

*E' privilegio della sperimentazione di percorrere strade non tracciate con tutti i limiti e i vantaggi che ciò può comportare.*

*It is the privilege of experimentation to travel along roads that are not traced with all the limits and advantages that this may entail.*

(Alessandro Silj, Dati per la verifica dei programmi trasmessi: Eurikon, 1982)

## **TV Eurikon and Europa TV: Research on the Beginning of Transnational pan-European Television<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The article examines the success or failure of two experimental pan-European channels, TV Eurikon and Europa TV, focusing on the role of television in shaping European identity. The research, carried out thanks to the International Visegrad Fund Research Grant Program and the Historical Archives of the European Union, showed that balanced reporting during development of satellite communication and strong pan-European communication strategy are of key importance for shaping the public perception of supranational institutions like the EU. To achieve success, policy makers must overcome obstacles such as linguistic diversity, regulatory frameworks and national interests. Although we are not in the era of the beginning of satellite systems, Europe should consider new models of cooperation, cultural exchanges and different perspectives for the long-term sustainability of similar pan-European initiatives.

*Keywords:* television, Europe, satellite communication, TV Eurikon, Europa TV

## **TV Eurikon and TV Europa: Research on the Beginning of Transnational pan-European Television**

### **Introduction**

National identities in Europe are traced back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, but challenges from transnational agencies, new political groups, and the media have transformed the landscape over time. The construction of European

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identity is multifaceted, with economic and political factors having a greater impact than cultural factors. The European Union, which was first founded as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), promoted open markets and democratic engagement in order to maintain stability. However, cultural and media components can be seen as the most important for European identity creation. As a result, European integration and cultural identity formation have gained attention in recent decades. Moreover, researchers began to introduce media as a concept that is indispensable in contemporary European society. Television was the dominant medium in the twentieth century, promoting European identity formation through collective representations. However, scholars disagree on the media's role in shaping the European public sphere. The "impossibility school" believes there is no common European public sphere due to lack of common language, pan-European media, and shared identity, while the "realistic school" argues for Europeanization of the national sphere. My scholarly pursuits are rooted in the belief that television has played a pivotal role as a communication medium of the twentieth century, fostering the emergence of a collective European consciousness. My fascination lies with the initial stages of television's incorporation into the reporting and broadcasting of European matters. More importantly, I would like to comprehend the economic, legal, and political foundations that led to the development of TV Eurikon and Europa TV and the reason why they disappeared and are now almost completely forgotten. The research gap emphasizes the importance of further examination of the institutionalization of transnational pan-European television and its effects on Europe's cultural identity. This article aims to delve into various elements that dictate the success or failure of such ventures, and their implications on media policy within Europe. The inquiry centers on the potential of television during its nascent phase to contribute to the forging of a European identity, and whether Europe must deliberate on new paradigms to advance pan-European media initiatives.

### **Methodology and research background**

Transnationality is the slow formation of a common culture or feeling of community based on transnational experiences, which shapes nation-state identities but does not happen instantaneously. Transnationality is the process of cultural integration and identity creation that transcends national boundaries and is influenced by cross-national experiences. Transnational television flows, which are multidirectional streams of content that span several industries and viewers, are an example of this. These flows engage institutions, viewers, creators, and content providers, resulting in a fusion of cultural elements. The aesthetic quality of these flows helps to shape a collective global culture, affecting local traditions and media consumption expectations. As we can see, transnational television flows occur across institutions, people, programs, production, and aesthetics. "Here transnational means a common (preferably simultaneous) experience of television programs (images and/or content) across national borders (...)" (Henrich-Franke, 2010: 68)."

Historically, European broadcasters have been national, encompassing the whole national territory. Television's relationship with the nation-state has changed since the 1980s due to two developments: transnationalization, which has led to the growth of transnational media corporations and the expansion of international television trade, and decentralization, which has resulted in the development of intricate local and regional broadcasting systems. The relationship between the media and the nation-state is redefined by pan-European television, which both challenge and supplement national broadcasters (Chalaby, J. K., 2002).

