COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

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The communication policy of the European Commission: radio broadcasting since the 90s, from Radio E to Euranet Plus

Abstract

In the middle of the most pronounced economic crisis since its inception, many of the communication policies initiated by the European Union in recent decades must be evaluated and redefined considering the future of the Union. The challenge to define Europe and create a common identity that respects the diversity of cultures within the Union has been attempted through various media policies. We explore the recent evolution of European radio policies, considering a range of projects from the global to network levels (e.g. Radio E, Euranet and Euranet Plus) that are fundamental to our understanding of the use of media in the development of a European identity that respects the diversity of cultures within the Union.

Keywords

Radio broadcasting, European Commission, public policies, diversity, communication

1. Introduction

At present, in the midst of the most pronounced economic crisis since the inception of the European Union (EU), Europe has an opportunity to reconsider its common future. Here, we reflect on the development of primary European Commission (EC) radio policies. The definition of Europe and the creation of a common identity that respects the diversity of cultures within the Union is a challenge that has been confronted by various media policies. However, the final stage of implementation of Euranet provides an ideal opportunity to appraise the evolution of the EU's communication policies to date.

The Treaty of Amsterdam (European Union 1997, 25) notes that "Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship". Conversely, the European institution was described by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas (2003, 95) as "an intergovernmental creation of markets, contrary to the initial program of Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide De Gasperi. It is also the place where euroscepticals confront europhiles and eurofederalists face them both".

According to Eurobarometers, most citizens associate the EU with concepts such as "freedom to travel, study and work; the Euro; peace;

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an important voice in the world; cultural diversity; democracy; economic prosperity and social protection" (Eurobarometer, 2011, 32). Moreover, the majority (62%) of Europeans feel that they are citizens of EU (Eurobarometer, 2013: 5).

These concepts could form a robust foundation for the European project, using mass media, educative systems, information technology (IT) and linguistic policies to promote spaces of understanding (Castells, 2004: 20-22). In this context, the EU's mass media policies are vital for the development of cultural and political identities and could be applied by institutions and political and social organisations to form the basis of communication processes (López Gómez, 2007: 24-31).

Here, we explore the recent evolution of European radio policies, considering a range of projects from the global to network levels (e.g. Radio E, Euranet and Euranet Plus) that are fundamental to understanding media use in the development of a European identity that respects the cultural diversity of Europe.

This article offers the results of research focused on radio projects developed by the European Commission. It presents a comprehensive review of the norms and legislations that European institutions have put in motion, scrutinizing what role the radio plays in the European Commission's general communication strategy. This analysis centres on three specific case studies (Radio E, Euranet and Euranet Plus) from multiple perspectives, taking into consideration legal, economic, political and organizational aspects. To obtain qualitative information about the issues touched upon, the keys to the success or failure of these experiences and the specific characteristics of their production and broadcasting systems, we have made a series of in-depth interviews with their main promoters: Erlends Calabuig (CEO de Euranet and Euranet Plus), Johannes Hoffmann Head of Communications, DWR group), Marie Kindler (journalist at DW Radio) and Thierry Vissol (Special Adviser for Media and Communications at the EC).

2. The European Union radio policy

The European radio sector is not homogeneous: it is composed of national and regional markets and characterised by its highly fragmented nature, which reflects the Union reality (De Smaele, 2009, 17). There are 28 distinct markets, each dominated by public or private radio depending on historical evolution in each country, producing both centralised (e.g. France and Spain) and regional/local (e.g. Germany) models. Similarly, differences in business and policy models have produced systems dominated by public media (Sweden, Germany), private companies (Spain, France, Italy) or both (the UK). For coexisting public and private radio, the EU is dominated by the markets of Germany, the UK, France, Italy, Spain and Denmark (Starkey & Crisell, 2009: 88; European Commission, 2003: 9).

