

Transnational European Media: Overcoming National Barriers to European Publics

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Abstract

This thesis identifies the strategies used by media established for pan-European audiences to report politics and public affairs to the populations of the European Union, which are characterized by multi-nationality, overlapping identities and interests. These strategies overcome specific barriers which impede media outlets from reaching their diverse audiences and sustaining themselves as viable businesses. A total of six media outlets are assessed for how they deal with these barriers, identified from previous research literature on European media and the emergence of European public spheres. These barriers are: language, national identity, European Union political communication deficits, and advertising markets. Media outlets examined include one weekly newspaper, two daily newsletters and three websites, all devoted to the coverage of the European Union and European public affairs. Interviews were conducted with editors and reporters of these media outlets in Brussels, Belgium to identify strategies used to overcome the four transnational barriers.

Results show that each media outlet has undertaken its own unique strategies to overcome language and advertising barriers. The use of English as the language of preference in pan-European media audiences has surpassed all others. The barrier of national identity is only significant insofar as it limits the appeal of pan-European media outlets to audiences interested only in the EU and Europe-wide public affairs. Websites appear to have the greatest appeal among general readers who seek information on the EU and Europe, likely because these are free more easily accessed than newspaper and specialized newsletter publications.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Communicating in a multinational federation	1
Chapter 2: Pan-European media and Public spheres.....	6
2.1 The European public sphere.....	6
2.1.1 Definition.....	6
2.1.2 Multiple public spheres	9
2.1.3 Spheres in emergence.....	10
2.2 Barriers to pan-European media	11
2.2.1 Language and national identity.....	11
2.2.1.1 Localizing content	12
2.2.2 Political communication deficit	13
2.2.3 Advertising markets	15
Chapter 3: International media centred in Europe	17
3.1 Print publications: serving economic elites.....	17
3.1.1 Deepening roots with EU integration.....	20
3.2 Newswires	21
Chapter 4: Brussels-based European media.....	23
4.1 Media outlets examined	24
Chapter 5: Analysis	28
5.1 Overview of case studies: Pan-European reach.....	28
5.2 Language	31
5.2.1 Commitment to linguistic diversity	32
5.2.2 Encouraging reader participation	33
5.2.3 English only	34
5.3 National Identity	36
5.4 EU communication deficits.....	39
5.4.1 Filtering and translating into “normal language”	40
5.5 Advertising markets.....	42
5.5.2 Advertising for the web: Two models.....	44
5.5.2.1 EU observer	44
5.5.2.2 EurActiv.com.....	45
Chapter 6: Conclusions.....	47
6.1 Strategies to reaching audiences.....	47
6.1.1 Language	48
6.1.2 National identity	49
6.1.3 EU Communication deficits	49
6.1.4 Advertising markets	50
6.2 The EU and news media: Two variables in flux	51
6.3 Going Europe-wide via internet and digital	52
6.4 Public spheres: Elite vs. general.....	53
Appendices.....	55
Appendix 1. Interviews conducted in Brussels, Belgium, May 2 – May 11, 2007.....	55
Appendix 2: Front pages of selected pan-European case studies.....	57
References.....	62

Chapter 1: Communicating in a multinational federation

With institutions patterned on those of federal states on the one hand, and a system of multilevel governance that includes 27 national governments leading peoples who speak 23 different languages on the other, European Union's avenues for political communication are presented with great challenges that call to question the success of the European integration project.

Economic integration of the Union deepens as member state governments continue to transfer national policy-making power to EU institutions. Political integration, however, seems remote, all the more since member state citizens tend to identify first and foremost with their national governments, their own languages, histories and cultures. Voter turnout for elections to the European Parliament – the only directly democratically-elected institution of the Union, and the only EU institution directly accountable to the public – are distinctly second-order, with turnout rates markedly lower than those of national elections (Schmitt 2005; Lord 2004: 64-71).

For citizens of EU-member states at large, national politics and public affairs continue to take precedence over EU-wide politics and public affairs in spite of the increasing policy-making weight taken up by the EU, particularly in matters of trade and economics. The general population's ability, interest, willingness to understand and relate to EU politics and decision-making are miniscule in comparison to the attention accorded to national affairs. Media content analyses have been particularly effective at demonstrating this reality (Machill, Beiler and Fischer, 2006, and Downey and Koenig,

2006, are notable recent examples) – which contributes to communication deficits between the EU and member state citizens.

Such studies are part of a sizeable body of political science and communications research which, nevertheless, hypothesize that as European integration proceeds, citizens will come to relate to the European Union as they do with their own states – and relate to citizens of other member countries as they do with their own co-nationals. Stated in more specific terms, it is hypothesized that a European public sphere will emerge.

Following this reasoning, European communication patterns and media structures are expected to change. Media outlets that serve citizens of Europe at large – or pan-European publics – are expected to emerge and grow, much as they had in the case of the unification and founding of nation-states and federal states, such as Italy or Germany. Applying the model of the nation-state to the multinational European case is very misleading, however. “Multilevel governance and continuing tensions and divergences between the supranational level and those of the member states”, according to Philip Schlesinger (1999: 270), call for researchers “rather to think in terms of overlapping spheres of publics. There is little evidence of a single, official mode of address to the publics of Europe”. This absence, Schlesinger specifies, “has made the search for evidence of a common public sphere capable of transcending Europe’s diversity a matter of some theoretical and practical interest.”

At present, there exist only a few successful media outlets that transcend national boundaries, catering to public audiences that span Europe. In the case of print, these audiences are specific, not general. Such Europe-wide publications largely serve economic and political elites, in English, the international lingua franca of business and

diplomacy. These include dailies like the *Financial Times*, the *International Herald Tribune* and *Wall Street Journal Europe*, and weekly magazine *The Economist*. Broadcast media that serve a Europe-wide audience have also developed, but are more generalist in terms of audience served. The most prominent among them are television networks CNN International and BBC World. The print media mentioned emerged out of regional markets within Europe to become international ones that happen to cater to a European audience. The two broadcasters on the other hand cater more to a global audience, even though they have a strong presence in Europe. Hence are best described as “global,” and not “pan-European”. The distinction between the two terms is best defined by Downey and Koenig (2006). In covering Europe, as pan-European media do, “European sources, perspectives and interests are asserted over (...) national interests or global interests.” Global media on the other hand, have as their focus universal values and points of view, whereby “global sources, perspectives and interests are presented as paramount” (Downey and Koenig 2006: 167). Such is the case with the two broadcasters.

Unlike these large Europe-wide outlets, there exist smaller-scale media established for the specific purpose of serving a European audience at large. Largely centered in Brussels, where most EU institutions are located, these media – including newsletters, newspapers, and websites, are focused on covering EU-related public affairs. They more typically cater to EU functionaries and other professionals, businesspeople, international decision-makers, and to some extent educational institutions. These media appear have the potential to serve a pan-European public, including more than simply elites. What is the extent of this potential, and what barriers are keeping them from growing to reach audiences as broad as the large, global-international media of the

Financial Times-IHT group? Answers to this question help define the barriers that exist to European political integration. Importantly, they offer an indication of how to overcome the yawning communication deficits that exist between the EU and its member citizens.

The purpose of this study is to identify the strategies used by media established for pan-European audiences to report politics and public affairs to the populations of Europe, characterized by multinationality, overlapping identities and interests. These strategies overcome specific barriers, identified in the study, which impede the media outlets from: a) reaching their diverse audiences and b) sustaining themselves as viable businesses.

A total of six media outlets – five based in Brussels and one with major offices there – were examined. These include the weekly newspaper *European Voice*, newsletters Agence Europe (producers of *Europe Daily Bulletin*) and European Information Service, (producers of *Europolitics/Europolitique*), and websites *EU Observer* (euobserver.com), *Euractiv.com*, and *Café Babel* (cafebabel.com). Each were assessed for how they deal with specific barriers to reaching Europe-wide audiences, identified in previous research literature on European media and European public spheres. These include: language, national identity, European Union political communication deficits, and national advertising markets. Interviews were conducted with editors of the media outlets in order to assess the degree of difficulty that each of the four transnational barriers presented to the aspiring pan-European outlets, and how they worked to overcome each. These

interviews were conducted in Brussels, Belgium, where the media outlets are either based, or, in the case of *Café Babel*, have local offices that cover Europe-wide affairs.

Interviews were also conducted with the European Commission's Directorate General Communication, responsible for communicating the activities, objectives and goals of the Commission to the general public, and with the European Journalism Centre, an independent organization that trains and briefs foreign journalists in Brussels on how to effectively cover EU affairs. These provided a more complete picture of the obstacles that limit effective EU political communication to the public, and a better overall view of the challenges potential pan-European outlets face to reaching Europe-wide audiences.

For purposes of background and comparison, the study also included an overview of long-established international print media of the *Financial Times-International Herald Tribune* group, and Europe's oldest international newswire services, Agence France Presse (AFP) and Reuters. The study identified the characteristics of the *FT-IHT* group, which have been most successful at distributing their content to a broad audience throughout Europe. Their success was demonstrated in circulation figures, as well as properties of language, content and audience, all taken to indicate the most successful models of pan-European media. Meanwhile, interviews with Brussels bureau chiefs at AFP and Reuters provided information on the limitations (if any) the four transnational barriers pose to long-established large-scale media. These helped allow for some inference on the possible characteristics of an emerging European public sphere. One obvious characteristic of such a sphere, for instance, appears to be the use of the English language as the lingua franca of Europe.

Chapter 2: Pan-European media and Public spheres

Research literature on European media and European public spheres indicate the existence of four main barriers that limit the emergence of pan-European media that report public affairs to all citizens of the European Union at large. These are: language, national identity, EU political communication deficits (citizens' relative lack of knowledge on EU institutions and politics), and advertising markets. The success of any given media that aspire to deliver information to all peoples of the EU depends on their success at overcoming each of these transnational hurdles. These barriers pose a challenge to the formation of a European public sphere – assumed to be a necessary condition for the establishment of pan-European media and successful EU-integration.

2.1 The European public sphere

Rather than investigate empirically the emergence of media that aim to reach a pan-European audience, as proposed here, recent Political Science and Communication Studies research on European media have investigated whether there exists any evidence of an emergence of a European public sphere (or European public spheres) as a result of the European Union integration project – looking for evidence of this in the discourse and content of mainstream national media throughout Europe.