There were disagreements in the pan-European television debate in Europe during the 1980s. America's hegemony in media content and the expanding commercial services sector put the European public broadcasting system under intense competition. Since national programs have historically been the only ones available, it was also necessary to consider the intricacy of national preferences for television programming. This implies that new power dynamics and shifting cultural and economic regimes required policy adaptation:

“How one can justify a European intervention in audiovisual matters? Basically, there were two ways out of this dilemma. One was to claim that ‘free trade’ and ‘Europeanism’ were highly compatible. Let us suppose that Europeans are thirsty for European material (other than their own national programmes), though history proves otherwise. Thus, any policy encouraging the development of a fluid European market of European programmes could claim to be both connected to a ‘free market’ and to ‘identity policy’” (Bourdon, 2007: 269).

Also, television viewership has become more diverse and pluralistic as national broadcasting rights are deregulated and privatized, and cable, satellite, and digital technologies become more widely available. Overall, satellite communication has proven to be a valuable tool in promoting cultural exchange and fostering international cooperation. With technological advancements, the potential for satellites to further enhance diplomatic relations and bridge cultural divides was promising. However, Bourdon believes that pan-European trials with TV Europa and TV Eurikon were to execute the ‘Green Paper’, spread European culture, and aid in the establishment of European identity. “Based on the same technocultural determinism as the Green Paper, the experiments failed” (Bourdon, 2007: 271).

This paper is an attempt to approach the subject from a new angle, albeit one that is not as critical as that of Bourdon's, whose catchy title (*Unhappy Engineers of the European Soul: The EBU and the Woes of Pan-European Television*) already alludes to a negative consequence of the creation of the European cultural identity. From the previous literature, we have learned what has not been done (Collins, 1998; Bourdon, 2007; Polonska-Kimunguyi & Kimunguyi, 2011). My aim is to show with this paper what was done in the early 1980s of the 20th century. I would not have been able to show it if I had not immersed myself in a huge amount of archival material from the Historical Archives of the European Union thanks to the International Visegrad Foundation Grant Program. The research was conducted in August and September 2023. After searching for the keywords *TV Europa*, *TV*

*Eurikon*, *satellite*, and *television*, all publicly available materials were ordered. Since the majority of the texts were in physical format, they had to be saved in several folders. Part of the content was available digitally. The main research period referred to the five years between 1980 and 1985. Nevertheless, as there were earlier stages in the preparation of policies towards the development of the satellite program, as well as the consequences of the termination of the two aforementioned experimental programs, the texts from the end of the 70s of the 20th century and the three following years, 1986-1988, were also analyzed.

### **From a pan-European idea to an action initiative**

The idea of being able to watch a joint program regardless of which European country you are in appeared in the sixties of the 20th century, but, like any innovative idea, it took time to take concrete technical, legal and financial steps. It would certainly be a difficult task, mostly due to the harmonization of the normative and legal framework of different national legal systems and also international law. European countries' unique broadcasting and media regulations necessitated extensive coordination and cooperation to reconcile content standards, advertising regulations, copyright laws, and licensing requirements for a joint program. Additionally, following international rules and managing issues of jurisdiction, cross-border broadcasting rights, and intellectual property protection were necessary in order to establish a single program spanning European countries. Apart from legal considerations, there were also significant technical and financial challenges. As indicated, while the idea of creating a joint program for European countries may have originated in the sixties, its realization was impeded by a multitude of challenges.

In the early 1980s, the European Parliament seriously considered radio and television broadcasting primarily for political reasons, which were as follows: decision-making processes, insufficient public information about the work and development of European institutions, inadequate and negative information about the European Community, and the need to present the community in a professional manner. In addition, the reasons were also of a media nature, taking into account primarily the power of television and the accelerated development of satellite technology. The initiative itself was officially launched on September 18, 1980, when the European Parliament adopted the resolution and Schall report *The information policy of the European Communities and of the European Parliament calling for either the establishment of a new 'European television company' or the establishment of 'a European television channel'*.<sup>4</sup> At that time, television was perceived as a very important tool for the unification of Europe: "Television could contribute more to developing a wider understanding of the benefits of the European Union."<sup>5</sup> This means that there was no certainty about whether it