According to data from the EC (Eurobarometer, 2012: 8), "radio is still the second most popular medium with Europeans, but its popularity has slipped since the Eurobarometer survey of autumn 2010: 51% listen to the radio every day or almost every day, a five-point decline". Overall, 76% of Europeans consume radio at least once weekly and EU citizens listen to a daily average of 193 minutes of radio (EBU, 2011: 33) although radio consumption is in decline,

> overall and especially among younger audiences, as a result of several factors: the growing popularity of online music and radio services, greater time spent using the Internet and social media sites as well as the high penetration of portable media devices such as mp3 players, iPods and smartphones. In addition digital TV is spreading rapidly with increasing TV consumption in several markets.

Radio contributes to the creation of a European citizenship space through audience closeness and a schedule adapted to various needs. In particular, the emergence of new

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information technologies (e.g. satellite or online radio), the activity of European broadcast associations (e.g. the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the Association Européenne des Radios (AER) and the expansion of transnational radio business groups (e.g. the RTL Group in Germany, NRJ in France and the Scandinavian Broadcasting System, which belongs to the German group ProSiebenSat.1) are fostering development of the pan-European dimension of the radio sector.

The EU's information and public communication policies have always been influenced by European consolidation and amplification processes. In the 1950s, negotiations between European states on matters of convergence were conducted with a lack of transparency that at times bordered on outright concealment of information, as national leaders were fearful that a well-informed citizenry would resist major moves towards pan-European economic and political integration. The only institutional step taken during this period to provide public information was the founding of the Press and Information Directorate General (DG) in the 1960s. This agency functioned as a European community press office serving accredited journalists covering the activities of the EU's nascent institutions. Increased transparency was achieved during the 1970s following the establishment of the European Council; for example, the Council actively sought broad coverage of the first direct elections of representatives to the European Parliament in 1979. At the end of the 1980s, under the presidency of Jacques Delors, a new DG of Information, Communication and Culture was created to inform average European citizens about the EU project. This new office issued the De Clercq and Oostlander reports, which defined the EU's institutional strategy for public communication for the latter twentieth century. However, the model proposed was vertical and unidirectional, designed to facilitate a top-down, bureaucratic style of communication devoted primarily to conveying the achievements of European institutions to the public—an erroneous approach that, when implemented, served only to dampen citizens' enthusiasm for European convergence and leave them further in the dark regarding the processes underway. Schlesinger (1999: 217) argued that

> the record of public policy intervention to create a common European media space, or to engage the public via official information, has not been a notable success. If there are some signs that the news market is taking a 'European' shape thereby helping to build a restricted communicative space for some, it is important to recognise that this could not have occurred without the prior institutional framework of the European Union.

In search of this 'European shape', the *White Paper on European Governance* (European Commission, 2001) represented a turning point in the communication strategies of European institutions. In particular, the document emphasises the necessity of decentralised communication policies at national and local levels through established communication networks, civil society organisations and local authorities (Pérez García, 2008: 87-89).

In the early 2000s, two primary strategies focusing on television, film and audiovisual production were developed by the EC to promote cultural diversity and an integrated European audiovisual market: the Television Without Frontiers Directive[1] and the different MEDIA programmes of support of the European audiovisual sector (film and television). Nevertheless, radio had not been assigned a definitive role within EU audiovisual and

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[1] The "Television Without Frontiers" Directive (TVWF Directive) is the cornerstone of the European Union's audiovisual policy. It rests on two basic principles: the free movement of European television programmes within the internal market and the requirement for TV channels to reserve, whenever possible, more than half of their transmission time for European works ("broadcasting quotas"). The TVWF Directive also safeguards certain important public interest objectives, such as cultural diversity, the protection of minors and the right of reply. In December 2005 the Commission submitted a proposal to revise the TVWF Directive (europe.eu).

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communication policy as Europe entered the 21st century (Lax, 2010, 80). The marginal role that was subsequently assigned to radio in EC communication policy did not correspond to the credibility and penetration of radio throughout Europe (Fernández Sande and Gallego, 2012: 218).