2.1.1 Definition

The public sphere is defined in research literature in various ways. The meaning of the term in itself has been the subject of much research and discussion. The concept of the European public sphere is largely rooted in the works of German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, who defined it as being “made up of private people gathered together as a

public and articulating the needs of society within the state” (Habermas 1989 [1962]: 176).

Consensus is that the public sphere is a “‘space’ of communication, and as such transcends any particular place,” weaving together conversations from many (Calhoun, 2003:1). In her appraisal of the notion of public sphere in the EU, Marianne van de Steeg further specifies that it consists of “actors who debate in public on a particular topic which they consider to be in the public interest, i.e. of concern to the polity,” and that such debates and deliberations are open to input by members of the public at large (Van de Steeg, 2002: 499-519). In the case of the EU, the question is whether a European public sphere – binding the citizens of the union, transcending national barriers – is emerging.

Studies investigating the emergence of a European public sphere within the European Union are based on the assertion that media play an essential role in the construction and emergence of national identities – or more broadly speaking, communities with a collective identity shared by all members. There exist two essential aspects to the formation of such identities, which Downey and Koenig (2006: 166) aptly sum up as “the existence of national media institutions and the dissemination of stories that encourage individuals to see themselves as belonging to a community of fate.” National identities are supported by the existence of collective public spheres, through which a nation’s, or well-defined society’s “different interests, views, and meaning are presented, discussed, criticized and negotiated” (Valentini 2006: 5).

Studies on the emergence of a European public sphere have typically tested for it by analyzing media content, verifying the proportion and type of reporting on EU-related

news items over specific time frames. Results found by Machill, Beiler and Fischer (2006) and Trenz (2004) are typical. In studies that enumerate the raw quantity of EU coverage, they find initial signs of the appearance of a European public sphere in the content of national print and television media, although this is overshadowed by coverage of national issues, and national rather than EU players. Both studies investigate whether a European public sphere is emerging out of a Europeanization of national public spheres. Neither could demonstrate that a common European public sphere actually exists, however.

Downey and Koenig (2006) use content analysis to effectively demonstrate that national divides prevail in reporting – particularly in the reporting of EU events. Their study tests for similarities in the media framing of former Italian president Silvio Berlusconi’s controversial address as president of the European Council in 2003, “in which he compared Social Democrat MEP Martin Schulz to a *kapo*, an auxiliary concentration camp guard” (Downey and Koenig, 2006: 165). Results, which enumerate data drawn from six EU countries, Switzerland, the USA and Canada show that stories on Berlusconi’s address and associated events were framed into national contexts, and presented specifically for national audiences. In all countries surveyed, the conflict reported on “was primarily framed as a clash of ethnic nations,” the authors report in their conclusion. Moreover, “the persons involved in the conflict were portrayed as representatives of ethnic nations rather than their respective political parties” (Downey and Koenig 2006: 184).

2.1.2 Multiple public spheres

In examining the Europeanization of national media – specifically newspapers and magazines – studies on the emergence of a European public sphere have not considered print publications sold Europe-wide which are unattached to nationality. These include transnational titles like the *Financial Times*, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *The Economist* newsmagazine. Schlesinger’s oft-cited seminal study on the “changing spaces of political communication” in the EU summarizes why: “the growth (of such) transnational media has worked to sustain a restricted elite space rather than to herald generalized access to communication by European publics” (Schlesinger 1999: 263). This “elite space” is taken up by economic and political decision-makers, whose work takes them across national borders. The lack of “generalized access” to these media, due to language and coverage content, has been seen by recent studies as being sufficient reason for not looking to them as examples for the emergence of an at-large European public sphere. To ignore these more specialized media, however, is to ignore the reality of multiple, even competing public spheres, which are more likely to be found in the transnational EU than in any given nation-state. The European Union’s multilevel structure of governance, which includes national officials, both elected and unelected, EU officials, and national representatives elected to the European Parliament – not to mention the question of local, regional, and national identification by citizens of EU-member states – “require us to think in terms of overlapping spheres of publics”, Schlesinger (1999: 270) emphasizes. In this light, the imminent emergence of an at-large European public sphere prior to multiple public spheres seems unlikely.

2.1.3 Spheres in emergence

Machill et al (2006) concede that there are two fundamental ways a in which a European public sphere can arise: “1. As a pan-European public sphere independent of individual states; or 2. As a European public sphere that emerges as a result of the Europeanization of national public spheres” (Machill et al 2006: 61). The first criterion is demonstrated by the existence of pan-European media of the *FT-IHT* variety. The authors pursue the second model as grounds for their study, however. Even though they concede *FT-IHT* media do have pan-European reach, Machill et al submit that these media are few in number, and beyond the scope of their study. The authors also highlight the lack of a “uniform European language” as grounds that “the existence of European public sphere are absent” (Machill et al 2006: 62).

In investigating how aspiring and potential pan-European publications report to EU-wide audiences, this study would take Machill et al’s first concept as its basis. This approach has one overriding advantage over the second: it has never been undertaken before, largely because media established for pan-European audiences were not seen as significant enough to merit consideration. Circulation figures of national media still far outstrip those of pan-European-focused publications, after all. The relative success of the young Brussels-based pan-European media studied here, most of which were founded in the last 12 years, demonstrates that a market for pan-European readers does exist, and is growing. The new, unique strategies that each of these have undertaken to reaching Europe-at-large audiences offers an indication as to how public affairs and political communication may develop in the EU as the European integration project proceeds, and deepens.

2.2 Barriers to *pan-European media*

2.2.1 Language and national identity

Language is the immediate, most obvious barrier to the emergence of pan-European media, whether print or broadcast. The European Union officially recognizes 23 languages spoken in its member states. Proceedings in the European Parliament resemble those of a mini-United Nations, where discussions and debates are simultaneously translated into all the other official languages.

Language is complemented by national identity. For the purposes of this study, unique reporting traditions, political culture and history are considered to be central elements of the national identity barrier. These are readily evident in the results of content-analyses studies of newspapers across Europe, which indicate national differences in framing news events. In their content analysis of a story reported on Europe-wide, John Downey and Thomas Koenig (2006) found that “distinctly European framings” are “largely absent.” National differences in reporting prevail. Furthermore, “ethnicity is seen as largely immutable, and therefore not open to the change of opinion via political and/or communicative persuasion strategies as would be the case if actors were imagined to be part of a Europeanized public sphere” (Downey and Koenig 2006: 184).

Language and nationality appear to present distinct obstacles to pan-European print media in particular. An obvious solution to the language barrier is the establishment of a European lingua franca – a Europe-wide language – alongside mother tongues. Such is the case for example in India, where English is used as the language of consensus and interchange across the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual federal state (Nariman 1989: 13-

14). As is the case worldwide, English is used as the language of communication among European elites, which has worked in favour of the success of publications like the *Financial Times* and other international-global media mentioned previously. Whether this, or any other, will become the pan-European one that binds all of European society together remains to be seen.

2.2.1.1 Localizing content

Contrary to print media, television broadcast media appear to have been able to overcome language, and to a certain degree national culture barriers by “localizing” content to suit local national viewers. Specific networks – namely the successful Eurosport and MTV networks – have undertaken this to ensure their commercial success across Europe. Chalaby (2002) identifies four types of localization that have allowed them to do so: local advertising, dubbing or subtitling, local programming or local opt-outs. Localization of this sort can be performed by websites to a certain extent as well, simply by translating content, and/or selecting stories to suit national audiences and speakers of specific languages. Of the case studies examined in this study, websites Café Babel and EurActiv.com publish in multiple languages, enabling them to reach audiences in various countries of the EU. Print media may “localize” simply by translating stories, if it is their policy to report in more than one language – a minimal form of localization. Newsletter agencies European Information Service (EIS) and Agence Europe for instance publish their daily editions in multiple languages: EIS’s *Europolitics/Europolitique* is in French and English, and Agence Europe’s *Bulletin Quotidien Europe/Europe Daily Bulletin* in French, English and Italian.

2.2.2 Political communication deficit

Reportage of news about institutions and politics that encompass Europe – specifically EU politics – has proved to be confronted with perhaps the most insurmountable barrier to the establishment of pan-European news media: the lack of citizen knowledge of EU institutions and politics. A European public sphere, and with it, pan-European media, cannot be established without the elimination of this obstacle.

Notions of communication deficit between the EU and citizens of EU-member states, and related perceptions of democratic deficit in the EU – are themselves the subject of a large body of research. Resolving these deficits is seen as being essential to the success of the European integration project. Media researcher Peter Golding (2006: 13) asserts that “the expectation, or indeed aspiration, that Europe may be the home to an embryonic political culture transcending the national is a necessary dimension to the ‘European project’.” Consequently, the emergence of a European public sphere is dependent on citizens’ ability, interest in, and willingness to understand the political and decision-making processes of the EU. Recent political science research, drawing on EU and private surveys, shows that citizens lack these, as they continue to perceive their national governments as being more important to their lives (see Lord 2004: 40-73 for instance). Ineffective media coverage of the EU is related to this, partly because reporters’ attitudes to the EU are similar to those of the general public (Golding 2006: 17-18).

Coverage of the EU, following conventional means of reporting, is infeasible. Political news reporting, as Meyer (2003: 38) states, is commonly based on the criteria of conflict, personalization, drama and relevance – and a number of studies have highlighted

that none of these are well suited to EU governance. Reporters are confronted with the impractical prospect of reporting on “long-dragged out negotiations among civil servants, lobbyists and experts from various settings, which yield compromise solutions with long transition periods and framed in technocratic language.” (Meyer 2003: 37-38). Moreover, sources willing to impart information about negotiations that characterize typical EU consensus solutions are elusive. As such, “without the tool of personalization as a shorthand to translate political conflicts into the language of media, Brussels journalists struggle to explain how and why the decision about certain issues is relevant to their readers/audience” (Meyer 2003: 38). Meyer goes so far as to suggest that multinational research cooperation is needed in order to link information and provide coherent reports on the transnational union. His proposal implies added legislation and government intervention on the media, which is inconsistent with principles of press freedom. In spite of this glaring weakness of his proposal, Meyer makes a strong point that pan-European news media reporting on events continent-wide would serve well to diminish communication deficits within the EU. To ensure complete success, such media would necessarily have to operate completely independent of national and transnational governments.

