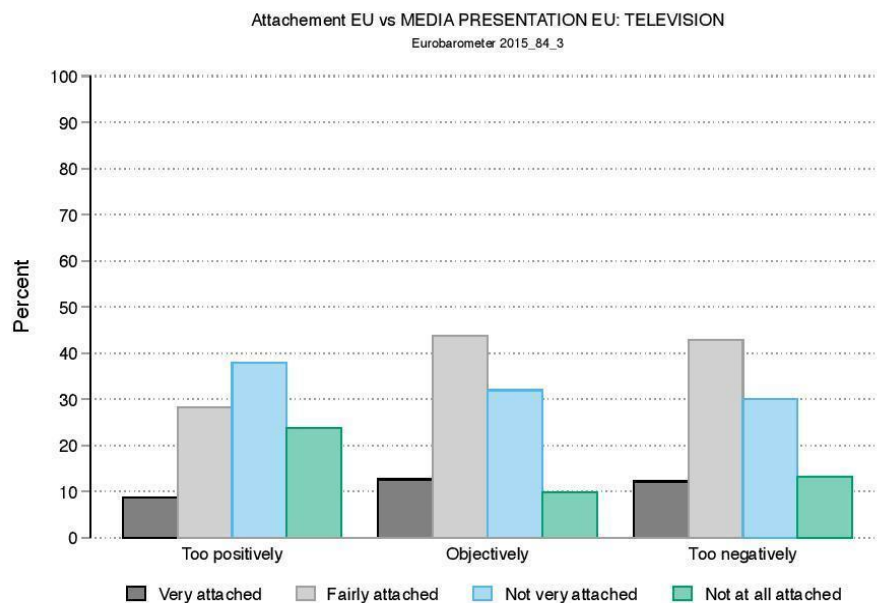Attachement EU vs MEDIA PRESENTATION EU: TELEVISION
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.9.5: Media coverage of EU issues in TV - Attachement EU 2.**

### 5.9.2. Trust in national governments and parliaments and in the European Union

      In this chapter I was focusing on how television influences trust in national governments and parliaments, and also in the European Union. On the graph below[406], we can see how this has changed in more than a decade. In overall we can see that trust is not static, but the level of trust changes in time. However these changes show a decrease on a longer term. Also trust in the European Union has decreased by 8% since spring 2015 (in 2016 it is 32%). This percentage is still higher than the level of trust in the national parliament (28%) and trust in the national government (27%), although the decrease for these two in the last year was less significant than the EU's one.

      With regard to the opposite, not trusting these entities, the Eurobarometer 452 study shows an increase in the proportion of not trusting: 55% of European citizens tend not to trust the EU, which is a 9% higher proportion than it was a year before. Also not trusting national parliaments has risen by 2%, to arrive to 62% of citizens, just as in the case of national governments, where there was an increase of 3% to 66%.
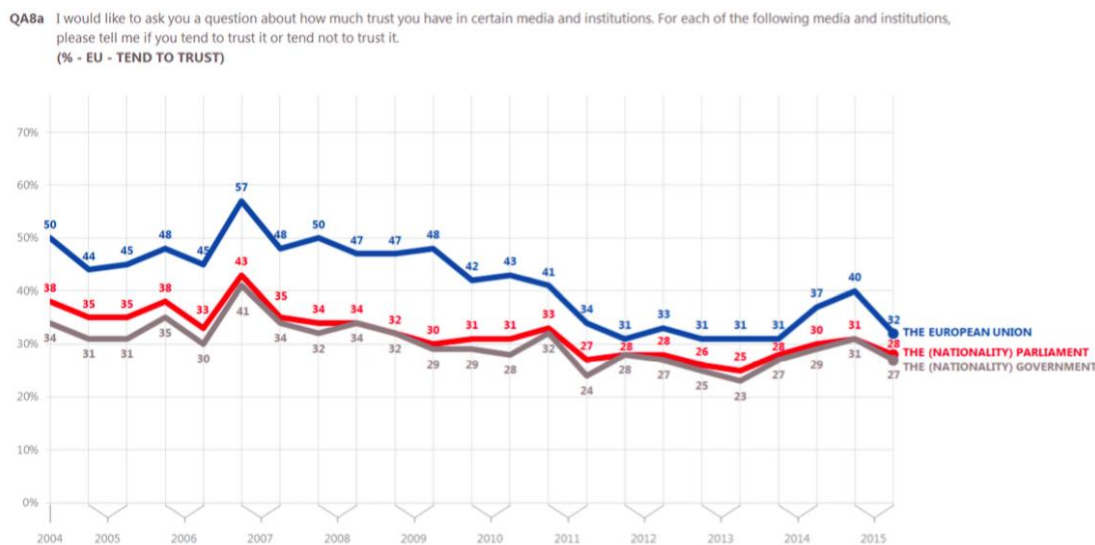


QA8a  I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.
(% - EU - TEND TO TRUST)

**Figure 5.9.6: Trust in media and institutions**

      Trust can determine general opinion and can influence beliefs. For example the next figure shows that there is a correlation between having a positive view on public