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<sup>4</sup> European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Télévision: relations avec les professionnels de la télévision, rapports - Plan d'action pour l'introduction des services de télévision avancés en Europe*, Documents from [1977] to [1993], CEUE\_PICP-459,

was even possible for the national broadcast services to harmonize enough to create a common European television program, so the idea of an independent and autonomous pan-European company that would be freed from the influence of the existing national companies was emphasized. Its headquarters could be in Luxembourg, but the costs and difficulties of organizing such an international media company are quite high, and the European Parliament was aware of that. Although the conclusion about the benefits of this solution is quite adequate, considering the projection that ‘television journalists with a European outlook will only emerge when a real European role has been defined for them’, this solution was nevertheless rejected.<sup>6</sup>

### **A joint European channel of several broadcasters is less complicated and costs less**

Consequently, they resorted to what was supposed to be less complicated and cost less. It was a joint European channel of several broadcasters that was broadcast via the fifth channel of the satellite. That solution was called realistic and the key to its realization was seen in the cooperation of national broadcast services within Eurovision with the help of the development of satellite technology, which was detected in November 1980 at the EBU conference in Venice. Although the national broadcast companies had different ideas on how to make a European program, the best proposal, in the opinion of the European Parliament, was given by the second German program ZDF, on March 19, 1981 with the projection that broadcasting could start in 1986. It seemed quite feasible, and the consequences could be the following: A joint European television channel will give further cohesion to the European Community, uniting the citizens of Europe, and provide it with a medium which, even if it is not managed by the Community itself, by its very existence will increase the feeling of solidarity among Europeans.<sup>7</sup> As indicated, the major purpose of the collaborative European television channel was to strengthen ties within the European Community by bringing its citizens together under a common media umbrella. This program would allow Europeans to access a unified broadcast network, boosting communal involvement. While this channel was planned to run freely, not directly overseen by the European Community, the decision-makers believed that its very existence would serve as a catalyst for cultivating a stronger sense of togetherness among Europe’s diverse people. From the same Working Document from 1982, it was evident that thoughts also went in the direction of European unification and

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BAC101/1999\_0520, 23.3.1982, p.445.

<sup>6</sup> European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p.10

<sup>7</sup> European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p.13

common identity with the help of television and new satellite technology that would break existing borders: “European unification will only be achieved if Europeans want it. Europeans will only want it if there is such a thing as a European identity. A European identity will only develop if Europeans are adequately informed. At present, information via the mass media is controlled at national level. The vast majority of journalists do not ‘think European’ because their reporting role is defined in national or regional terms. Hence the predominance of negative reporting. Therefore, if European unification is to be encouraged, Europe must penetrate the media.”<sup>8</sup> The development of television and satellite technology may serve to promote European unity and shared identity, which is dependent on European residents’ desire for a collective European identity. This shared identity can only emerge if people throughout Europe receive full and reliable information. At the period, media dissemination was predominantly national, which influenced journalists’ viewpoints and reporting style, resulting in negative storylines. To foster European integration, it was critical that European-centric information obtain more access and exposure in the media landscape, resulting in a more balanced and inclusive narrative. The Commission also conducted a preliminary survey through “Eurobarometer” to gauge public interest in a multilingual European television program. The survey, conducted in October-November 1982, involved 6,600 adults aged 15 and over in 10 European countries. The results showed that 57% of Europeans expressed interest in the project of a European television channel.<sup>9</sup> In December 1981, the European Space Agency (ESA) offered the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) the second TDS channel for a pan-European program on the L-Sat satellite. The channel was designed to be oriented towards any EBU member country.<sup>10</sup>

The Working document from 23.2.1982 states what this European channel should cover and pay attention to: language adaptability, technical operability, respect for diversity, fulfillment of three media functions: information, education and entertainment.<sup>11</sup> During the early 1980s, it was of paramount importance for the European Community to prioritize and focus on several key aspects to enhance communication efficacy. This included a strong emphasis on adapting

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<sup>8</sup> European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81, p 8.