In an article that sums up the theoretical findings of the Adequate Information Management in Europe (AIM) program, Golding (2006) lends further evidence to the impracticality of reporting on the EU in conventional ways. AIM’s extensive research included interviews undertaken with journalists across Europe over the past three years, which demonstrate the consequence of this: among journalists there exist “a recurrent

number of views that are far from enthusiastic about the European ideal, or indeed the EU specifically” (Golding 2006: 17).

Aware of its communication deficits, the EU has undertaken several initiatives in recent years to make its decision and policy-making processes more transparent, and improve communications with the public. To that end, a “European Communication Policy,” was established in 2006, including the appointment of a Commissioner for Communication and a Directorate General, Communication (Kurpas et al 2006: 2). Whether this will narrow the communication gap remains to be seen.

The ultimate aim of the new policies, as outlined in a 2006 White Paper by the Commission entitled *On a European Communication Policy*, is to develop “a European public sphere where the European debate can unfold” (European Commission 2006: 4). A “public sphere” is best described in the research literature as the a ‘space’ within which citizens, civil society organizations and political actors publicly debate issues of common concern (Kurpas et al 2006: 2). It is doubtful that a public sphere can be created by political or administrative institutions, however. For that to occur, there must first exist a common European political identity to which all citizens of the EU can relate – otherwise commonly referred to in the research literature as a “European demos” (Cederman, 2001).

2.2.3 Advertising markets

Following the linguistic, cultural and political barriers to pan-European media, there exist national market barriers – which mostly relate to advertising and sales success, and legislation. Political science research and communications studies on the emergence

of a European public sphere have not highlighted this obstacle specifically, as the success of advertising and sales are directly dependent on the other three barriers. The ability to localize content and cater to specific national audiences, as detailed by Chalaby (2002), appears to be the main determinant to successfully finding advertisers and reaching all citizens of Europe at large. This includes the ability to advertise effectively, and conform to local rules and norms set out in national laws and regulations.

Chapter 3: International media centred in Europe

Before specifying the case studies of this analysis – all relatively young media outlets centred in Brussels, and established for pan-European audiences – it is important to take note of long-established print media, centred in Europe, which grew out of regional markets to reach pan-European levels without explicitly targeting all-European audiences. These media owe their success to several factors, outlined here, which offer a broader indication as to the character of emerging European public spheres, and how to report for such audiences.

Equally important to note are Europe's oldest newswire services, providers of news to print publications and broadcasters around the world. Founded in Europe, with European operations and a European clientele that still take up the greatest share of their operations, these media also offer an indispensable perspective on reporting for pan-European publics.

3.1 Print publications: serving economic elites

In any major town or city of Europe, it is possible to find a handful, or at least one of a handful of given publications that are circulated throughout the continent. These offer some indication of the existence of a European public sphere, which melds to a certain extent with a global one, best defined as a public sphere of economic and political elites. Publications which serve such a sphere include daily newspapers the *Financial Times*, the *International Herald Tribune*, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, and weekly news magazine *The Economist*.

A simple survey of the key characteristics and circulation figures of each of these print publications, detailed in Figure 1, demonstrates these publications' pan-European

Figure 1. Europe-based International Print Media

Outlet	Media type	Date and location where established	Central Editorial Office	Primary Readers	Circulation	
					Worldwide (daily or weekly average in year listed)	Europe (including % of worldwide circulation)
Financial Times	Daily newspaper	London, 1888	London, UK	Senior business-people; economic and political decision-makers	432,930 (2007)	124,212 (29%)
Financial Times Deutschland	Daily, in German	February, 2000	Hamburg, Germany			104,000 (in Germany, 2007)
International Herald Tribune	Daily newspaper	Paris, 1887	Paris	General, largely American; international by profession and lifestyle.	242,073 (2006)	140,738 (58%)
The Wall Street Journal Europe	Daily newspaper	Brussels, 1983 (Parent edition: New York, 1889)	European edition: Brussels Central offices: New York	Senior business management and high-income-earners.	2,250,072 (All editions, USA, Asia and Europe, 2005) (USA edition: 2,083,660)	86,539: European edition (3.8%)
The Economist	Weekly news magazine	London, 1843	London	University-educated Economic and political decision-makers.	1,197,712 (2006)	396,932 (33.1%)

(Sources: Company websites, factsheets and advertising information packages; independent circulation figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) and the European Business Readership Survey 2006-2007.)

reach, and offers some indication of the basic properties that have allowed them to achieve Europe-wide reach.

All in English, these outlets have circulations that are far surpassed by the biggest national dailies of Europe – however their circulation spread throughout the continent is unrivalled. These are also sold throughout the world, although the share of their circulation in Europe relative to their worldwide figures, shown in the final column of Figure A, is indicative of each publication's European focus. One exception to this rule is the *Wall Street Journal Europe*: the European share of its global circulation is miniscule compared to other publications, but *The Wall Street Journal's* European edition nevertheless has circulation levels high enough to make for some relevant comparison with other Europe-wide dailies.

Also noteworthy is the *Financial Times*, whose operations in Europe include the German-language *Financial Times Deutschland*, a nationally-distributed German paper in the German language launched in 2000, whose content is similar to its English-language counterpart. Circulation of the German-language paper in Germany since its launch has boomed to levels nearing those of FT's Europe-wide levels.

These media are similar in many respects. All in English, they were first established in the world's major capitals and financial centres in the 19th century. All of them, with the possible exception of the *International Herald Tribune (IHT)*, in their beginnings catered strictly to a readership of economic elites, who went to the newspapers for information on financial markets, world business, and international news of relevance to these. *IHT's* readership was in its beginnings focussed on a readership of Americans living abroad, not as strictly devoted to finance and economics as the others, even though its end readership proved to be similar. All are long-established, profitable operations owned by large media companies, some even bearing overlaps in ownership:

The Financial Times group, owners of the *Financial Times*, for instance, owns a 50 % stake in The Economist Group, owners of *The Economist*. *The Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) and the *IHT* are owned by U.S.-based giants: *WSJ* by Dow Jones and Company, and *IHT* by the New York Times Company, both New York-based and publicly traded.

3.1.1 Deepening roots with EU integration

Predating the importance of Brussels and the EU, the pan-European papers in effect grew out of important capital cities and world financial centres to reach pan-European levels. It appears that their focus on finance and economics in these important centres allowed them to achieve their continental reach. That the European integration project has been largely economic trade-oriented has proved to be of added advantage to the Europe-wide success of these publications, which focus on such topics. This has allowed them to broaden and deepen their roots within Europe. In the case of *Wall Street Journal Europe* and *Financial Times Deutschland*, economic/financial focus has in fact allowed them to make exceptionally quick inroads throughout Europe and Germany, respectively, lending firm evidence that a pan-European public sphere of economic elites, ready to take in more varied information on international financial and economic-related news services, not to mention media platforms on which to debate such issues – exists.

Even though focus on financial, economic, and global international news overshadows all other sections of these newspapers, some evidence of foundations for a broad pan-European public sphere that could include all Europeans at large is also to be found in these publications. A certain portion of their content, relating to other matters such as arts, culture and sport – do have potential appeal for broader Europe-wide audiences over the long run, hence an at-large European public sphere.

3.2 Newswires

Among the long-established media that serve Europe at large are newswire services, which in fact predate the print publications by decades, and have reported on and served international clients in Europe since their very beginnings. These include newswire service Agence France Presse, founded in Paris in 1835, and Reuters, a multimedia news and financial information agency founded in London in 1851. Reuters' origins in fact lie in Brussels and Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle, two years earlier, where founder Paul Julius Reuter ran a business that bridged a missing telegraph wire link between Paris and Berlin, using carrier pigeons. Stock price information was transmitted via telegraph from Paris to Brussels, from whence Reuter's waiting pigeons delivered it to his office in Aachen. Once received, Reuter sold it to waiting clients who would telegraph the information to Berlin (Taylor 2007).

Since their beginnings as agencies transmitting information throughout Europe, these companies have grown into global wire services. Still, these services' European bases have retained the greatest share of their clientele and revenue, which gives some indication of the presence of an at-large European public sphere. Figure 2 briefly summarizes Europe's importance in the operation of these agencies. As shown, Reuters' main source of revenue remains Europe, accounting for almost 50%, with miniscule revenue from the Middle East and Africa topping the share off to 53% (Inside Market Data 2006). AFP still counts Europe as its largest single regional source of revenue worldwide. Even though their head offices are located in other major capitals – AFP in France and Reuters in London – their Brussels offices have become the centres from

which they cover EU and to an increasing extent Europe-wide affairs. Both offices produce news in several European languages: Reuters in English, French and German, and Agence France-Presse in French, the language of priority for European coverage in Brussels, followed by English, German and Spanish (Triomphe 2007).

Figure 2. Europe-based Newswire Services

Agency	Established	Head office	Market share: Europe/Worldwide	Language of stories reported on in Brussels
Reuters	London, 1851	London	53% for Europe, Middle East and Africa	English, French, German
Agence France-Presse	Paris, 1835	Paris	Europe reported to take up greatest single regional share worldwide.	French, English, German, Spanish

(Sources: Company websites, interviews; Inside Market Data, 2006)

As a supplier of financial information and data, with a small fraction of its operations devoted to news (a share of about 7%, which nevertheless rivals AFP's entire newswire operation), Reuters has, like its economics and finance-devoted counterparts in print media, benefited from the fact that the European integration project's focus has been on trade and economic matters. "The EU is Europe's biggest financial regulator. So the financial markets are hanging on what the EU decides," noted Reuters' Brussels bureau chief Paul Taylor (2007). Each passing year sees the emergence of a set of integration plans to be deliberated among EU officials – and to be covered by his agency.

Chapter 4: Brussels-based European media

Said to play host to Europe's – and possibly the world's biggest press corps, Brussels is the workplace of some 1,200 to 1,300 members of the media, according to members of the industry there. In spite of this, Brussels does not register as a capital that hosts the head offices of major media. It does, however, serve as the central location of a collection of smaller-scale media devoted to the coverage of the EU and Europe-wide public affairs to a European audience.