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[406] Special Eurobarometer 452: Media Pluralism and democracy, Autumn 2016

service and trusting the European Union. 13% of those who tend not to trust the European Union have a very positive image of the EU, whilst this number is almost doubled among those, who trust the public service (25%). This correlation is also confirmed by the 'very negative' views as well, as among those who tend not to trust this number is 9%, whilst those who trust only 3% think very negatively of the EU.
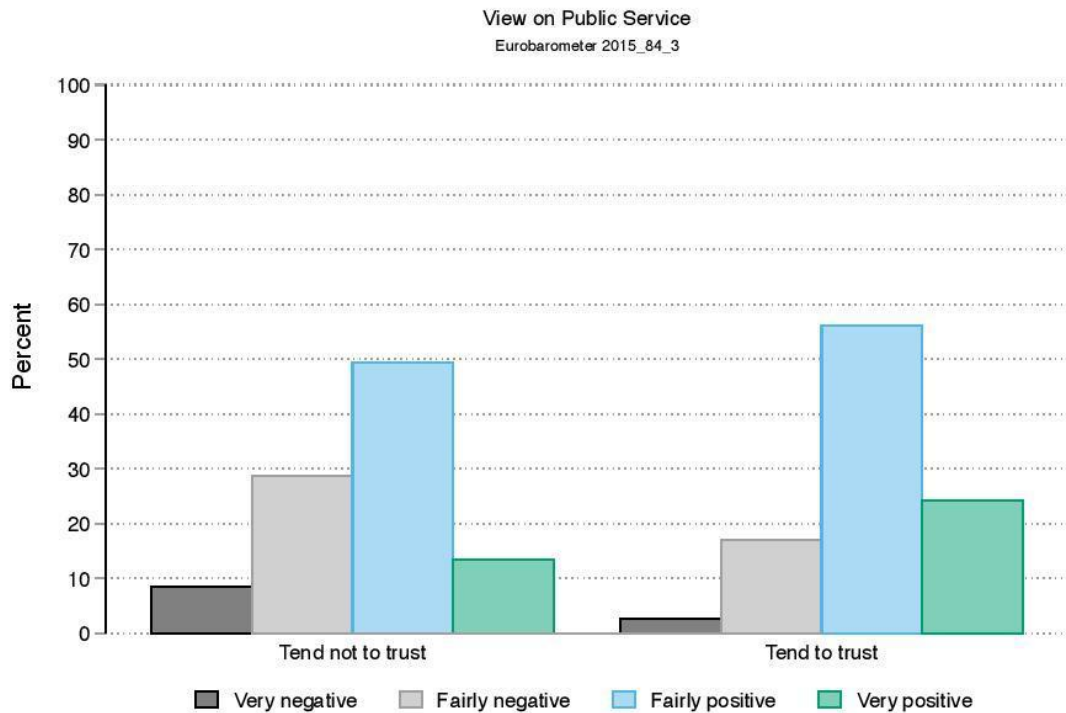


**Figure 5.9.7: Believing in public service - believing in the EU**

We wanted to understand whether television being the main information source affects the trust towards the European Union or not. From the figure below we can observe two important things: first that regarding European matters the television is the first or second source of information for a significant majority of people independently if they trust the EU or not. Second that there is no correlation between trust in the EU and the main information source on EU affairs.
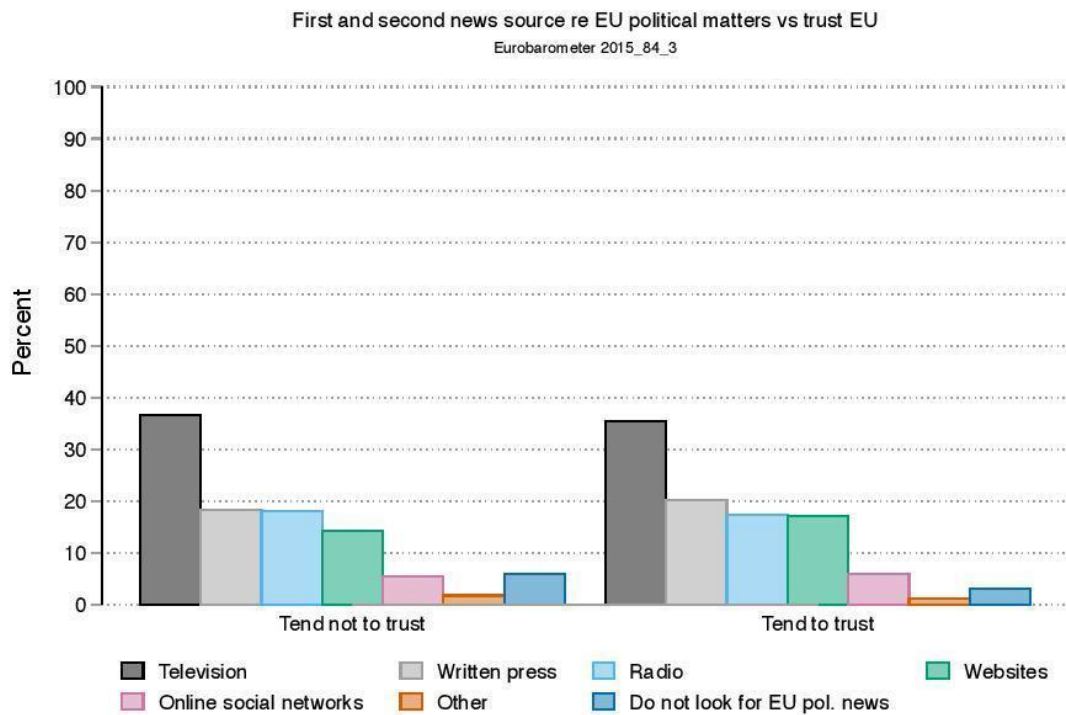
First and second news source re EU political matters vs trust EU
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

Figure 5.9.8: TV as information source - trusting EU

### 5.9.3. My voice counts in the European Union

Another important aspect that influences general opinion on the European Union is whether citizens feel their voice count. Following the special Eurobarometer 452, just as previously, we can see how the proportion of Europeans who agree that their voice counts in the EU changed in a longer period. In 2016 this level was standing at 39%, which was -3 since spring 2015. However results of the EU in this regard are not very positive, as more than half of European citizens disagrees: 54% (+4) feel that their voice doesn't count in the EU. This is nevertheless the third highest score for this view since 2004, behind only the 42% recorded in spring 2014 and spring 2015, and the 40% recorded in autumn 2014.