Real progress was achieved regarding the effectiveness of EU communication policy when Durao Barroso assumed the presidency of the EC in 2005. Margot Wallström became the first vice president and commissioner for the Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy. Introducing Plan D, Wallström emphasised communication with citizens, promoting the use of television, Internet and other new media to connect with wider audiences (Wallström, 2009: 68–69).

In parallel, in 2006 the European Community ratified the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of cultural diversity, which supports some of the communication policies of the EC. This ratification was incorporated into the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* (European Commission, 2007a). This document was grounded in three common objectives: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity and culture as a key component in international relations. Although radio was not included initially, Euranet was launched in 2008 to pursue multilingualism, generate a common European public sphere (Vissol, 2011: 29) and reflect national, cultural and regional diversity within the EU (Euranet, 2013).

In terms of EC policies, Plan D (Democracy, Dialogue and Debate) emerged in 2005, calling for a decentralised, bidirectional model of communication and feedback designed to promote mutual understanding among Europeans by engaging at the local level through programming that expressed a transnational perspective (European Commission, 2005). The announcement of Plan D was followed by the Commission's *White Paper on a European Policy for Communication*, which set out a strategy to transform its unidirectional style of institutional communication into a stronger, two-way citizen-focused dialogue (European Commission, 2006). This document articulated the Commission's goal of ensuring adequate media coverage of European issues and fostering public awareness and debate concerning pan-European issues throughout all member states.

The white paper provided an overview of the Commission's intentions, although further information describing the Commission's plans and priorities for communications in Europe was provided by subsequent publications such as *Communicating Europe in Partnership* (European Commission, 2007b). Such plans contemplated a pan-European multimedia network, whereby institutions within the network would be assigned contracts for several years to develop media content centred on European issues and concerns. Occasionally, several radio and television programmes were co-financed by the EC and Parliament; however, going forward, the Commission confirmed its commitment to supporting a Europe-centric broadcasting network with consistent programming. Broadcasting organisations within the network typically agreed upon common strategies and format but were able to determine programming content independently. Euronews was allocated resources to increase production capacity, and three new media networks were formed: Euranet (radio), PanEuropean TV (television) and Presseurop (Internet).

This policy demonstrated the Commission's firm recognition of radio as an essential tool to create a European civic identity. This pan-European media consortium aimed to increase public interest and engagement in European affairs and provide broader coverage of Europe-related issues. The Commission published *Communicating Europe Through Audiovisual Media* (European Commission, 2008) in April 2008. This publication commenced with a statement that reinforced the commitment to transform European communication, as first suggested by the European Council in June 2007. Television and news were the principal sources of information for most of the European population; accordingly, they were assigned critical roles in this milestone enterprise and formed the pillars of the pan–

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European communication strategy going forward, being enhanced subsequently by the emerging Internet medium. The pan-European network aimed primarily to produce a multilingual "European public sphere" to allow the European population to access news and information with a perspective that extended beyond national boundaries and regional views. In this context, the following sections discuss the evolution of European radio policy in detail, with reference to two of the most important projects initiated during the last two decades.

3. A "European Radio": first experiences in the 90s

The 90s involved change in EC radio policies for two primary reasons: the legacy of previous policies (e.g. the Television Without Frontiers Directive) that had pursued a single European broadcasting market (O'Neill & Shaw, 2010: 34), and the work of the EBU to implement digital audio broadcasting (DAB) as the primary digital radio standard from 1985 onwards. The European digital radio project was initiated in 1995 (the year of the first digital broadcast) under the leadership of the European newsroom of Radio France Internationale (RFI) and with an important technology profile focused on implementing the new digital standard. This project involved creating a European radio station with programs produced by several international radio broadcasters across Europe. Groothues (1997: 93) described the project as follows: "The Parliament Committee for Culture and Media offered 600 000 ECU for the project in 1994. Meanwhile, enthusiasm for Radio E seems to have spread to Brussels and Strasbourg: That same year, the EU offered us additional 450,000 ECU". An internal document from 1995 discusses the renewed project, Radio E, as follows: "Radio E should in the long term become a public European station. European by its programs and European by its broadcasting zone" (Radio E: 1995)

Based on this idea, RFI, Deutsche Welle Radio (DWR) and the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service (BBCWS) sought a common objective: to produce a common European and multilingual radio project. Accordingly, journalists from each partner worked together on common programs, with one program for each language: Network Europe (BBC), Accents d'Europe (RFI) and Europa—das Magazin (DWR).