Selected as case studies for this thesis were Brussels' top European public affairs print outlets, identified in terms of readership, subscriptions, circulation and sales revenue figures enumerated in independent media audits and sales research by media within the industry. They include: daily newsletter Agence Europe – producer of *Europe Daily Bulletin*; daily newsletter/newspaper *Europolitics* (French edition: *Europolitique*), weekly newspaper *European Voice*, and websites *EU Observer* (euobserver.com), *EurActiv.com*, and *Café Babel*. These outlets, including those that relay information through the same media, be it via internet or daily print bulletins – have little in common with each other – so much so that they hardly consider one another competitors. Their unique properties and histories require a brief description to illustrate the variety of independent print media that report on the EU and EU-related affairs, as follows. Figure 3 provides information on how readers can access each publication.

Figure 3. Brussels-based media: Consumer access

Publication	Media type, language, frequency.	Access	Price	
			Unit	Subscription
<i>European Voice</i>	Weekly newspaper, English, issued Thursdays.	Newsstands; subscription	4.20 Euro	165 Euro/year
Agence Europe: <i>Europe Daily Bulletin</i> ; <i>Bulletin Quotidien Europe</i>	Daily newsletter: English, French, Italian.	Subscription only	N/A	1,350 Euro/year, via internet. 1,710 Euro/year, print and internet.
Europe Information Service: <i>Europolitics</i> ; <i>Europolitique</i>	Daily newsletter: French, English.	Subscription only	N/A	1,700 Euro/year, print and unlimited online access.
<i>EU Observer</i> (euobserver.com)	News website, updated twice daily	Online, free	Free	N/A
EurActiv.com	Website; EU policy portal	Online, free	Free	N/A
<i>Café Babel</i> (cafebabel.com)	Web magazine	Online, free	Free	N/A

(Sources: Publication issues, websites.)

4.1 Media outlets examined

***The European Voice*:** Weekly tabloid-format newspaper distributed Thursdays, 32-40 pages on average. Launched in 1995 by The Economist Group, owners of *The Economist*. Modeled on USA capital's Washington-based publication *Roll Call*. Also owned by *The Economist*, *Roll Call* is devoted to the coverage of political and related events and news

occurring in American political institutions on Capitol Hill. The *European Voice* similarly reports on activities of all EU institutions, targeting readers who work in EU institutions – including “the EU departments of national governments and national administrations,” according to Deputy Editor Tim King (King, 2007). Newspaper circulation is paid and non-paid, with non-paid going to EU institutions and policy-makers in Brussels, and paid ones accounting for roughly 30%, throughout Europe. Editorial content is entirely in English, with ads in various European languages. Staffed by five full-time reporters of British and Irish nationality and five editors, including an editor in chief and deputy editor.

Agence Europe: Produces *Bulletin Quotidien Europe* (*Europe Daily Bulletin*), a daily newsletter that produces both print and electronic versions of news text content. Agence Europe is the oldest press agency devoted to the coverage of European common market institutions, now identified as European Union. Established in 1953 by Lodovico Riccardi and Emanuele Gazzo, of Italy, to cover the European Coal and Steel community. Readership composed largely of members of EU institutions and national governments. Newsletter’s paper versions are about 16-20 letter-sized pages, delivered. Electronic versions of the same content are e-mailed and accessible online to complimentary and paid subscribers. Editions with identical content are printed in English, French and Italian. The agency has 11 reporters, two editors. Financed by subscriptions.

Europe Information Service: Produces *Europolitics*, a daily European affairs news publication, staple-bound 16-20 A4 (letter-sized) pages, recently re-formatted from

newsletter format to news publication that more closely resembles a newspaper. Established in 1972 as an alternative to Agence Europe. Readership is mainly EU professionals and members of national governments. The newspaper is delivered daily to subscribers. Produced in French as *Europolitique* and English as *Europolitics*, the bulletin has five editors, and 13 reporters from at least 6 different European countries. Financed by subscriptions, and some advertising.

***EU Observer*:** Online news website, euobserver.com, “focused” on coverage of the European Union, updated with news stories twice daily. Established in Brussels by reporter Lisbeth Kirk in 2001. Published by a non-profit association registered in Belgium, the site has two editors, four full-time multilingual reporters, and several freelancers. Produced in English. Financed by advertising.

***EurActiv.com*:** Website, established in 1999. Described as an “independent EU policy portal,” or simply a “media portal.” *Euractiv.com* includes news stories, policy sections, and dossiers on specific EU policy topics. News stories provide links to background on EU and Europe-wide policies toward various issues, including environment, energy, public transport, banking and finance. Links include policy documents from the EU, stories by other selected news outlets available online, *Euractiv* “policy sections” and dossiers. Content on the main site is produced in English, French and German. Partner sites in six new EU-member states of Central and Eastern Europe are franchisees, with web content in their own languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovak. Financed primarily by corporate sponsors, who fund dossiers on specific EU-

related issues on the site. Biggest sponsors include: Visa, Shell, Microsoft, Dupont, Honeywell.

Café Babel: A web magazine, cafebabel.com, described on its website as “a multilingual European current affairs magazine,” established in 2001 by a group of university students in Strasbourg, France, at the Institut d’études politiques de Strasbourg. Head office located in Paris, France, branch office in Brussels. Content in English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Catalan and Polish. A non-profit, volunteer-run, with part-time paid employees at Paris head office, *Café Babel* is funded largely by public and private grants. The site features magazine articles by contributors throughout Europe on various societal topics and political issues, with a European outlook.

With the exception of *Café Babel*, all the selected outlets are staffed by professionals. Agence Europe’s *Europe Daily Bulletin* is financed strictly by subscriptions, and *Europolitics* largely by subscriptions and a few ads. *European Voice* and *EU Observer* are financed by advertising, and *Euractiv.com* largely by large corporate sponsors.

The sheer variety of these print media demonstrates that there exist several avenues to reaching audiences throughout Europe. Even though they are very different, the basic limitations and barriers to reaching audiences are the same, albeit with marked differences in the importance of each barrier.

Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Overview of case studies: Pan-European reach

Communication barriers to reaching all citizens of European member states are perhaps nowhere more evident than from the standpoint of the EU itself. Political communication barriers between the EU and member-state citizens are particularly evident to the lead policy-making institution of the EU, the European Commission. Establishing communication itself is no easy task. Especially “when you consider the constituency out there is 500 million, with 23 official languages, cultures,” admitted Giorgios Markopouliotis, head of planning and priorities with the Commission’s communication division. Reaching EU-member citizens of so many different overlapping cultures is not possible by means of a single, simple strategy. “Some people like internet, others like the written press, others watch only television,” the official explained. “You have all of these variables which are much more complex in the EU constellation than in the national constellation” (Markopouliotis 2007).

Diverse cultures appear to have bred a diversity of media in Brussels, each of which cover the EU and at-large European affairs in slightly different ways, using their own approaches to surmounting barriers of language, national culture, EU communication deficits and advertising to reach their Europe-wide target audience.

A quick survey of readership size/circulation and reader location, detailed in Figure 4, nevertheless shows that all media outlets examined here are succeeding at reaching a distinctly pan-European readership. In terms of readership figures and target audience, one media outlet stands out in particular as the most closely measuring up to

Figure 4. Brussels-based Pan-European Media: Readership Characteristics

Publication	Established	Media type	Readership size/ circulation	Primary readership	Reader location 2006
European Voice	Brussels, 1995	Weekly newspaper	Circulation about 15,600 copies per week.	EU officials and those with a vested interest in EU affairs.	83% Belgium 16% Rest of Europe 1% Rest of world
Agence Europe	Brussels, 1953	Daily newsletter, electronic and printed	About 5,000 print copies delivered daily; over 5,000 subscribers to electronic edition.	EU officials; national governments; decision-makers and agencies with a stake in the EU; news media.	40% Brussels 50% Rest of Europe 10% Rest of world (Company estimates)
Europolitics/ Europolitique	Brussels, 1972	Daily newsletter/ newspaper	About 10,000 subscribers	EU officials; national governments; businesspeople; educational institutions; news media.	47.53% Brussels 43.85% Rest of EU 5.79 % Europe outside EU 2.83 % Rest of world
EU Observer (euobserver.com)	Brussels, 2001	News website, updated twice daily.	25,000 readers (unique visitors) daily, on average.	Varied and general; students and educational institutions form the biggest single group.	14.6% Belgium (Brussels) 56.3% Rest of EU 9.1% Europe outside EU 11.7% USA 8.3% Rest of world
EurActiv (euractiv.com)	Brussels, 1999	EU policy web portal	475,000 unique visitors per month.	Management-level professionals; political leaders; educational institutions.	21.39% Belgium 40.73% Rest of EU 8.85% USA 1.84% Canada 25% Rest of world, incl. rest of Europe
Café Babel (cafebabel.com)	Paris, 2001	Online magazine	400,000 unique visitors per month, of which 336,000 from Europe	General	84.1% Europe 12.66% Americas (6.35% North Am.) 1.56% Asia 1.12% Africa 0.45% Oceania

(Sources: Company websites, factsheets and advertising information packages; independent circulation figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) and the European Business Readership Survey 2006-2007.)

what could be called a truly independent pan-European publication: news website *EU Observer*.

Taking audience figures and primary readership identities as the criterion for successful reporting of EU public affairs for Europeans, *Euractiv.com*, *Café Babel* and the *European Voice* would have to follow. Newsletters *Europolitics* and Agence Europe's limited readership target put them in a distinct category: these report largely to elites, or, according to the theoretical definition, a European public sphere of elite decision-makers. *Euractiv.com*'s devotion to reporting to elite decision-makers may also put it in this category, however the high volume of readership Europe-wide readership and readership identity suggest that *Euractiv* informs multiple European public spheres.

Café Babel, in terms of reach and target audience, appears to be a successful example of pan-European media. However its viability as an independent, profitable, professional enterprise has yet to be proven – as demonstrated by its reliance on public and private grants for financing and staffing largely by volunteers, interns and unpaid contributors.

The *European Voice*, the only newspaper of significance devoted to the coverage of EU and European affairs, could also lay claim to being pan-European, were it not for its low circulation levels outside Brussels. The newspaper's paid circulation, moreover, amounts to only about 30 percent, with the rest supplied largely to EU institutions and their members, including EU policy-makers, leaders and civil servants, within Brussels. Nevertheless, the style of the newspaper makes it reader-friendly enough for a general audience that has some knowledge of the EU – leaving room for greater potential beyond Brussels. "We would aim to be a more entertaining read than *Europolitique*," said Deputy

Editor Tim King, comparing *European Voice* to the more targeted *Europolitics*. “You don’t have to be a specialist to be reading *European Voice*” (King, 2007).