D72.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
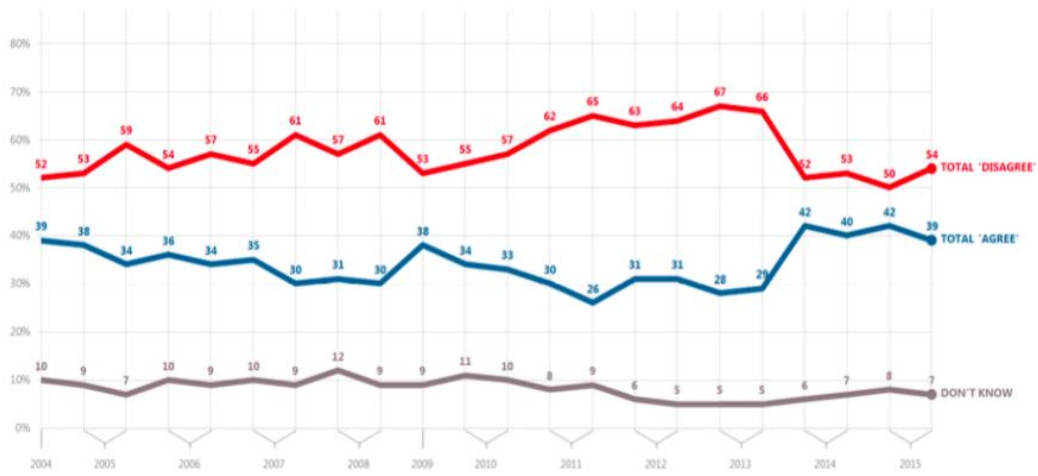My voice counts in the EU (% - EU)

**Figure 5.9.10: My voice counts in the EU**



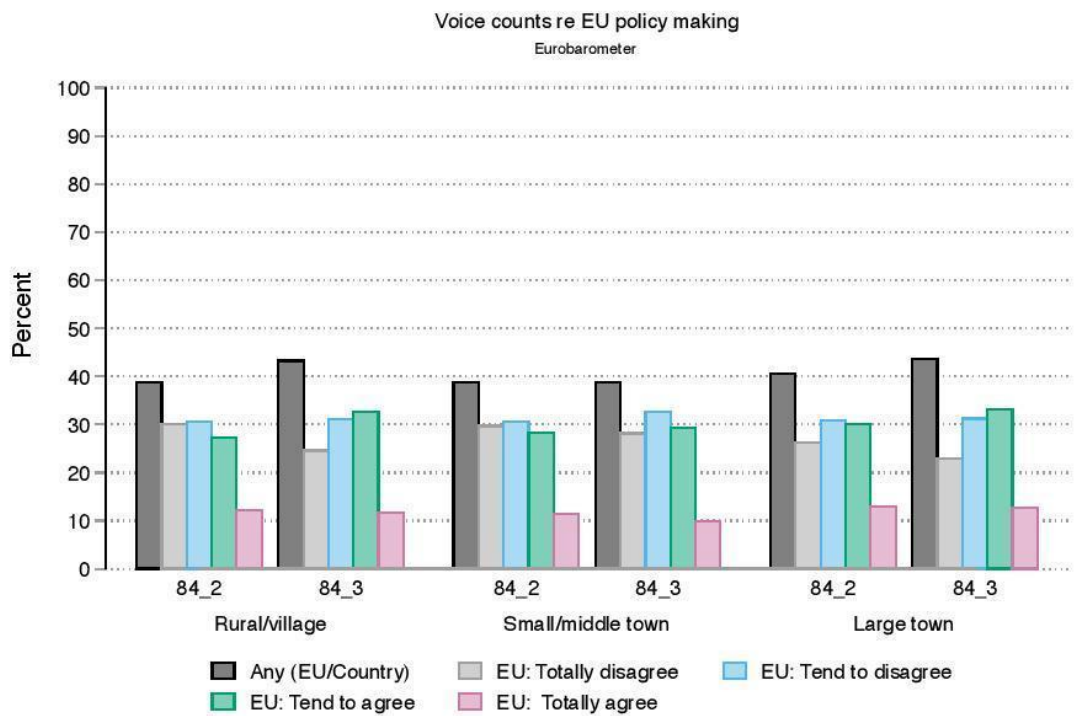Voice counts re EU policy making
Eurobarometer

**Figure 5.9.11: My voice counts - living in cities**

In the figure above I have compared the size of the city where respondents live with the general feeling of being heard; and I have seen if these results have changed in the arch of time. First of all it was an important finding that the size of the city doesn't influence people feeling their voice counting in the EU. But this changed in time slightly, as the proportion of those who agree with having their voice count in the EU has increased in case of rural/village and large towns, not like in the small and middle cities.