Previously, cooperation had been initiated with the program "La Rédaction Europe", which was broadcast by RFI between 1992 and 1995 and coordinated from the European newsroom. Co-directed by Erlends Calabuig, this program was a daily 20-minute magazine show that combined, for the first time, the European "Cross Vision" of developing a multicultural production with professionals from RFI, DWR, BBC, Radio Nederland and SRI. RFI broadcast this program in German, English, French and Spanish. This international co-production contributed considerably to the development of Radio E, planted the seed for Accents d'Europe and was an important influence on the configuration of Euranet[2]. With the support of the EC and the abovementioned international broadcasting services, Radio E continued until 1999, when the EC grant expired.

We believe that the project failed for several reasons, including the lack of implementation of DAB in the International Broadcasting Services, which selected Digital Radio Mondiale and the Internet for digital development of the project. Marie Kindler[3], journalist at DW Radio, stated that the renunciation of DAB was the first critical obstacle to the continuation of the Radio E project: "There was a first change when the unlucky DAB was given up. Clearly, the technical dimension of the project—DAB technology—was a setback". The lack of institutional involvement from various partners also had direct effects. For example, Calabuig left RFI temporarily and the BBC left the project at an early stage.

[2] Calabuig, Erlends. Interview by Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I., 3 May 2013.
[3] Kindler, M. Interview by Demonget, A., 10 August 2004.

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Nevertheless, Radio E produced some interesting results: the sustainability of cooperation between journalists from DW and RFI is a very positive result (Demonget, 2012, 211) and likely planted the seed of Euranet, the most ambitious network to date.

4. Euranet: the beginning of a multilingual network

The Euranet network was conceived in 2005 in the wake of a new EU communication strategy that embraced all major communications media across Europe, aiming to construct a sense of pan-European citizenship and provide citizens throughout Europe with a decentralised, bidirectional media network delivering transnational information about European issues and events, thus creating a new European public sphere. This strategy required more than simply channelling news and information about the activity of EU institutions and their representatives to the public: it required media programming that would generate a transnational perspective on European events and issues and a sense of the wide-ranging role that the EU framework played in the lives of all Europeans.

Within this framework, the EC Directive *Communicating Europe Through Audiovisual Media* (European Commission, 2008) presented the mission and editorial policy for Euranet, establishing that the EU would underwrite the cost of the initiative but respect the independence of all affiliated stations. This document allocated an annual budget of 5.8 million euros for the project, guaranteeing funding for at least five years. In return for this support, the network was to produce and broadcast 4,221 hours of content "by Europeans for Europeans". The EC estimated that Euranet would reach 12–19 million radio listeners and set its expectations for Euranet website traffic at 60–80 million visits annually.

In reality, plans for Euranet were already underway several months before the project was made public. Antoine Schwarz (president of RFI, 2004–2008) was a leading figure in implementing pan-European radio, although Erlends Calabuig (then deputy general manager of Euranet) became Euranet's architect thanks to his previous experience coordinating projects with international broadcasting services in Europe[4].

Additionally, the Euranet structure was opened up to other broadcasters (e.g. private networks, university and community stations) to help expand the culture of cooperation.

Although the name "Euranet" did not appear in the annual work programme on grants and contracts in the field of communications released by the Commission for 2007, the document mentioned a 'EuRadio network' and included a budget item of 5.5 million euros, earmarked for the creation of a pan-European radio network under the category "audiovisual productions and multimedia projects". This funding increased steadily in subsequent years: it rose to 5.8 million euros in 2008, remained constant (6 million) during 2009–2010 and increased rapidly again (6.3 million) in 2011 (European Commission, 2007c, 2008b, 2009, 2010, 2011)[5].