As is the case with most media studied here, the *European Voice* does not consider *Europolitics* nor any of the other media to be competitors. Each outlet appears to have found a stable niche in the Brussels-based European print media market. Their strategies to reaching readers are unique enough to keep them from intruding into each others’ audiences, such that audiences are presented with slightly different types of information from each, via different means, and in differing styles. An examination of business models and editorial strategies taken in response to each of the market barriers, detailed in the following sections, demonstrates this.

5.2 Language

In the absence of a recognized lingua franca, aspiring pan-European media must concede that language limits them from reaching readers throughout Europe, down to the grassroots, unless such media translate their content for ready reading into all European languages. Of the media examined here, four out of six provide content in two or more official languages of the EU. The oldest outlets of the group, newsletters Agence Europe and Europe Information Service (EIS), have always done so. As have two of websites, *Café Babel* and *Euractiv.com* – which offer content in the greatest variety of languages. News website EU Observer and newspaper *European Voice*, on the other hand, report only in English. Reporting in a single language does not appear to have limited nor threatened the success of the latter two outlets. Reporting in multiple languages is perceived among the oldest two outlets as being a necessity, in keeping with the EU’s

commitment to linguistic diversity, as well as adding value to the publications, and maintaining their readership market reach. For *Café Babel* and *Euractiv.com*, providing content in several languages is in line with these websites' goal of encouraging dialog among readers and contributors, as much as it is to reaching as many European readers as possible.

5.2.1 Commitment to linguistic diversity

Agence Europe has in its newsletters provided news in three major European Languages – French, English and Italian – since its inception in 1953. Likewise, EIS has provided its newsletter in two language versions – *Europolitique* in French and *Europolitics* (formerly European Report) in English, with plans for a third language edition – *Europolitica* – in Spanish (Lemoine 2007). The editors-in-chief of these long-standing European publications, committed to intimately and meticulously following the EU integration project from its earliest years, admit to the rising importance of the English language throughout Europe, particularly since the accession of Sweden, Finland and Austria in 1995, and the most recent “big bang” accessions of 10 member states in 2004, and another two in 2007. This has translated into a rise in the demand for content in English relative to the two publications' other languages.

Despite this, Pierre Lemoine, executive publisher and editor-in-chief of EIS's *Europolitique/Europolitics*, emphasizes that, as far as language is concerned, “particularity” is has become an integral, accepted characteristic of the European Union. The goal of maintaining appeal and interest in the publication makes it important to continue publishing in multiple languages. “That will never change. In my opinion,

language barriers will always complicate understanding,” explained Lemoine. “That’s the way it is. It’s been accepted to such an extent that it has become policy (in the EU and among national governments). So we are not ready to change our principal of multi-lingualism.” Moreover, national elites, among the EIS’s major clients, “prefer to read in their own national language,” Lemoine explained, even if they do know English (Lemoine, 2007). With that, EIS has plans to create a Spanish, and possibly other language editions in the near future.

5.2.2 Encouraging reader participation

Websites *Euractiv.com* and *Café Babel* follow similar editorial lines on language, to an even greater extent than the older publications. *Euractiv.com*’s main site, produced out of Brussels, features a choice of English, French and German editions, all with the same reports. *Café Babel*’s main site also features a choice of identical editions in different languages – with a choice of English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Catalan, or Polish.

Euractiv.com, however, follows up with an added localization strategy in an effort to reach more readers in their home countries: the main site has links to partner franchisee sites with their own local content in France, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania – all in their local national languages. The three language options on the main site allow *Euractiv*, firstly, to be read by its biggest national audiences of Europe, and readers worldwide who know English. Meanwhile its partner franchisee site strategy allows it to provide localized content for audiences in France and Central and Eastern Europe. Franchisees can use content from the main site, translating it and even, ideally, adapting it for local audiences. “What we’re looking for

ideally is also for them to adapt the content to the local audience,” explained *Euractiv* managing editor Frédéric Simon. Any article that is written at the main website in Brussels, he remarked, can generate comments and other reaction from people in the partner site countries, “whether they are government officials, NGOs or from civil society. So that’s our localization [strategy], as we call it” (Simon 2007).

Providing content in other languages is particularly important for *Café Babel*, as it is in keeping with the site’s founding idea to create a “European public space” where European issues can be discussed. The online magazine, explained the site’s Brussels branch president Lorenzo Morselli, aims to provide information “on different societal topics or political issues with a European outlook. So people can see the same issues arise in neighbouring countries, and exchange ideas with examples of how the issues have been dealt with” (Morselli 2007).

Beyond the content of the magazine, *Café Babel*’s objective of “creating a European public space is also linked to the idea of getting people together on ideas and issues,” Morselli said. Following that line, added activities of the organization include web forums and in-person meetings to discuss issues with a European perspective.

5.2.3 English only

Reporting only in English, the *European Voice* newspaper and website *EU Observer* claim they have not encountered any barriers to reaching their audiences. Both rely on the reality that English is the unofficial lingua franca of Europe, at least among EU professionals, younger and more highly-educated Europeans. Still both are aware that a lot, if not most of their readership have English as a second language. “A lot of our

readers in the [EU] institutions could be French or German, but they'll have good English, and so will be able to read us" said Tim King, deputy editor for the *European Voice* (King, 2007). Writing for such an audience must be kept relatively simple and straightforward, King admitted, largely free of cultural references, without sacrificing depth and detail in explanation.

EU Observer has considered reporting stories in other languages, concluding that they did not have the resources to do so. Whether there was a need to do so or not was a different question: "We don't know. I don't think we have the need" stated marketing and advertising executive Alexandre Dechaumont.

"The audience interested in European affairs normally speaks English," remarked reporter Mark Beunderman (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007), concurring with King of the *European Voice*.

The website has not received any complaints about their exclusive use of English, with one occasional exception, according to Dechaumont: "Some French MEP's [European parliamentarians] complain that we are only in English. When we ask them for funding they say 'oh, we cannot.' Then we say we don't have the resources to report in French, 'can you help us?' 'No'," he laughed (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007).

Recent enlargements of the EU, unprecedented in terms of area and population, have also worked in favour of English usage, according to King and other editors interviewed for this study. The accession of 2004 included nine new languages into the EU, and the accession of 2007, two more. "We are aware that a lot of our readership will have English as a second language," commented King (2007). "So the *European Voice* has been well-positioned to profit from the fact that enlargement of the European Union

has generally meant a further tilt towards English being the dominant language of Brussels.”

5.3 National Identity

“European journalism is still a myth. We write, we broadcast in different traditions. We have different habits,” said Guiseppe Zaffuto, director of programs for the European Journalism Centre (EJC) in Brussels, elaborating on local media at his office in the heart of the district that hosts all institutions of the European Union (Zaffuto, 2007). His organization, the EJC, orients and briefs journalists in Brussels about the EU. The program director’s illustration of the challenge language and national culture pose to the notion of pan-European journalism is revealing in many ways, and merits close attention.

“Anglo-saxon kind of reporting is very much to the point. Facts are separated from opinion,” he elaborated. An Italian hailing from Sicily, Zaffuto has worked as an international affairs reporter, and lived for a few years in Scandinavia. He went on to illustrate key differences between two (of many) reporting traditions of Europe:

In the Latin tradition, it’s not really like this. Facts and opinion are a little bit mixed. In Italy, Spain, France, Portuguese, Greek maybe – I would say the South European perspective is not really as rigorous as your [Anglo-Saxon] way. Plus I would say that we have a very descriptive style. So the example we always make to young European journalism students that come to see us is always – somebody like you would say that somebody died. That’s it. One of us would write that in a full river of blood, the person... la, la, la, you know? More literally [One would write in a more literary language].

In my country, if I would write that person died, that means I don’t know how to write. Whereas in one of your countries [following Anglo-Saxon traditions] if I would write the Italian way, you would say ‘ah, but this is bullshit. Why don’t you get to the point!

I am exaggerating of course to make you understand what my experience is. What I want to say is, there is no harmonization. We have no harmonization in Europe about journalism. Yet. (Zaffuto 2007)

Zaffuto added that pan-European journalism would not occur until such harmonization began to emerge.

Taken literally, in context, Zaffuto's illustration of language and national cultural obstacles is excellent in its completeness and concision. In his illustration of the difference between Anglo-saxon and Mediterranean/Latin strains of news and public affairs reporting, Zaffuto uses personal pronouns "I" and "you," "my" and "your" – thus indulging, for the sake of explanation, in differentiating the national/regional identities of both himself, as an Italian of the Mediterranean/Latin tradition, and of the interviewer, this researcher, an anglophone Canadian from the French-speaking province of Quebec. Such mode of discourse is commonly prevalent in national media throughout the world. Social science researcher and author Michael Billig for instance coined the term "flagging the homeland daily" for this with his description of national mass media's conventional use of such patterns of discourse – in a chapter of the same name – in his work *Banal Nationalism* (Billig 1995: 91-127).

National reporting traditions affect editorial decisions on writing styles in pan-European publications as well. To be intelligible to the general European reader, who could be from any given country and of any one of a variety of cultural backgrounds, reports must be given in a neutral, straightforward language without national or culture-specific references. "There are odd cultural references that you just weed out," explained deputy editor Tim King of *European Voice*, who like most of his colleagues in the editorial department, hails from the United Kingdom (King 2007). "In an English newspaper background (setting) you might allude to some television program in the 1970s, on the assumption that everyone had grown up on TV in the '70s. Well, you can't

do that here.” More room for such references would be allowed in small gossip and humour-oriented sections of the paper, he said. Otherwise, such references could be included, “and we would just explain it.” Common pan-European cultural references, if they do exist, would be the only ones to include in such papers. As such, national reporting traditions register as limiting factors to reaching a Europe-wide audience insofar as they make for much less colourful, or attractive reading in pan-European print news.

Zaffuto, who has also helped train and brief journalists from all over the world in his capacity as director of programs with the EJC in Brussels, further claimed in his interview that he had not seen any signs of the emergence of pan-European modes of reporting. The dream of establishing a European newspaper or European television network, he asserted, is of more specific interest to an elite community “that understands and is interested in European affairs” (Zaffuto 2007). Rather than a pan-European public sphere, this point of view concurs with the concept of multiple public spheres emerging in Europe: in this case, a specific elite sphere of European decision-makers.