The following two tables show the same hypothesis but without monitoring the changes in time, only viewing the size of the city and feeling the voice count. Still I couldn't find any correlation in this regard.
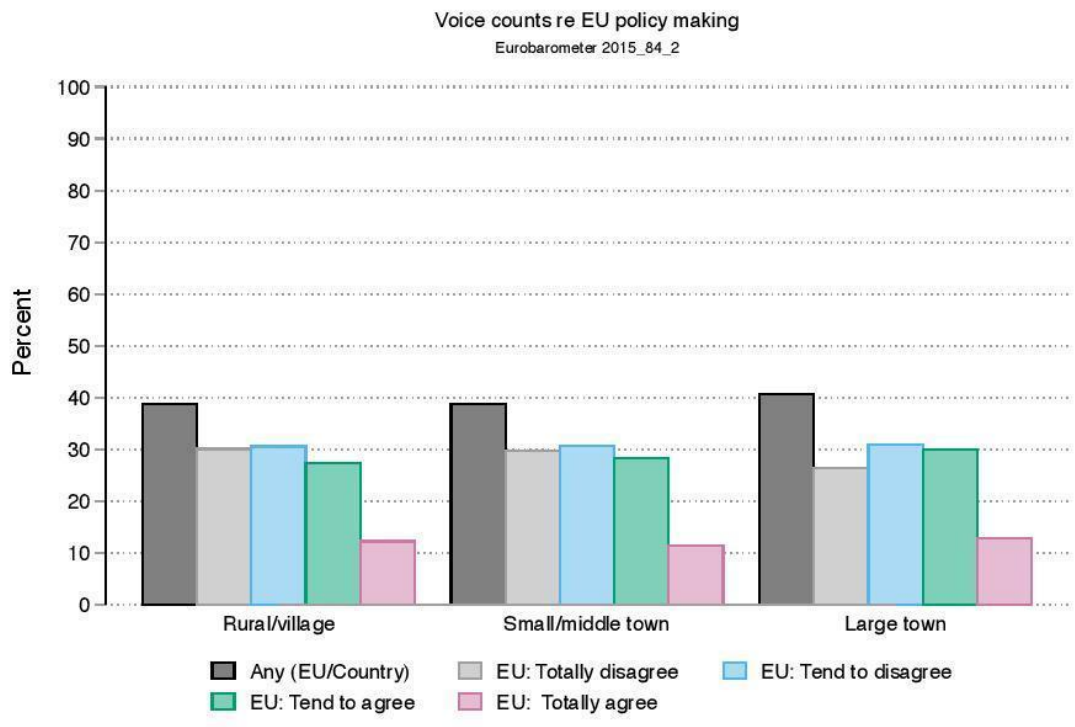


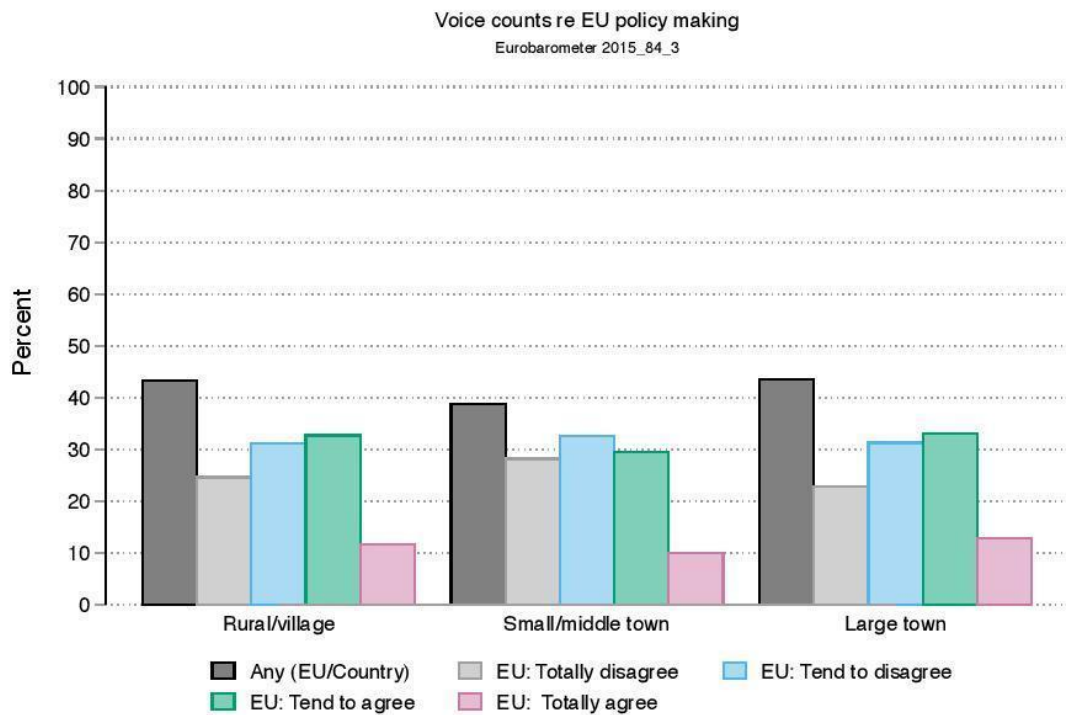**Figure 5.9.12: My voice counts - living in cities 2.**

Figure 5.9.12: My voice counts in the EU policy making

## 5.9.4. Feeling like a citizen of the European Union

Besides having the 'voice counts in the EU', also "feeling a citizen in the EU" is an important element that needs to be examined in order to understand trust in the European institutions.