Euranet began as an idea for a European radio network, proposed to the Commission in July 2007 by 16 broadcasters operating in 13 European countries. The project was fast-tracked and the network went on air in April 2008. This new network furthered EU communication strategy in a number of ways. Most importantly, it fulfilled its objective of providing news and information reported from a well-reasoned transnational perspective through national and regional channels. No plan for a centralised European radio broadcast system based in Brussels was ever considered.

On 26 February 2008, Commissioner Wallström presented the project as a medium- to long-term initiative backed by an EC financial commitment of at least six million euros in

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[4] Calabuig, Erlends. Interview by Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I , 3 May 2013.
[5] Euranet budget. Data source: European Commission, Annual Work Programme on Grants and Contracts in the Field of Communications, 2007-2011.

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annual funding, guaranteed throughout 2012. The challenges faced included expanding the network to incorporate an affiliate station in each member state and broadcasting in the EU's 23 official languages by 2013.

Concrete applications of European communication policies for radio were also developed. During the first phase of Euranet's development, Radio France Internationale and Deutsche Welle provided management leadership for the network. Both broadcasters consolidated the initial network with 14 additional founding members: Euranet founding members were as follows: Radio France Internationale (RFI, France), Deutsche Welle (Germany), Polskie Radio (Poland), RTBF (Belgium), Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (Netherlands), Magyar Radio (Hungary), Bulgarian National Radio (Bulgaria), Punto Radio Castilla y León (Spain), Radio Praha (Czech Republic), Radio Romania International (Romania), Radio Slovenia International (Slovenia), Skai Radio (Greece), Polskie Radio Szczecin (Poland), RFI Romania (Romania), RFI Sofía (Bulgaria), and Europa Lisboa (Portugal). These 16 affiliates represented 13 EU member states and broadcast in German, English, French, Bulgarian, Spanish, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese and Romanian.

Thierry Vissol, Special Adviser for Media and Communications at the EC and an integral promoter of the Euranet project, noted that the project was founded owing to "the insufficient content quality and return on investment of previous grant programs (like the APCAV) to individual radio operators"[6].

Although certain key countries (e.g. Great Britain, Italy) did not participate, the pan-European multimedia network demonstrated significant potential initially. Collaborations were forged by the network's founders between radio stations and broadcasting companies. Euranet comprised an assortment of public and private broadcasting companies, servicing a dissipated spectrum of local, regional and international audiences. This audience dissipation strengthened and broadened the network's vision of European radio but also contributed to certain organisational weaknesses. Moreover, some large broadcasting corporations in Europe did not participate. This hindered the ability of Euranet to reach a mass audience and resulted in an inconsistent operating network (e.g. two radio stations in Poland but no affiliates in Great Britain or Italy). Vissol considered the causes of these inconsistencies:

> First, programs on EU affairs are not much developed and often considered as not creating much interest from the auditors. Second in many countries, specifically, UK, Germany and other Nordic countries public broadcasters refuse any financial contribution from the EU (either by law or by absence of interest). Third, in some countries (like Italy), their management was too complex to respond to the call for tender[7].

All Euranet affiliates enjoy complete editorial freedom. The EC does not intervene in decisions concerning broadcast content and all Euranet management decisions are made democratically, with the participation of the general directors of member media organisations.

An editorial committee and five language-based working groups (English, German, French, Spanish and Polish) coordinate and focus the programming. Punto Radio Castilla y León heads the Spanish language group, which collaborates with broadcasters in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Holland and France.

To impart a more Eurocentric tone to the overall programming of participating stations, Euranet-produced content was distributed throughout their programming schedules rather than presented as a separate feature sponsored by the EU. Each station

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[6] Vissol, Thierry. Interview by Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I., 20 December 2011.
[7] Vissol, Thierry. Interview by Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I., 20 December 2011.