Rather than confront the barrier of national identity and its effect on reporting, print outlets examined here accept it, and report in a straightforward fashion. In so doing they accept that their content will be read by those who have an interest in European, rather than national affairs. This means that, short of serving an educational function, Brussels-based European media will not be sought by readers whose concerns are strictly national, unless an EU issue affects the national interest.

As such, national identity as a barrier has the effect of limiting the overall number of readers to: a) those who know something of the EU, b) those who need to, and c) those

who want to. These tend to be younger people who have learned something of the EU in their years of schooling, and/or must do so to improve employment prospects; or political and business management-level decision-makers who have an interest or stake in EU policy-making. The importance of education on knowledge and interest in the EU is demonstrated in the experiences of the personnel who work at the two youngest outlets examined: *Café Babel*, which was founded by university students who lived and studied in other EU countries as part of an EU-sponsored exchange program called Erasmus (Morselli 2007); and the relatively young personnel of EU Observer, most of whom attended Collège de l'Europe, a university-level institution which has campuses in three different EU countries, attended by students from all over Europe (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007).

5.4 EU communication deficits

Interview results show that deficient knowledge of EU institutions among the general population in Europe poses a conventional challenge to reporters – one that is in line with their work as interpreters, whose job it is to make issues understandable to the public. The intricacies of the EU, however, make it more challenging to report on than conventional national political and public affairs reporting. In fact, learning and understanding EU processes is a common problem among journalists themselves – particularly those that approach the EU for the first time.

The very nature of the journalism profession requires skills of learning, interpretation, and explanation to mass audiences. Making the EU understood, quite simply is “a sort of first-order journalism challenge,” explained *European Voice* deputy editor King. Reporting on the EU should be no more challenging than it is to tackle any

other topic not understood by the layperson, he said. The journalists' first-order task is to make topics – complicated or not, “understandable to the generalist” (King 2007).

5.4.1 Filtering and translating into “normal language”

Editors of other case study publications emphasized that the problem with covering the EU, unlike national governments, lies in filtering through particularly vast amounts of information that its institutions generate every day, and rendering its technical language understandable to the public. Reporters with EIS (*Europolitics*) and Agence Europe, who follow the EU institutions on a daily basis, are particularly aware of this. “The EU is machinery that produces news and information every day. It is very effective at this” explained Sebastien Falletti, foreign affairs and trade reporter with EIS. “You get a lot of information which is not really news. [The EU] is also trying to sell their point through the Commission, through the lobbies. So one key challenge is to try to figure out what is news and what isn't” (Falletti 2007).

Falletti, like his fellow reporters at EIS, follows specific issues dealt with in the EU day after day, until key decisions finally break, meriting the production of a story. This experience, it must be noted, is unique to the specialized newsletters *Europolitics* and *Europe Daily Bulletin* in the sense that these are committed to covering the EU day after day. Close coverage of this sort is necessary in order to break EU-related stories. More generalist media however scarcely have the time to do this.

General news wire services' experience is particularly telling – meriting a momentary digression from the case studies. EU coverage, according to Agence France Presse's Brussels deputy director Catherine Triomphe, is “definitely more intricate” than covering national governments. “The decision-making process is slower,” she explained.

“It goes through many phases and compromises which have to be followed closely and deciphered. Because there is a lot of EU jargon used to present the way compromises are gradually being structured, which is difficult for any beginner [reporter] in Brussels” (Triomphe 2007).

In following every step of decision-making, interest in issues often “gets lost in the process”, Triomphe said, by readers and reporters alike. Decisions taken by 27 member state governments requires constant compromise, resulting in outcomes that have less impact than anything produced by national or local governments. Such stories make for less interesting news, and are less attractive to reporters, considering the time and constant follow-up that is required of them.

Troublesome “EU jargon” is a challenge posed to all journalists. “People in Brussels speak in EU jargon,” noted reporter Beunderman of the *EU Observer*. “Especially in legislative processes, conciliation procedure and first reading, second reading committees in parliament,” as well as proceedings in all other EU institutions. The challenge, he said, “is to explain that well. We (reporters) are EU experts ourselves. We should always be aware of the need to keep translating it into normal language” (EU Observer 2007).

Normal language is evidently hard to come by in the institutions of the EU. Paul Taylor, Brussels’ bureau chief for Reuters, asserted the EU is partly to blame for the overuse of unfamiliar jargon. “I think it was deliberate in the sense that, from the outset they wanted to use terminology that did not make it [the EU] sound like a state”, he said. “They didn’t want it to be thought of as a state.” This, he said, is most readily evidenced in debates over the proposed EU constitution (Taylor 2007). A proposed official title of

“High representative for the common foreign and security policy” as written in the rejected constitution, for example, would translate quite simply into “EU foreign minister.”

Insofar as the apathy of the general population towards the EU is part of the communication deficit issue, the present lack of important, vital stories that have a direct perceived impact on EU-member citizens is perceived by some members of the media as being partly to blame. As director of programs at the European Journalism Centre in Brussels, Giuseppe Zaffuto has seen coverage priorities and reader reaction shift in the last decade. Unlike the mid-1990s, when the European integration project gathered steam with renewed enthusiasm following the end of the cold war and the fall of the iron curtain, recent years have seen a decline in interest. Recent big events, such as monetary integration and enlargement in the East, are not unexpected stories. They are largely the product of decisions made in the heady 1990s, he remarked. As for the present decade: “I do not see any big priorities that are driving the man in the street towards a better understanding of the institutions,” said Zaffuto (2007), “or much more affection towards the parliament, which is the body that is elected by European citizens.”

5.5 Advertising markets

Among the six case studies considered, advertising concerns only three directly. Newsletter agencies Agence Europe and EIS rely almost exclusively on subscriptions for their revenue. Website *Café Babel* still falls short of a professional operation, as it is financed largely by public and private grants. Advertising presents a singular puzzle to the remaining three outlets. Their media formats – one print, the others web-based, and

their aspirations to reaching a Europe-wide audience that spans at least 27 European states – present big questions to advertisers. Meanwhile, contrary to the *European Voice* and *EU Observer*, *Euractiv.com* has established its own unique business model that, for many, appears to sacrifice principles of editorial independence. A description of the business models adopted by each medium is in order.

5.5.1 European Voice

European Voice's readership, largely Brussels-dwelling expatriates with a high income, make the paper a good place to advertise local products purchased by affluent customers, such as airlines, banks, cars, telecom networks and luxury goods. The newspaper easily attracts advertising from lobbying and advocacy groups, and ads for jobs and educational institutions throughout Europe. Having worked with a number of newspapers throughout his journalistic career – including *The European*, a failed attempt at a pan-European, English-language weekly newspaper, deputy editor Tim King is keenly aware of the limitations of advertising with an aspiring pan-European newspaper, which completely differ from advertising in conventional local/regional newspapers. “You deny yourself classified advertising, and you deny yourself property ads – apart from villas in coastal resorts across Europe,” said King (2007). In terms of property ads, “If you wanted to sell a house in Brussels, why would you advertise it in a Europe-wide newspaper rather than a Belgian one?”

National market barriers are not so much the problem, King added: “It’s just the physical distance. Restaurants, theatre, all that kind of listings-area, shops – it doesn’t

work on a Europe-wide basis.” The editor recalled advertising as being a key unresolved puzzle at The European, which constantly operated at a loss.

5.5.2 Advertising for the web: Two models

5.5.2.1 EU observer

Logistical limitations on delivery and circulation limit the reach of newspaper advertising. The internet, however, with its potentially unlimited reach, appears to present an ideal advertising platform. But practice shows this is far from being the case.

Even though their website is widely read, *EU Observer* has found that a pan-European advertising market does not exist. Genuine pan-European advertising agencies are nowhere to be found, according to marketing and advertising director Alexandre Dechaumont. Even though “all advertising agencies are multinationals” he said, all advertising campaigns they undertake are limited to national markets, with “very few pan-European campaigns” (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007). Meanwhile, he noted, national ad agencies will not consider the website because it is not judged to have a sufficient “critical mass” within any given state.

Another key limitation to websites is the novelty of online advertising, which has not yet convinced advertisers. “Potential advertisers tend to be very conservative,” explained Dechaumont:

[Advertisers] will think they are better off advertising in *European Voice* and paying 3,000 Euros for a weekly ad – I mean like half a page in *European Voice*, than being visible on a website. Even though they might never read the *European Voice* from A to Z, and they might check our website every day. That’s something which makes it very hard, for everybody. (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007)

New methods of advertising are also challenging principles of editorial independence. Integrated content, for instance, which offers links to outside sites that are in some way related to a given story, can cross the line of editorial independence if the content is more promotional than informational. Such new techniques push advertising “to the point where you don’t know where the border is between business and advertising,” Dechaumont said (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007). These changing boundaries test the limits of journalistic integrity, and sometimes raise questions of fair practice among competitors. *EU Observer*’s main online competitor in Brussels, *Euractiv.com*, for example, arguably straddles the line between promotion and reporting with its “sponsorship” business model.

5.5.2.2 EurActiv.com

Calling itself an “EU policy portal” rather than a news site, *Euractiv.com* does not rely on conventional advertising. Instead, the site’s main source of funding derives from corporate sponsors, who provide funding to open “policy sections” on the site. “We wanted to keep the site completely free of charge,” explained *Euractiv* managing editor Frédéric Simon. Conventional advertising on the internet proved to be inadequately developed, “so the sponsorship option was chosen as a founding principle” (Simon 2007). In all, policy sections cover about 20 major policy issues that concern the EU. Among them are climate change, energy, EU enlargement, financial services, trade and industry, transport, and workers’ mobility. “We couldn’t cover climate change or energy as deep as we do today without the sponsor funding. That’s very clear,” Simon explained. Together with the sponsor, we agree on some dossiers on which we would go a little more in-depth” (Simon 2007).

Policy sections include extensive background information on the issues covered – including archived news articles, issue summaries, and position statements by decision-agreement, *Euractiv* posts their sponsor’s logo in the large margins of its web pages. The images are links in themselves, which take visitors either to the company website, or opens a page that informs readers on the company and its activities.