<sup>9</sup> Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

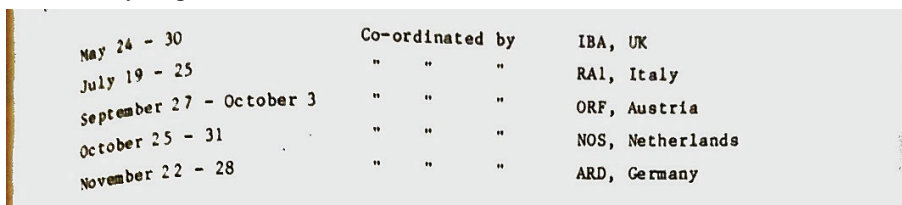
<sup>10</sup> Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

<sup>11</sup> European Parliament, Working documents 1981-1982, 23.2.1982, document 1-1013/81, Report drawn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education, Information and Sport on radio and television broadcasting in the European Community, PE1-17458 Radiodiffusion et télévision dans la Communauté européenne, Document date: [1981], PE1 AP RP/JEUN.1979 A1-1013/81

languages for wider comprehension, ensuring the technical systems were operable and conducive to communication, valuing and acknowledging the rich tapestry of cultural diversity, and ensuring that broad media functions were satisfied. First, the European Community (EC) was established with diverse linguistic backgrounds, necessitating language adaptability in communication channels for effective communication and community inclusivity. Secondly, technological advancements were rapidly transforming the media landscape, and the European Commission (EC) was prioritizing technical operability to leverage emerging technologies, ensuring effective communication channels and staying updated on technological developments across borders. Further, the European Community was founded on principles of unity and cooperation among diverse nations. Respecting diversity in communication meant acknowledging and celebrating the cultural differences present within the community. By promoting diversity in media content and representation, the EC could foster mutual understanding and tolerance among member states. Finally, information, education, and entertainment were fundamental functions of media with a vital role in shaping public opinion and fostering societal development. This multi-faceted approach was critical in promoting seamless communication across member states, supporting the ideal of unity within European society, and addressing the varied requirements and expectations of its vast citizenry.

In 1982, the EBU organized a five-week test broadcast of EURIKON to address content, style, organization, coordination, financial, and legal issues related to a joint European television program produced by Member State organizations. The experiment involved 35 hours of broadcast per week, sent in code to the Orbital Test Satellite (OTS-2).<sup>12</sup>

**Picture 1, TV Eurikon broadcasting**, from: Spicer, J. A Progress Report from 1982 prepared for the Directorate –General Information Commission of the European Community, September 1982, source HAEU



|                          | Co-ordinated by  |  |
|--------------------------|------------------|--|
| May 24 - 30              | IBA, UK          |  |
| July 19 - 25             | RAI, Italy       |  |
| September 27 - October 3 | ORF, Austria     |  |
| October 25 - 31          | NOS, Netherlands |  |
| November 22 - 28         | ARD, Germany     |  |

In the opinion of Alessandro Silj, the Eurikon experiment emerged almost by accident, freeing it up for usage in other European Broadcasting Union (EBU) research. Five countries, including the United Kingdom (IBA), Italy (RAI), West Germany (ARD), Austria (ORF) and Nederland (NOS), agreed to implement programs, while nine countries provided programs if requested and eighteen

<sup>12</sup> Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

countries could receive it in total.<sup>13</sup> Although the concept of pan-European was not developed nor was identity belonging to the European space, everyone participated “knowing the limits of the experiment, but finding it useful as a step forward towards programming European” (Silj, 1982: 3). In conclusion, the experiment was viewed as a valuable stepping stone, a preliminary exploration in the attempt to create a shared European broadcasting space that may foster a sense of unity and cultural expression among Europe’s different nations. This collaborative attitude and readiness to start on such an innovative undertaking highlight the potential of media to operate as a unifying force, bringing together countries with unique histories and languages under the banner of a united European endeavor.

### **‘A tricky business’ of a joint channel**

In the document, Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat) by the ESA joint board on communication satellite programs, it is repeated that EBU and ESA have been cooperating for a long time and together they are making the most important steps in the development of broadcasting satellite television. It also states that the first mention of the practical use of L-Sat for this purpose was in the end of 1980 in an ‘exchange of letters on this subject between the Director General and the President of the EBU.’<sup>14</sup> But what is most important in this documentary is the conclusion of why the experimental TV Eurikon program did not show success: ‘With regard to the programs themselves the accent is on the daily transmission of programs with a character intended for the general public. At present there are in practice no such programs, and a special effort will be required to produce them. The Eurikon experiment carried out with the OTS showed, moreover, that making programs intended for audiences throughout Europe was a tricky business especially where simultaneous interpretation into several languages is concerned.’<sup>15</sup> The Eurikon project, executed in partnership with the OTS, illuminated the challenging nature of producing television programs intended for pan-European viewership, particularly in the context of delivering simultaneous interpretation into multiple languages. Indeed, the most complex technical problem was the language for which different solutions were tested. A variety of potential solutions were evaluated, including simultaneous interpretation, where linguists translate the spoken content as it occurs;