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adapts this content to suit their style of broadcasting. One of the most interesting aspects of Euranet is its capacity to develop and administer international broadcast collaborations while respecting each partner's personal style of operating and connecting with audiences. The Euranet editorial charter clearly states its commitment to the independence and autonomy of its affiliates. The network considers its programming to be an EU service that tries to transcend the too often national framework of European news coverage by adopting a genuinely pan-European approach, broadcasting in all 23 languages of the EU and covering the diverse political, economic, cultural and social events of the Union. To achieve such diversity in content, the Euranet network combines public, community and private media. The different aims of these broadcasters, which typically depend on their funding sources, can impede the implementation of Europe-wide policies (Euranet, 2013).

Content production can be approached from three complementary perspectives: coordination, cooperation and the articulation of a transnational perspective. Euranet's goal is to produce diverse, informative programming about issues of substance that is suitable for distribution to other partners in its network. To ensure that that its programming reflects the diversity of the European scene, it divides its coverage into five broad categories: EU policy, the EU as seen through the political perspectives of its different member states, how EU policy plays out in the lives of European citizens, 'transnational perspectives' (i.e. case studies of how solutions to problems formulated by one member state might be helpful in solving the problems of others) and "EU Miscellany" (which informs European radio listeners about events and happenings beyond their own national borders and the European continent). This editorial policy is based on the five circles of European information: EU policies (institutional), EU policies (national), influence of EU policies on everyday life, EU transverse view and EU diversity (Euranet, 2012, 32).

Dr. Johannes Hoffmann, head of the communication sector of DWR, has explained that DWR viewed Euranet as an opportunity to combine the cultural diversity of the continent with other media of Europe, for all European citizens, adding that "media has a responsibility for the citizens that is why they must reinforce their collaboration"[8].

Program content is typically categorised as news, analysis (i.e. that featuring special reports on subjects of interest to citizens) and live coverage of events and happenings.

The editorial work involved in the production and distribution of Euranet's content is complex and must be coordinated in several ways; such coordination entails handling communications between affiliate members, guaranteeing the continuity of a joint strategy, ensuring that all principles of the charter are respected, establishing a common agenda for following current events and news in Europe and conducting routine tasks for the editorial committee.

The audio programming designed by Euranet was intended to promote the sharing of content and distribution, and time slots for Euranet programming are configured into each station's format. Euranet made excellent use of Internet technology in addition to its FM satellite and short-wave transmissions. In July 2008, www.euranet.eu was launched, providing an interactive platform in 18 languages. This platform acted as a common interface for all Euranet partner stations and helped distribute member content to other audiences throughout the network. The site can be used by audiences to view programming schedules through hyperlinks provided in the section entitled "radio a la carte". All of the published Euranet audio files can be accessed by users by language, and users can create personal playlists. From its inception, this website was intended to provide more than merely a point of access to radio programming; the website also contains surveys, an

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[8] Hoffmann, Johannes. Interview by Demonget, A., 29 November 2011.

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analysis of EU issues, information on the "Connecting Euranet" initiative and user comments.

The Euranet University Circle represented one of the most interesting projects associated with Euranet and consisted of a collection of university radio stations that worked together to produce and transmit programming for the network. It has been demonstrated that university students represent one of the demographic groups interested in EU-related topics. Accordingly, it has been critical for Euranet to reach this audience since its conception. Many university radio stations work together, both to produce content and transmit Euranet programs. Accordingly, information about Euranet is typically included within their websites. These stations also played an important role in the creation of an online forum known as "Connect Euranet: Connecting U and the EU" in 2011. This forum was intended to attract young Europeans to exchange opinions and discuss European issues, allowing them to provide questions, ideas and comments for EU decision-makers and institutions through the launch of a new forum each month. Topics such as employment, youth mobility and climate change have been the subject of previous forums.

Euranet's organisational structure originally consisted of a consortium of independent network affiliates. It operated under this structure, with representatives of Deutsche Welle and RFI occupying the highest positions of responsibility within the consortium, during the first two years of its existence (2007 until May 2009). This major engagement and the associated French–German partnership continued in the formal project known as Radio E. Dr Johannes Hoffmann explains: "From Radio E in 1995 until Euranet, the DWR and RFI always maintained their partnership". Logically, DWR and RFI remain very close and participate in the Euranet project voluntarily, according to Dr Hoffmann: "Under the guidance of Deutsche Welle and Radio France Internationale (RFI) on 28 February 2007 representatives of European broadcasters laid the foundation for more intensive, transnational cooperation"[9].