First let us view how citizens of the different member states agree with the statement of feeling an EU citizen. The figure below, taken from Eurobarometer 84,[407] depicts a comparison. In general, we see that two-thirds of Europeans feel that they are citizens of the EU, 65%, 3% less than in spring 2015. Whereas only 34% disagrees with this statement. This question was asked in 2010 for the first time (62%) and since then gained only ground slightly. The majority of the countries fell into the part where more citizens feel European than not: Luxembourg (85%), Malta (82%), Lithuania (77%), Denmark (76%) and Ireland (76%). In Bulgaria (47% 'yes' vs. 52% 'no'), Cyprus (49% vs. 51%) and Italy (49%

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vs. 50%), a slight majority of the population do not feel they are citizens of the EU. In Greece, as in spring 2015, the population is evenly divided (50% vs. 50%).

If we want to do the comparison in time, we can see that since spring 2015 the feeling a European citizen decreased in 19 countries, most in Austria (63%, -9) and Germany (74%, -7), whereas the other half of the countries, 17 member state show an increase in this sense. The most significant ones are Slovenia (75%, +10), Spain (75%,+6), Croatia (66%, +3), Denmark (76%, +2), Belgium (72%, +2) and Hungary (69%, +2). In Portugal (72%), France (61%) and Greece (50%) the proportion remained unchanged.
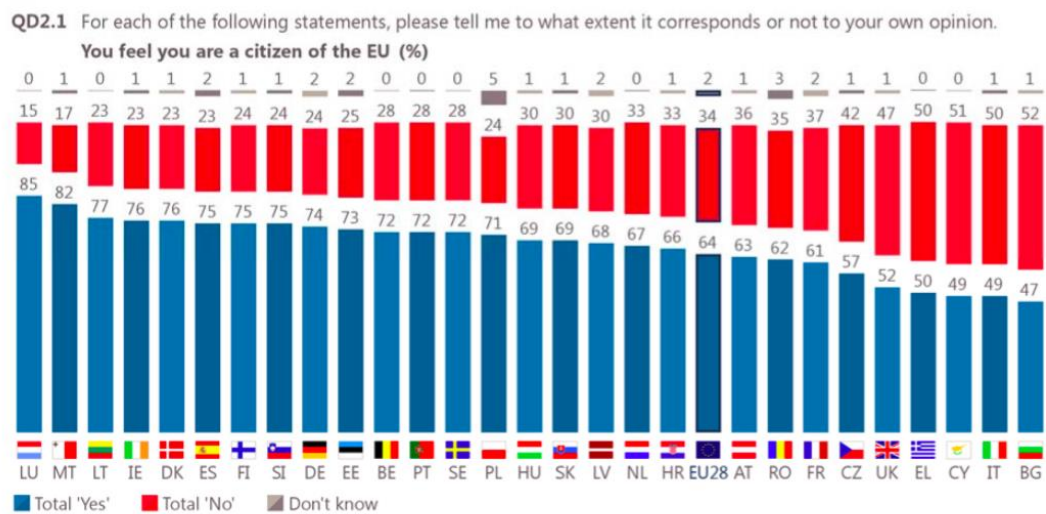


**Figure 5.9.14: Feeling a citizen EU28**

I wanted to know whether feeling European affects trust in the European institutions therefore we have elaborated the following two figures. The first one shows trust in the European Parliament, the second trust in the European Commission. In both cases a significant correlation can be seen between the two variables, and the two cases are very much alike. More people feel European, the more they trust the institutions. almost 70% of those who trust the EP/EC feel 'national and European', whereas the same category counts only 40% of those who tend not to trust. The same ideology goes for those who feel only national: 22% of those who trust feel only national, and 53% of those who don't trust.

How European do you feel? (feel_eu) vs EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - TRUST (qa13_1)

Eurobarometer 2015_84_3
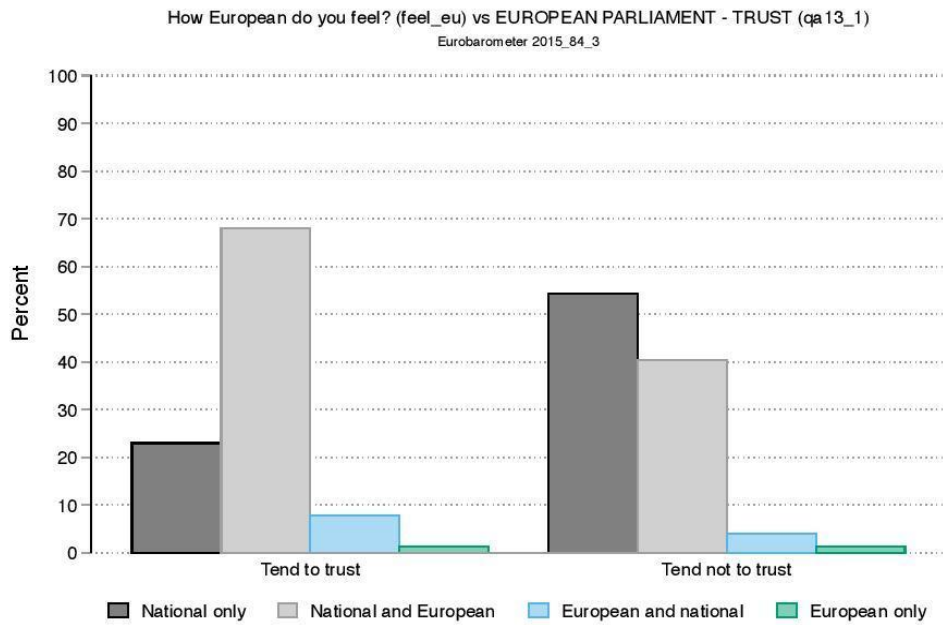
**Figure 5.9.15: Feeling a citizen and trusting the EP**