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<sup>13</sup> Dati per la verifica dei programmi trasmessi: Eurikon, Un esperimento di televisione europea di Luciano Li Causi, Introduzione di Alessandro Silj, RAI Radiotelevisione italiana Segreteria del consiglio di amministrazione Verifica programmi trasmessi, 1982.

<sup>14</sup> ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1

<sup>15</sup> Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat), ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1



voice-over dubbing, where original audio is replaced with translated dialogue; and the provision of subtitles, which display translated text on the screen corresponding to the spoken words.

Additionally, the complex issue was also the general design of the program and the balance between its different elements (information, education, entertainment).<sup>16</sup> Striking this balance was essential to cater to the diverse preferences and expectations of a broad European audience, ensuring the program's content was engaging, informative, and culturally enriching across the continent.

The fact that one experiment failed did not end the thinking about the ways in which programs could be transmitted via the Olympus satellite and the kind of programs for this transmission. Three possibilities were proposed: a mixed European service that would maintain similar programming schemes as national broadcast services only with an added European dimension; then a European service that would broadcast mostly sports and current affairs live; and the European music Channel.<sup>17</sup> The new experiment was called 'Europa TV' and it started on October 5, 1985. It was supposed to last until 1988 when it would be replaced by a European television channel that would be accessible to over 300 million viewers. The plan was to launch the Olympus satellite in the summer of 1987 and to operate from January 1, 1988.<sup>18</sup> Out of DG19 X funds, in 1986 the EBU awarded a contract for financial support from the Commission, amounting to two million ECU<sup>20</sup>, to enable Mr. Ripa di Meana to launch expenses and research work related to the European television channel Europa TV.<sup>21</sup> 'EUROPA TELEVISION is Pan-European Satellite Broadcast Channel, beaming a multilingual television service to multinational television audiences in Europe.'<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, the document that was published on December 8, 1986 in a version in eight languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, English, Dutch, Italian, German, and French) and belongs to the group of Working documents of

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<sup>16</sup> Rapport interimaire sur realites et tendances de la television en Europe: perspectives et options (rapport de la commission au Parlement Européen) com (83) 229 final, Bruxelles, le 25 mai 1983, BAC 101/1999, No 536, 1982 - 1983

<sup>17</sup> Request by the European Broadcasting Union to use a direct television broadcasting channel on the Olympus satellite (L-Sat), ESA-7341 Use of direct television broadcasting channel on Olympus satellite (L-SAT), Documents from 02 November 1983 to 28 March 1985, ESA/JCB(83)46;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.1 TO REV.4;ESA/JCB(83)46,REV.4,ADD.1

<sup>18</sup> Participation de la commission a la premiere experience de television Europeenne (Europa TV) (Communication de m. Ripa di Meana en accord avec lord Cockfield, m. Narjes et m. Sutherland), Bruxelles, le 5 mars 1986, Dossier SEC(86)373, Vol. 1986/0013

<sup>19</sup> Directorate General

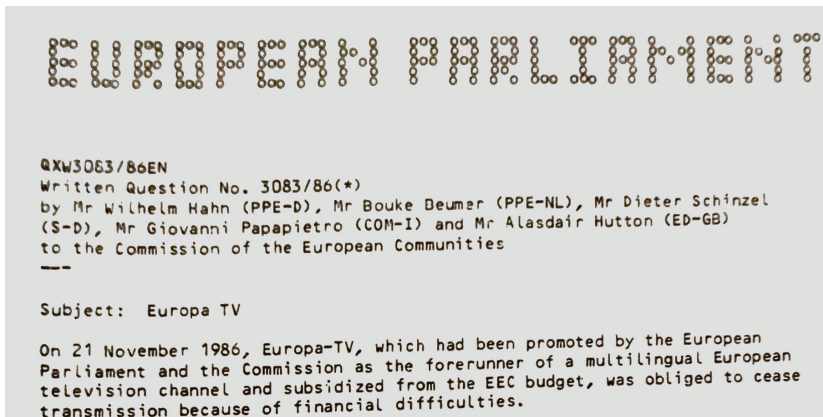
<sup>20</sup> The European Currency Unit (ECU) was the monetary unit before the Euro.