A change in the organisation's legal status, made public by the Warsaw Declaration of 27 May 2009, marked a radical departure from this initial model. Eager to enhance the flexibility and viability of the group's decision-making processes, members of the network spent the months preceding the Warsaw Declaration creating a new legal entity designed to replace the original Euranet consortium structure under the banner of the European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). The group announced this change in legal status formally and issued a pan-European declaration of cooperation and communication at the Warsaw meeting. This change in legal status implied a profound transformation of Euranet's organisational structure. Deutsche Welle and Magyar Radio left the group, citing conflict between its new legal structure and their status as public entities. Johannes Hoffmann explains:

> With the transformation of Euranet consortium into a 'European Economic Interest Grouping' (EEIG), Euranet became not just a different structure, but also a different quality. The related consequences would not have been with the program-related independence of DW compatible[10].

With the exit of Deutsche Welle, the group's leadership could no longer be divided between two major partners; going forward, RFI assumed this role alone. This organisational change (driven by the EC) was considered fundamental by Erlends Calabuig[11] because it allowed increased effectiveness and protected the management structure from

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[9] Hoffmann, Johannes. Interview by Demonget, A., 29 November 2011.
[10] Hoffmann, Johannes. Interview by Demonget, A., 29 November 2011.
[11] Calabuig, Erlends. Interview Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I, 3 May 2013.

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various political changes that determined the evolution of public service media and their participating consortiums.

Further changes to Euranet's organisational structure were implemented at the annual meeting held in Greece in 2009. To improve operational efficiency, the group decided to delegate formerly shared management responsibilities to a single chief operating officer responsible for all of Euranet's operations. Erlends Calabuig of RFI, who at that time was serving as the organisation's general financial director, was chosen to fill this new position. Under this new arrangement, the CEO is responsible for the editorial, financial and administrative activities of the organisation. A general editorial director (COO for editorial content) is now responsible for the editorial teams. The current COO for editorial content heads two divisions: web/social networks and radio. Financial responsibilities are divided among three positions: financial manager, accounting manager and internal consultant.

After four years and five months of uninterrupted diffusion, the EC decided not to renew the Euranet project in December 2012. By the time of its termination, Euranet will have transmitted 110,000 minutes (approximately 2,000 hours) of independently produced, Eurocentric programming each year. Each station devotes 30–60 minutes of air time to European issues distributed throughout a wide variety of news and entertainment programmes, the latter of which cover European sports, travel and culture. According to data provided by the Commission (European Commission, 2012), Euranet reaches an audience of nearly 20 million radio listeners.

However, the end of this particular project does not represent the end of pan-European networks. For example, the project "Europe Towards 2014" has been co-founded by the European Parliament (under the project entitled "SPECIFIC CALL FOR PROPOSALS COMM/2012/02") and generates information related to the 2014 European election in five languages (French, German, Italian, Polish and Spanish). Moreover, it provides a continuation of the Connect Euranet forum, funded by the Education and Culture DG of the EC. Viviane Reding, the new vice-president of the EC, transformed some of the previous communication policies that were developed by Margot Wallström (which were terminated along with the original Euranet project), and the new DG of Communication team have launched a new tender for a pan-European radio.

The new contract entitled "B-Brussels: production and broadcast of radio programmes on EU affairs, on air and on digital platforms, by a network of EU radio broadcasters" (European Commission, 2012b) was introduced in 2013 with new bidding conditions. These include strict specifications regarding audience numbers (an accumulated audience of least 10 million people), thus excluding some of the previous partners: a third of the Euranet project broadcasters, including some of the public international services, have been excluded from the tender. Moreover, the partner that wins the tender must open and maintain an office in Brussels to maximise the quality of the coverage of EU affairs.