How European do you feel? (feel_eu) vs EUROPEAN COMMISSION - TRUST (qa13_2)
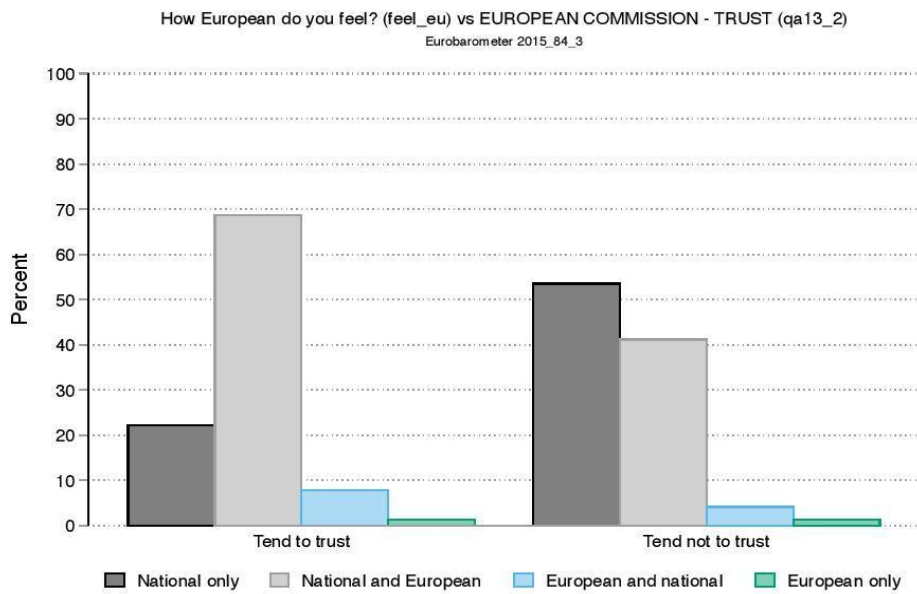
Eurobarometer 2015_84_3

**Figure 5.9.16: Feeling a citizen and trusting the EC**

## 5. 10   Summarizing results

This chapter is crucial mainly for the understanding on the one hand how the European broadcasting space is affected by certain elements such as ownership or language. On the other hand, it aims to depict the other side of this reciprocal relationship, how the European broadcasting affects the perception of certain elements, such as trust, informedness, news independence and diversity of news. This latter implies than that we can define the main pillars of general opinion: the image of the EU, feeling European and trusting the EU.

First of all, I have seen that not only the European integration evolves, but also digitalization and market demand. As a consequence, the accessibility of the European broadcasting space and also content changes. I have also seen that the broadcasting market was growing in the past decade: new channels appeared, new content-providers started to increase competitivity, viewer indexes increased also in a geographic reach out and also as digital tv appeared. Many broadcasting companies started to air content abroad, or internationally, especially as language doesn't seem to be a limit.

This is why, after examining the dynamics and tendencies within the broadcasting market, I have focused on language being an element defining the European broadcasting space or moreover, limiting the evolution of a European public space. I have found that despite provisions, language seem to have rather a positive effect on feeling European according to data. Also the audiences are increasing of foreign language channels that in addition contribute to this feeling European. Therefore, I can agree with Mr. Thibault Lesenecal, the Head of Web Communication Unit at the European Parliament, who said that multilingualism is not a barrier.

The next aspect was ownership. There are significantly more private channels than public ones despite the influencing factors that determine their everyday functioning, such as content and framing news as they have to satisfy market demand to maintain or increase their market share, increase reach out, and last but not least to cooperate with the public administration and follow the national laws as the juridical background for the European broadcasting space is not harmonized. Some might say that this is also due to the televisive heritage that member states carry, as for example the times of the Iron Curtain have had an impact on the degrees and forms of modernization. Consequently, the present differences in terms of public sphere in general and television in particular

between East and West. And this had also an impact on the entire process of media system evolution and change. [408]

In relation to the juridical background, I have examined also news independence, general trust in media and diversity of content. Regarding this latter, respondents believe that news diversity is balanced. Not like independence. Independence of general media varies country by country, and the range starting from 12% (Greece) goes up to 78% (Finland). Regarding public service media that shall be more informative and educative, 60% of the respondents retains public service media not independent only 35% agree on public service media being independent. Also the trustworthiness of the main information sources move on a wide scale. It came out that radio is the most trusted information source, followed equally by television and newspapers. The analysis also showed that trust specifically in television varies among member states but the majority of the EU countries is above the European media.

Examining trust was also important to conduct a terziere research analyzing correlation between watching television and the EU having a positive image, or things going in a right direction and I have found that there is no relationship between the two. So television doesn't seem to influence general opinion of European policy-making.

Last, but not least I was focusing on informedness. In regard I have found that the most viewed news-channels are CNN, SkyNews, Euronews and BBC. This confirms also the findings of language, as foreign language channels, especially those English-speaking gain more visibility as there is no linguistic barrier. Interestingly I have found that the regularity of watching television news doesn't influence the feeling of being informed, neither was there any correlation between being into political discussion and to think that things are going into a good direction. But there was a significative relationship between informedness and trust as results show that as the sense of informedness increases so does trust in European institutions.