<sup>21</sup> Participation de la commission a la premiere experience de television Europeenne (Europa TV) (Communication de m. Ripa di Meana en accord avec lord Cockfield, m. Narjes et m. Sutherland), Bruxelles, le 5 mars 1986, Dossier SEC(86)373, Vol. 1986/0013

<sup>22</sup> ESA master copy, ESA-9619 Continuous weather service for a European TV channel, Annex 1, Document date: 29 November 1985, ESA/TOAG(85)17

the European Parliament, is actually a Motion for resolution on the cessation of broadcasting by Europa TV.<sup>23</sup> Approximately one year after its inception, Europa TV was forced to shut down. The primary reasons for the closure were a disappointing number of viewers and persistent financial struggles. A special problem related to advertising was pointed out in the Working Document of the European Parliament *Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV* at the time: “Calls for the speedy resolution of the problem of advertising revenue and for such revenue possibly to be managed by groups demonstrating a willingness to do so”.<sup>24</sup> The funding, which was projected to sustain the channel for three years, was exhausted far more quickly than anticipated and it was not in the area of advertisers’ influence.

**Picture 2**, Europa TV ceased broadcasting on 21. 11 1986. From the EP, QXW3083/86EN, PE 112.944



### **Pessimistic view of press coverage: short overview**

In the early 1980s, the European Parliament recognized a significant problem with the portrayal of the European Community in media coverage. There was a lack of adequate and positive information about the European Community, which was seen as detrimental to public perception and understanding of the organization. To address this issue, the idea of creating a dedicated European satellite channel was proposed as a means to improve communication and provide more balanced coverage of EU affairs. Texts from the press at the time of Europa TV’s shutdown confirm what the European Parliament saw in the early 80s as one of the biggest problems. The titles looked like this in different languages: *M. Ripa de Meana met en cause la passivité des Européens* (Le Monde, 3.12.1986), *Overleeft Europa TV?* (De Elsevier, 8.11.1986), *The dreams they switched off* (Guardian, 8.12.1986), *Projecto Europa TV encerrará eemissios* (Diario de noticias, 28.11.1986), *Grandes manœuvres autour de la télévision européenne* (Le

<sup>23</sup> Motion for resolution on the cessation of broadcasting by Europa TV, PE2-12422 *Fin des émissions de l'EUROPA TV*, B2-1296/86

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

Monde, 21.11.1986), *La Europa de la televisión, una idea feliz que no encuentra el camino para llegar a buen puerto* (La vanguardia, 23.11.1986), «Countdown» e desporto do Europa-TV: *podem voltar em breve à RTP* (Diario de noticias, 2.12.1986).<sup>25</sup> These titles suggest the passivity of Europeans in relation to a certain aspect of television; survival or sustainability of Europa TV and the future of television in Europe; unfulfilled potential and lost opportunities in the realm of television; initiatives within Europa TV are coming to an end; significant maneuvers or movements surrounding European television; challenges and obstacles hindering its successful realization, etc. With the shutdown of Europa TV, some national television stations found themselves in a problem of filling up the content. For example, the Portuguese public broadcasting service, RTP, was preparing to fill the three and a half hour slot left vacant by the demise of Europa TV with a new program that could potentially include the popular “Countdown” segment dedicated to actuality and sports news. The emergence of cable systems offering a wide range of channels further intensified this competition. In such a crowded marketplace, launching a new channel like Europa TV required not only financial resources but also a unique value proposition to stand out among competitors. As for the problem with advertising, Jeremy Taylor, who collaborated with Europa TV, states that some other channels are not interesting to advertisers either. Channels like RAI Uno from Italy, which focused on high-minded peak-time programming including opera, ballet, and drama, struggled to attract advertising from major brands. Taylor highlighted the role of politics in European ventures, emphasizing how the success of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy impacted the support for Europa TV among European Broadcasting Union (EBU) members. The decision to broadcast in multiple languages and the challenges posed by commercial channels were significant contributors to Europa’s downfall.<sup>26</sup> TV Europa’s demise serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of financial sustainability in realizing ambitious broadcasting projects. Despite good intentions and initial enthusiasm, without adequate funding, even the most promising ideas can falter. In the end, the development of cable channels, as well as growing competition among national television stations, highlighted the importance of offering unique value propositions to viewers and advertisers.