This new contract, published in January 2013 (European Commission, 2013), has a budget of 24.4 million euros for four years (2013–2017). This initiative is known as Euranet Plus and, with Erlends Calabuig as CEO, requires the various partners to include at least 65 minutes of EU content in their schedules each week. Euranet Plus began broadcasting in April 2013 with 13 broadcasters (seven public and six private) and intends to add one or two new partners each year[12]. The stations that formed Euranet Plus in June 2013 were as follows. Public stations: RTBF (Belgium), RTVSLO (Slovenia), Polskie Radio (Poland), Bulgarian National Radio (BNR, Bulgaria), Radio Romania (Romania), Magyar Radio (Hungary), Latvijas Radio (Latvia). Private stations: BFM Business (France), Punto Radio

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[12] Calabuig, Erlends. Interview Fernández Sande, M. and Gallego Pérez, J.I, 3 May 2013.

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Castilla y León (Spain), Radio 24 (Italy), Skai Radio (Greece), AMS (Germany), SkyMedia (Estonia).

The remuneration system is based on the audience achieved by individual broadcasters. By June 2013, the network's general audience had reached almost 25 million and a new Euranet Plus News Agency had been developed in the International Press Center in Brussels.

5. Conclusions

The role of radio in the EU's media policy has changed considerably over the past 20 years. From the first projects driven by Radio France Internationale to the latest stage, Euranet Plus, the consideration of radio by the EC could feasibly be described as reticent and discontinuous. Based on the relative lack of 'cultural belonging' displayed by European citizens and the highly diverse nature of radio audiences (Tsaliki, 2007: 179) EC policies regarding radio may not be considered particularly important. Accordingly, the EC has not prioritised radio explicitly, even while supporting projects such as Euranet. For example, Euranet was not included in the last periodic report of the EU that described measures proposed to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expression in the framework of the 2005 UNESCO Convention (European Commission, 2012c). Moreover, in comparison to other audiovisual projects with similar budgetary characteristics (e.g. Media or Euronews), radio has received very little funding.

Conversely, it is noteworthy that various leadership changes (at the institutional, national or supranational levels) have affected the continuity of related projects. For example, although Radio E represented a good starting point, its applicability was limited in the real world and the operation of Euranet was interrupted in 2012. Regardless of its structural problems and weaknesses, Euranet can be considered the most important radio experience of the EU's communication policy, yet the efforts of the partners to build an operational network under complex and diverse conditions have had little impact on audiences and the media sector as a whole.

Euranet, at its core, was focused on the development of the "Cross Vision" concept. This concept encompasses the application of some the principles suggested by the EC in the *White Paper on Communication* and subsequent directives. This culture of cooperation between broadcasters of different origin (public, private, international services, regional networks and community or college radios) within the same network is one of the greatest achievements of Euranet. Nevertheless, Euranet and Euranet Plus have experienced difficulties in achieving some of their goals owing to the lack of relevant partners in some countries and the lack of sufficient audience for the programs produced by the network. The lack of coherence in the European Commission radio policy is reflected in the inconsistency and general evolution of the Euranet and Euranet Plus projects. The initial impetus for these projects, led by some of the most important European public international radio stations (RFI, DW), has been transformed into a structure based on a selection of private companies with a secondary role in their markets. We believe that the lack of participation of the most important public service media (BBC, RAI, RTVE, RF or DW) in the most important EC radio project to date contradicts the original aims of the project and has allowed the direct transfer of public funds to private enterprises. This transfer of public funds should have incorporated some control over the return of funds, the accountability of the results, and the real impact of the content produced for the specific audiences of the different partners.

Finally, the current economic and political crisis in the EU has highlighted the need for a better and more transparent communication policy for European institutions. Radio could play an essential role in such a policy owing to its credibility and considerable audiences.

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Furthermore, as observers of European policy, we will continue to investigate how this new network could help develop media diversity, a real balanced pluralism, real knowledge of the European situation and a common project that improves democratic quality.

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