After all this I wanted to depict the general opinion mirroring the image of the EU, the feeling citizen and trust in the EU. As I said, there was no correlation between the amount of information and the positive image of the EU. So informedness doesn't necessarily increase a positive opinion about EU affairs. Nevertheless, if the information is positive, than people feel more attached to the EU.

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[408] Jakubowicz, K.: *Ideas in our Heads: Introduction of PSB as Part of Media System Change in Central and Eastern Europe.* European Jounral of Communication 19(1): 53-74 [2004]

Gripsrud, J.: *Television and the European Public Sphere.* European Journal of Communication, SAGE Publications Vol22(4): 479-492. [2007]

Regarding trust, trust towards the EU is higher than towards national parliaments or national governments, despite the decreasing tendency in general. And even if 54% of Europeans think that their voice doesn't count in EU affairs, feeling citizen has a significant impact on trusting the European institutions.

As a conclusion I can say that this complex matrix of interdependent factors needs to be evaluated from different point of views keeping that each element has a connection to one another. Language, ownership, diversity, independence, trust and informedness all contribute to the evolution of each other and to form a general opinion. These are secondary elements that are defined also by news-frames.

## 6. Ending remarks

Communicating the European Union is a complex challenge both for journalists and for the European institutions themselves. For journalists the complexity, the quantity and the scatterdeness are the main difficulties in interpreting EU affairs. European institutions face the limits of direct contact with their citizens that make them become dependent from the media. Media following market demands inevitably distort information on the European Union by reflecting for example on national perspectives or political frames.

News on the EU often follow two different type of frames: conflict and economic consequence frame. The conflict frame follows from the observation that news about politics and the economy is often framed in terms of disagreement between, for example, individuals or political parties. In this way of framing the news, controversy and diverging aspects between conflicting parties are emphasized. [409] On the other hand the economic consequences frame reflects a bottom line of preoccupation of profit and loss. Focusing on the economic consequences of an issue is a frequently observed frame to make an issue relevant to their audience.[410]

[409] Cappella, J. and Hall Jamieson, K.: *Spiral of cynicism*. Oxford University Press. [1997]

Patterson, T. E.: *Out og Order*. News York: Alfred A Knopf. [1993]

Price, V.: *Social Identification and Public Opinion: Effects of Communicating Group Conflict*. Public Opinionn Quarterly 53, p. 197-224. [1989]

[410] Neuman, R. W., Just, M. R. and Crigler, A. N.: *Common Knowledge. News and the Construction of Political Meaning.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press [1992]

Graber, D. A.: *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide*. New York: Longman Publishers. [1980]

McManus, J. N.: *Market-driven Journalism Let the Citizen Beware.* Thousand Oaks: Sage [1994]

However, communicating Europe gains major attention and ground within national broadcasting, as the European integration increases its impact on national policy-making, still this only implies the Europeanization of national news and national media, not the establishment of a united and solid European public sphere. The public sphere itself can't be tackled independently from its social and political context as news supposed to reflect on this. The European integration still maintains cultural differences as Kielmansegg puts it: the European Union "*is not a community of communication, hardly a community of shared memories; it is merely, and in a limited sense, a community of shared experiences*"[411]. Cultural and social diversity is one of the main values of the EU that was emphasized also with the enlargement of our heterogenic community.

Also, the EU's own communication initiatives were evaluated the same way, for example in in the light of the Eurovision: *"As new (Ukraine, Serbia) or previously marginal Eurovision countries (Turkey and Greece) became highly successful participants in the ESC, the old Western Europe lost its once hegemonic position in the contest. As a consequence, it seems that European enlargement in the ESC stopped being 'just about getting bigger' and became 'a matter of cultural transformation'.*"[412]

According to Jaume Duch this is a slow evolution that shall end with the normalization of news in a sense that EU matters will gain more importance in media. In order to achieve this political culture of parties, media and citizens will have to be modified. This is a change that is boosted by the demand of publics to be informed about decision-making processes that contemporary with the increasing weight and influence of the EU will be more and more Bruxelles. However, we retain that this Europeanization of national news-broadcasting has its limits in the cultural, social and political diversity.

## 6.1. Visibility and objectivity

The above mentioned increasing intensity with which European news appear in television are still not regular. Not always EU news manage to enter news, but when it does it is fairly prominent in the program. EU stories are generally placed in the first third of a news bulletin and are, compared to other political news, not disadvantaged by being lumped together at the end of the news program.

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[411] Kielmansegg, P. G.: *Integration und Demokratie* in Jachtenfuchs, M., Kohler-Koch, B. (Eds.): Europaische Integration, Leske+Budrich, Opladen, vol 2, p. 49–83, [2003]

[412] Delanty, G.: *The Making of a Post-Western Europe: A Civilizational Analysis*. Thesis Eleven, 72, February [2003]

From this finding of low visibility but, interestingly, relatively high priority, a pattern of EU news emerges that is cyclic in nature.[413] The EU, it seems, is often absent from the news agenda, and then enters the agenda, peaks and vanishes. In effect, this means that the news provision about the EU is rather sporadic and that no stable level of news and information is present.[414] This cyclicality is also due to the peaks in relevance for national member states. During, for example, a 'regular', non-election period, we find that national news programs devote most attention to EU news during the periods in which the European Council of heads of state meets. In these days there is 5 to 10 times more airtime dedicated to EU affairs.[415]