Euractiv’s unique financing model raises questions about editorial independence among editors throughout Brussels. In spite of the fact that *Euractiv* does report news and information on the EU and Europe-wide policy issues, its site is packed with links to press releases and position statements that show little, if any independent interpretation and placement into context. Simon admitted that potential sponsors themselves are often skeptical of the site’s editorial independence. “We have to do a lot of explaining,” he said, underlining that *Euractiv*’s commitment as a policy portal is to provide fact-based reporting that is free of editorial opinion (Simon 2007). Positions presented by sponsors on the site must also be strictly fact-based, and open to contradictory views that can provide counter-arguments, also based on fact. Relationships with sponsors cannot proceed without such agreement between the sponsor and the website.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

As the European Union enlarges and diversity of European Union's population increases, avenues for political communication are presented with challenges that limit the success of the European integration project. Nevertheless, political science and communications researchers hypothesize that as integration proceeds, citizens will come to relate to the European Union as they do with their own states – and a common European public sphere will emerge. It is hypothesized that pan-European media outlets that report to all-European audiences will emerge as well. Is this feasible?

This study identifies strategies used by aspiring pan-European media to report politics and public affairs to the populations of the European Union at large, which are characterized by multinationality, multilingualism, overlapping identities and interests.

Rather than identify how media report to the diverse population of the European Union, previous studies have investigated the emergence of a European public sphere within the union, assumed to be a necessary condition for the establishment of pan-European media. This study, in taking the reverse approach, has yielded a series of conclusions that go beyond the original research question. The following conclusions first address the central research question of this thesis. Also included, in the second half of this chapter, are a summary of broader findings that suggest further avenues of research.

6.1 Strategies to reaching audiences

This study identifies four transnational barriers that exist to reporting news and public affairs to Europeans at large, and enumerates the strategies used by aspiring pan-European media to overcome these barriers and reach that audience. These barriers,

identified from recent research that sought to identify the emergence of a European public sphere, are language, national identity, EU political communication deficits, and advertising markets. A total of six media outlets that serve pan-European audiences were selected to identify strategies used to overcome the four transnational barriers. These case studies were recently-established pan-European media located in Brussels, the centre of EU governance. These included the weekly newspaper *European Voice*; daily EU newsletter agencies Agence Europe and European Information Service; and websites *EU Observer*, *Euractiv.com*, and *Café Babel*. Each of these have succeeded at overcoming the four barriers, proving themselves to be viable enterprises of political and public affairs communication so far. Strategies used to overcome each of these barriers are varied. These strategies, summarized here, provide an indication of how pan-European audiences can be reached.

6.1.1 Language

Firstly, the case studies all concur that English is the preferred language in the multinational setting, and is adequate for informing audiences of Europe who wish to know more about EU and Europe-wide affairs. Readers seeking news about the EU and Europe-wide affairs tend to understand English well enough to accept this. Offering services in other languages serves more the purpose of providing “added value” to the reader (Lemoine 2007, Jehin 2007), who usually understands English anyway. It could not be concluded with certainty that offering content in multiple languages increases the chances of reaching a Europe-wide audience. Interviews indicated that recent expansions of the EU (particularly from 1995 to 2007), which now includes 23 official languages as a result, have worked in favour of English as the preferred language Europe-wide.

6.1.2 National identity

Reporting styles and interest in stories vary by nationality and ethnic identity, according to literature surveys and interviews conducted in this research. No uniquely European tradition of reporting exists. This barrier works to limit the appeal of pan-European media to readers who wish to inform themselves about the EU and Europe-wide affairs exclusively. It can also work to limit the appeal of pan-European reporting overall, as such reporting is characterized as neutral, “simple” and straightforward, without colourful cultural references. Cultural references must be “weeded out” (King 2007) in order for reports to be understandable to European readers at large.

6.1.3 EU Communication deficits

Deficient knowledge of the EU among the general population does not present journalists with an uncommon challenge, as it is a reporter’s job to explain any given subject. From the standpoint of journalists, EU communication deficits are best defined by the difficulty posed in covering a transnational organization that: a) generates vast amounts of information on a daily basis; b) uses jargon that is not understandable to the general public; c) deliberates over exceptionally long periods of time before it produces decisions that are newsworthy. On the latter point, Agence France Presse Brussels bureau chief Catherine Triomphe commented that long deliberation causes interest to get “lost in the process” (Triomphe 2007).

6.1.4 Advertising markets

Advertising, commonly the largest source of revenue for conventional news outlets, was relevant for only three of the six case studies considered here. The two newsletter agencies – Agence Europe and Europe Information Service – rely on subscriptions for their revenues; web magazine *Café Babel* relies on public and private grants.

Firstly, a genuine pan-European advertising market does not exist, according to the three relevant case studies, which limits the financial success of outlets that rely on advertising for their operations. National and local advertising markets prevail, and these do not appear to be attracted to pan-European outlets. For newspapers, advertising staples of national, regional and local outlets do not exist at the pan-European level. Pan-European publications like *European Voice* are denied classified and property ads – not to mention local listings-type ads for restaurants and entertainment.

The advertising question looms large for websites in particular. Websites have greater potential to reach Europe-wide audiences, owing to the increasingly extensive reach of internet in Europe and throughout the world, however advertisers remain unconvinced, and conservative – sticking to conventional means of advertising like newspapers and magazines instead (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007).

For professional outlets that cannot rely on subscriptions for funding, alternatives to advertising seem few. Case study *Euractiv.com* has undertaken a sponsorship model, whereby corporate sponsors fund the production of specific dossiers that cover EU-related issues. Such a model was not viewed favourably by other media studied in

Brussels, as it opens questions of editorial independence. *Euractiv* defines itself as an “EU policy portal,” not a news site, which allows it to side-step such issues.

6.2 The EU and news media: Two variables in flux

In its investigation of print news media, an industry normally characterized by a high degree of competition, one of this study’s surprising findings is that the cases considered, all based in Brussels, do not consider themselves genuine competitors. The only evident source of ire for some media is Euractiv.com, a website whose business model takes it to the limits of editorial independence. Newsletter agencies Agence Europe and European Information Service compete against each other to a degree, as do news websites *EU Observer* and *Euractiv.com*, however none of these sees the other as threatening its readership. Primary effort among all the case studies is devoted to attracting readers from multiple nations who likely have some knowledge of English and, in the case of all except the newsletters, to secure themselves a financially-viable business model.

Low competition and the tremendous variety among the case studies in terms of publishing platforms, editorial and financing strategies demonstrates that the media industry is in a state of change. Citizens have a greater choice of media to consult for news than ever before. The study’s other element of analysis, the European Union and European public affairs, is also in a continuous state of change. Particularly dramatic changes – the largest accession in history and the adoption of the Euro – have just come to pass. Hence, what emerges from this study is more of snapshot of ‘two moving trains’ as it were – one the reporter and the other, its subject. Results indicate possible future

developments – rather than an enduring answer to the research question of “how pan-European media report politics and political affairs to a European audience.”

At this point in time, 50 years after the Treaty of Rome’s establishment of the European common market, and following the largest accession in history, news media have at their disposal extensive tools that allow them to reach the multinational populations of Europe more economically, and with a greater variety of means than ever before, largely thanks to the internet and advances in digital technology.

6.3 Going Europe-wide via internet and digital

Case studies show that the internet, compared to newspapers, is the more effective way to transmit information Europe-wide. Newspapers have greater logistical limitations that keep them from spreading their reach across Europe. Of the news media examined, the EU Observer, despite its small size, appears to be the most successful genuinely pan-European news media. Its readership reach across Europe is the most uniform, without being focused on a single public. The site’s number of visitors, 25,000 daily, puts it well ahead of the other outlets. Taking this as a model for the future of pan-European reporting seems feasible. *EU Observer*’s full-time reporters are from all over Europe, functioning in multiple languages but writing in English, normally their second language. Reporters keep informed on stories from other media, largely the common generalist national press, written in their native or other known languages – gleaning these for cues on developing news (Dechaumont and Beunderman 2007). These are easily accessed via internet, if not in newsprint form. The final product is news with an EU or Europe-wide angle.

Websites *Euractiv.com* and *Café Babel*, which produce content in multiple languages, are also very effective at reaching a mass readership throughout Europe, although they are not devoted to news reporting.

6.4 Public spheres: Elite vs. general

Most media examined in the case studies, with the exception of *Café Babel* and *EU Observer*, proved to serve a specific readership that can best be described as a public sphere of government and business decision-making elites, much the same as those elites served by large international print media of the *Financial Times-International Herald Tribune* group. This readership is comprised largely of EU professionals, national government officials, management-level businesspeople, members of NGO's and think-tanks. Newsletters *Europe Daily Bulletin* and *Europolitics/Europolitique* proved to have the most focused elite readership, one that can be described as a pan-European audience of EU and national political officials, diplomats, functionaries, and decision-makers makers with a stake in EU affairs. Neither of the two target common general readers, nor do they intend to do so. Newspaper *European Voice* also serves an elite readership, however the newspaper's more generalist style could potentially attract a broader reading public.

On the other hand, the *EU Observer* and *Café Babel*'s success at reaching a broad all-European audience suggests that a common European public sphere, one which includes more than simply elites, is developing. Both outlets are websites, implying that the internet may serve as the medium that would best serve an at-large European public sphere comprised of all EU-member state citizens. How true is this? Further research into

media preferences of European citizens would yield more coherent answers to this question.

The existence of a European public sphere of elites who have a say and a stake in the future of the EU is established. What remains to be seen is whether a more general, inclusive public sphere can emerge in the multinational environment of Europe: one that encompasses all publics, that is, *all* citizens affected by policies set by the decision-making elites.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interviews conducted in Brussels, Belgium, May 2 – May 11, 2007.

Dechaumont, Alexandre, Marketing executive, *EU Observer*, and Mark Beunderman, reporter, *EU Observer*. Interview by author, 3 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Falletti, Sebastien, reporter, *Europolitique/Europolitics*. Interview by author, 8 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Jéhin, Olivier, Deputy editor-in-chief, *Bulletin Quotidien Europe* (Agence Europe). Interview by author, 3 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

King, Tim, deputy editor, *European Voice*. Interview by author. 3 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Lemoine, Pierre, Editor-in-chief, *Europolitique/Europolitics*. Interview by author, 2 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Markopouliotis, Giorgios, director, planning and priorities, Directorate General Communications, European Commission. Interview by author, 8 May 2007. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Morselli, Lorenzo, president, *Café Babel*, Brussels. Interview by author. 10 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Ricardi, Lorenzo, director of marketing, Agence Europe. Interview by author. 3 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Simon, Frédéric, managing editor, *EurActiv.com*. Interview by author. 4 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Taylor, Paul, European affairs editor, Reuters, Brussels. Interview by author. 11 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.