## Conclusion

Europa TV and TV Eurikon could not appear spontaneously. Years ago, satellite technology was developed step by step within the European joint supranational institutions, primarily the European Space Agency. Market research was done for new users, various experiments and satellite components. Work was constantly being done on the improvement of the radically new technology of that time, without which it is actually not possible to communicate in all aspects even today. In order to broadcast a European program in Europe, the member countries had to constantly

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<sup>25</sup> Télévision, Parlement européen, Documents from [10/1986] to [02/1987], CPPE-1499

<sup>26</sup> *The dreams they switched off*, Guardian, 8.12.1986, in: Télévision, Parlement européen, Documents from [10/1986] to [02/1987], CPPE-1499

agree. It was necessary to harmonize the technical characteristics, legal frameworks and create sustainable financing flows. It was not an easy task at all. The termination of the two experimental satellite channels can be attributed to a combination of factors. While funding problems due to a lack of advertisers played a significant role, the changing technological landscape with the rapid development of satellite television and computer technology, along with the increasing influence of private capital in the industry, also contributed to its demise. Additionally, being an international channel broadcasting in several languages further complicated sustainability in a time when the interests of capital were gaining prominence in the television industry. However, at the time of conceptualizing a European TV channel, the involved thinkers could not have anticipated the rapid evolution of computer networks that would eventually challenge the supremacy of television viewing. Their proposals, lacking the foresight of the technological advancements that would unfold in just a decade, were nonetheless astute, inventive, and crucial for nurturing the concept of a collective European identity. They envisioned that a shared television service, broadcast via satellite across Europe, could feature high-quality arts programs (although TV Europa and TV Eurikon included non-artistic programs as well) that would transcend language barriers, allowing viewers to appreciate foreign content without the need for linguistic understanding. This idea was rooted in the belief that such programming could serve as a cultural bridge, fostering a sense of unity and shared heritage among the diverse populations of Europe. Time has shown that other non-artistic channels such as Euro news and Euro sport could survive. The only channel of European artistic character today is ARTE TV. Despite the setback with Europa TV and TV Eurikon, there is evidence that balanced coverage and strong communication tactics have an important role in molding public perceptions of supranational institutions such as the EU. To achieve success with pan-European media initiatives, policy makers have had to overcome obstacles such as linguistic diversity, regulatory frameworks and national interests. Europe should consider new models for cooperation, cultural exchange and different perspectives to ensure the long-term sustainability and relevance of pan-European initiatives.

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## TV Eurikon i Europa TV: istraživanje početaka transnacionalne panevropske televizije

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### Apstrakt

Rad istražuje uspeh ili neuspeh dva eksperimentalna panevropska kanala TV Eurikon i Europa TV, fokusirajući se na ulogu televizije u oblikovanju evropskog identiteta. Istraživanje, sprovedeno zahvaljujući Grant programu Međunarodne višegradske fondacije i Istorijskom arhivu Evropske unije, pokazalo je da su tokom razvoja satelitske komunikacije uravnoteženo izveštavanje i snažna komunikaciona panevropska strategija od ključne važnosti za oblikovanje percepcije javnosti o nadnacionalnim institucijama poput EU. Da bi postigli uspeh, kreatori politike morali su da prevaziđu prepreke kao što su jezička raznolikost, regulatorni okviri i nacionalni interesi. Iako nismo u eri početka satelitskih sistema, Evropa bi trebalo da razmotri nove modele saradnje, kulturne razmene i drugačije perspektive za dugoročnu održivost sličnih panevropskih inicijativa.

*Ključne reči:* televizija, Evropa, satelitska komunikacija, TV Eurikon, Europa TV.

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