But it shall not be only about quantity, rather quality of the news, better to say their objectivity. Very often European news are blaimed to be negative and using pessimistic frames. However, De Vreese, who has based his study on the analysis of the European election campaign, the summit and the routine news periods, he suggested that while EU news is generally negative and with a moderately negative slant so is other news about politics too.[416] The more appropriate conclusion is therefore that news media tend, in general, to be negative about (or critical of) politics and not about the EU in particular.[417]

## 6.2. Limits

In the early 2000 the relationship between news coverage and public perception of European affairs was scarcely researched.[418] This was also due to the limited assessable evidence of broadcast media coverage of the European Union, nevertheless the EU started to monitor its media coverage in a number of national television news programs. Also De Vreese claimed: "Beyond the descriptive sources, however, the discussion of the media coverage of EU affairs suffered from the almost total absence of data."[419] The lack of data makes also comparison limited when examining the visibility of the European issues in relation to other factors. Thus, it is often difficult to extract comparable data in a reliable and systematic manner.[420] Data is also lacking regarding audience responses in television

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[413] Norris, P.: *A Virtuous Circle*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [2000]

[414] De Vreese, C.H.: *Communicating Europe.* Next Generation Democracy: Legitimacy in Network Europe project [2003] pp.17.

[415] Ibid p. 15.

[416] De Vreese, C. H., [2002]

[417] De Vreese: *Communicating Europe.* [2003] pp. 19

[418] De Vreese, C. H.: *The Effects of Frames in Political Television News on Issue Interpretation and Frame Salience.* Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Spring, vol 81, no 1, p.36. [2004]

[419] De Vreese, C. H., [2003]

[420] Semetko, H. A.; de Vreese, C. H.; Peter, J.: [2000]

frames despite evidence suggesting an impact different from print's.[421] Also Semetko wrote in 2001 that there is lacking information on how the European integration appears on domestic news coverage. Moreover, the comparative perspective of political communication and news organization was missing, how news differ cross-nationally in terms of the reporting of domestic and European political affairs. [422]

However, since the early 2000 we have experienced notable change. Numerous studies have appeared with content analysis, doing cross-national comparisons and also the European Union institutions have invested in measuring general opinion also with regard the news. With the rise of the notion of the European public sphere scholars directed their focus to the analysis of the coverage as main indicator of this phenomenon.

This research aimed to cover all the member states and give an overall European picture. However, I have faced difficulties with gathering empirical data in order to extract primer, quantitative research results on the one hand because of not accessing European institution's databases of monitored visual coverage. On the other hand, doing a comparative content analysis by involving fellow-researchers within the 28 member states questioned the objectivity and reliability of the gathered data due to the subjective evaluation of news and our replies not being representative. Therefore, I was using raw data gathered by the European Commission through international surveys to map general knowledge and feelings out of which we have exploit figures by combining the preferred variables.

However this means that I could confirm the dynamic and existence of the European public sphere only indirectly, through relying on secunder research results rather than monitoring news coverage. These results are enough to detect cause and causality relations between television news and general opinion. In order to explain these findings we were relying on previous studies and interviews that helped us understand not always visible trends and dynamics.

Another limiting factor is that results procured by these surveys don't exclude the external, influencing elements. When asking, for example, about the feeling European and compare it with the regularity with which one watches television news, I am not taking in consideration other factors that might influence this feeling European other than television. In these cases we might find results that don't look at the context of the European public sphere.

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[421] Rhee, J. W.: *Strategy and Issue Frames in Election Campaign Coverage: A Social Cognitive Account of Framing Effects*. Journal of Communication 47, Autumn, p. 26-48 [1997]
[422] Semetko, H. A., De Vreese, C. H. and Peter, J., p. 121–39. [2000]

## 6.3. Future research

For this reason future research could be conducted by focusing on the external factors and the context of variables mentioned above. Another interesting question to ask could be about ownership. I couldn't get into the depth of the analysis of ownership and how ownership influences framing and news. Content-analysis especially the comparative content-analysis could enable further primer research on the European public sphere.

With respect to public opinion and European integration, one interesting question is whether and to what extent the predominance of a certain issue (such as, for example, common foreign policy in the migration-crisis) has influenced the overall evaluation of European politicians and institutions. According to Semetko and De Vreese further research can be conducted with regard to the politicians within the European public sphere: an interesting research question to pursue could be about the idea of the 'Europeanisation' of politicians, such as the increased visibility of politicians in the context of Europe, for example during the EU presidency of a country. Yet another aspect worth investigating is whether the success or failure of EU policies, initiated by a politician, affect his or her evaluation in the domestic political platform and mediatic space. One might also ask whether those policies have an impact on the public's evaluation of a politician concerning his or her general ability to push European integration further. Than they also add: "It could be expected that negative news about European integration, echoing topics such as bureaucracy, fraud and agriculture, may fuel a negative and cynical perspective of politics and current politicians in other areas, and one might ask whether news contents and effects differ cross-nationally". [423]

Also Semetko and De Vreese have suggested regarding frames that the next step could be to investigate the extent to which those frames are mirrored in public support for further European integration or the opinions concerning the reduction of national sovereignty in decision-making. [424]

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[423] Semetko, H. A., De Vreese, C. H. and Peter, J., p. 121–41. [2000]
[424] Semetko, H. A., De Vreese, C. H. and Peter, J., p. 121–41. [2000]

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