Triomphe, Catherine, deputy bureau chief, Agence France Presse, Brussels. Interview by author. 4 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Watson, Rory, reporter, *The Times*. Interview by author. 11 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Zaffuto, Guiseppe, director of programmes, European Journalism Centre. Interview by author. 7 May 2007. Brussels, Belgium. Tape recording and notes. Central European University, Budapest.

Appendix 2: Front pages of selected pan-European case studies

Europe Daily Bulletin: Newsletter by Agence Europe

 depuis 1953

BULLETIN QUOTIDIEN EUROPE

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Rédacteur en chef adjoint : Olivier Jehin

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(EU) CONTENTS

A LOOK BEHIND THE NEWS

3 - Benefits and limits of new EU-US economic partnership.

THE DAY IN POLITICS

4 - EU/ESTONIA/RUSSIA: Estonia wants EU to take 'strong' measures against Russia and threatens to veto Partnership Agreement.
- EU/TURKEY: EU urges all sides to respect Constitutional Court ruling and backs holding of early general elections.

5 - EU/UNITED STATES: Europeans and Americans take stock of efforts for world peace.

6 - EU/PALESTINE: €21 million from Interim Aid Mechanism to fund Palestinian public services.
- EP/PALESTINE: MEPs meet prime minister Ismail Haniyeh amidst criticism from Israel.
- EU/IRAQ: Neighbouring countries to meet in Sharm-el-Sheikh on 3-4 May.

GENERAL NEWS

7 - EU/UNITED STATES: Adoption of 'Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration between the EU and USA'.

8 - EU/UNITED STATES: EU and US pledge to speed up transformation of energy structures to tackle energy security and climate change.

9 - EU/BUDGET 2008: Preliminary draft reflecting challenges EU must face in future.

11 - EU/WTO/DOHA: Timetable for G4 meetings takes shape.
- EU/SOUTH KOREA: South Korea gives go-ahead to talks for FTA with Union – first round table in Seoul next week.
- EU/TRADE: Union and Mexico join in consultation on US complaint against counterfeiting in China.
- EU/BIOFUELS: Commission initiates public consultation.

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BUSINESS
CEOs cite importance of infrastructure Page 4

HEALTH SERVICES
Health consultation summary: observations and proposals Page 18

EU/TURKEY
EU warns Turkey's army against interfering in politics Page 14

EUROPOLITICS

The European affairs daily

Wednesday 2 May 2007 | N° 3298 | 39^e year

PROMOTING integration

By Elio Van Parys

Increased cooperation and exchange of experiences within the EU in terms of integration policy and the promotion of intercultural dialogue will be on the agenda of the meeting of EU ministers in Potsdam on 10 and 11 May, the German Presidency announced. The German Federal Minister of the Interior, Dr Wolfgang Schäuble, justified the meeting by saying that "with regard to second and third-generation descendants of immigrants living

COMPETITION

Kroes warns against 'subsidy races'

By Rob Moll

Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes has warned member state ministers against engaging in subsidy wars with non-EU countries, despite the unfair advantage this gives to third country businesses. At an informal meeting of the Competitiveness Council held in Würzburg, Germany, on 26-28 April, Kroes warned that subsidy wars would simply lead to "increased trade distortion". The issue was raised by a German delegation paper, which suggested that levels of state subsidies granted outside the EU27, where state aid control is not stringent, are having a detrimental effect on European companies. Such swollen

higher levels of state aid when there is a distortion of competition from international competition. However, she added, this is not currently being used by member states. On the other hand, said the commissioner, if introduced as a general policy, "matching aid would not increase investment, it would increase the bill". She urged member state delegates instead to look to international, World Trade Organisation routes to redress competition imbalances caused by disproportionate state aid.

MINISTERS' CONCLUSIONS

The consensus message transmitted to the Commission was that it should review the present policy on state aid in cases of

SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

L'exposition aux rayonnements optiques sous contrôle - Analyse, p. 10

PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN

Accueil mitigé des groupes politiques à l'agenda de M. Barroso, p. 11

ÉLARGISSEMENT

Le Procureur général bulgare évoque des progrès tangibles, p. 14

EUROPOLITIQUE

Le quotidien des affaires européennes

Vendredi 12 mai 2006 | N° 3084 | 34^e année

REDACTEUR MINUTE

Encore une méga-fusion dans l'énergie

Par Hugues Boile

Alors que la fusion entre Gaz de France et Suez, pour créer un second champion énergétique français, a enfin été notifiée à la Commission européenne le 10 mai, une nouvelle méga-fusion énergétique se profile : celle, 100 % autrichienne, entre le pétrolier OMV et l'électricien Verbund. La nouvelle entité aura une capitalisation boursière d'un peu moins de 30 milliards d'euros, ce qui la place parmi les « grands » européens, et en première position en Europe centrale. Les services de la concurrence de la Commission ne vont pas chômer : ils ont jusqu'au 10 juin pour se prononcer sur GDF-Suez - un délai qui devrait logiquement être prolongé par une enquête approfondie à cause des chevauchements d'activité des deux futurs partenaires en France et en Belgique. EDF est aux aguets, et compte profiter des ventes d'actifs inévitables en Belgique, mais peut-être aussi en Espagne, suite à la recomposition du paysage énergétique. L'heure est en tout cas à la création de géants européens, conséquence logique des craintes sur la sécurité d'approvisionnement énergétique et de la libéralisation, qui impose une telle critique pour réaliser les investissements nécessaires, trop longtemps retardés pour cause d'incertitude réglementaire.

AGRICULTURE

La Commission propose « une réforme fondamentale » de l'OCM vin

Par Leo Varad

La commissaire européenne à l'Agriculture Mariann Fischer Boel veut faire table rase des règles qui régissent actuellement le marché du vin européen et contraindre le secteur vitivinicole à une profonde restructuration. Dans une communication sur cette organisation commune de marché (OCM), elle préconise un plan d'arrachage de 400 000 hectares sur cinq ans moyennant une enveloppe de 2,4 milliards d'euros.

Passée cette phase de restructuration, elle envisage une « réforme fondamentale » pour mettre en place un régime avec des règles simples et claires. En cours de consultation inter-services à la Commission, le document d'une quinzaine de pages doit être présenté par la commissaire au collège le 21 juin. Il devrait aboutir à la présentation à la fin de l'année de mesures législatives.

La commissaire poursuit deux objectifs, la réduction du décalage entre l'offre et la demande en vin des consommateurs et la révision des pratiques oenologiques en vigueur dans l'Union pour permettre

aux vins du Vieux Continent de mieux concurrencer leurs homologues du Nouveau Monde sur les marchés émergents.

Mariann Fischer Boel détaille quatre options : une réforme de l'OCM en se basant sur les mécanismes actuels, une libéralisation complète et une réforme profonde avec deux possibilités quant au rythme choisi. Elle écarte d'emblée les deux premières solutions et se focalise sur la création de règles qui permettent de rendre le secteur « durable, compétitif et prêt à faire face à une concurrence en constante progression ».

Son projet est fortement axé sur la politique d'arrachage pour mettre fin à la surproduction. Il prévoit ni plus ni moins de supprimer les mécanismes actuels de gestion du marché (dallations de crise et alcool de bouche, sous-produits de la vinification, aides aux moûts pour l'enrichissement et pour le jus de raisin, stockage privé) et de les remplacer par des mesures structurelles, visant à rétablir dans la durée l'équilibre du secteur.

À ce titre, le programme d'arrachage serait temporairement réactif, l'objectif étant de retirer 400 000 hectares de la production sur une période de (suite p. 9)



Objectif : mieux concurrencer le Nouveau Monde.

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News

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**Brussels takes soft line on
'frightening' obesity problem**




Gentle political pressure on food multinationals and EU states is Brussels' answer to Europe's bulging obesity problem until 2010, with consumer groups saying the Barroso commission is passing the buck to its successor. [See more >](#)

Brussels to push for EU-wide organ donor card

30.05.2007 - 09:25 CET


As nearly ten Europeans waiting for an organ transplant die every day, Brussels is set to table a proposal on how to boost organ donations - something currently highlighted by a controversial Dutch reality TV show in which viewers send text messages to a dying woman to help her decide which of three patients should receive her kidney. [See more >](#)



France gives stay of execution on Turkey EU hopes

30.05.2007 - 09:25 CET

France has confirmed that it will agree to press ahead with Turkey's EU membership talks for now, and push for a broader decision in December on whether or not to scrap the country's accession process altogether. [See more >](#)



News ticker

- Sweden urges EU farm aid phase-out (09:41)
- EU police head to Afghanistan (09:41)
- Macedonian ethnic factions reach deal (09:40)
- Russia in 'signal' of cooperation on Polish meat (09:37)
- Greenpeace and Brussels scrap over lobbying (09:36)

NEWS

EU stands at fork in the road on economic policy

30.05.2007 - 17:38 CET

EU policy based on competitiveness is set to result in higher environmental and social costs in the future, while a cohesion-oriented policy will have a softer territorial impact but less economic benefits, a new study shows. [See more >](#)

Poland fights to keep 'high-ranking' status in EU

30.05.2007 - 09:29 CET

With just three weeks before a decisive EU summit on ending the two-year constitutional deadlock, Poland is sticking to three demands - a new voting system, a clear list of exclusive national competencies and an energy solidarity clause - to be part of the deal. [See more >](#)

US and China quash German hopes of G8 climate deal

30.05.2007 - 09:25 CET

The US and China are rejecting a German move to set bold targets for cutting CO2 emissions, saying respectively that they are "too ambitious" and

EurActiv.com: European Union policy portal website

EurActiv.com - European Union Information Website (EU and Europe) - Microsoft Internet Explorer

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EU cash delivers in p

EU funds have successfully boosted productivity and employment in the bloc's poorest regions, helping them catch up with their neighbours, the Commission said in a first assessment of European cohesion policy over the 2000-2006 programming period.

LinksDossier: The new EU cohesion policy (2007-2013)

Enlargement & Neighbours
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Innovation & Growth
Interview: 'Cutting red tape will take some time'

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Economy & Euro
Czech Republic rebuffed over budget deficit

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New LinksDossiers

EU Communication Policy [FR] [DE]
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