Euranet: a Case Study of Pan-European Radio

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Abstract:
From its early beginnings as a single idea to its current status as an organisation of 27 member states, the European Union has suffered from the lack of a common cultural identity. This debility has greatly hindered the progress of European consolidation and convergence, which to the present day has been manifested mainly through economic and policy agreements. The European Union has achieved many goals during the last 25 years, including the implementation of a common currency that has led to a real economic union between member states and the transfer of various national competences to European institutions. However, the construction of a real European civil society has proved to be a greater challenge; Europeans still cling to their individual national, regional and local identities and have not developed a greater sense of European citizenship.

The Euranet Project—an initiative to create a pan-European radio network—began in December 2007 as a joint proposal put forth by 13 national and regional radio stations operating in 12 European countries. Its stated mission when it went on air on April 1, 2008 was to broadcast European news from a transnational perspective to local communities within the European Union. As an independent radio network comprised of member stations spread out across Europe that generates a steady stream of quality Eurocentric information, Euranet serves the EU as an alternative to an official, centralised institutional radio service managed and broadcast from Brussels.

Euranet makes a particularly interesting object of study from a researcher's point of view, as it offers a cross-sectional view of multidisciplinary issues that are central to both European convergence and communications studies. From the perspective of convergence, Euranet constitutes the first successful pan-European radio project to recognise and address the diversity of European member states. It has been specifically designed to adapt to different radio markets and deliver tailor-made messages to local audiences. From a communication perspective, it's an example of how the technology and inherent synergies of Internet can be exploited to promote listener interaction and improve the dissemination of content online. Euranet has embraced web-based technologies such as streaming and podcasting and uses its connection with university radio stations to focus on youth as a key target audience. Euranet also represents a significant shift in European Commission media policy; radio now functions as a key part of the Commission's communication strategy to forge social cohesion in Europe and foster a sense of pan-European citizenship.

Euranet currently offers radio programming in 15 languages through a network of 18 radio stations located in 16 EU member states. It annually broadcasts 110,000 minutes (approximately 2,000 hours) of contents devoted to topics related to the European Union. Individual stations have complete freedom to determine the content of their programming. Each station daily produces between 30 and 60 minutes of Eurocentric content that is distributed throughout a variety of news and entertainment programs devoted to sport, travel and European culture. At the present time, it serves an audience of nearly 15 million listeners.

This paper presents a critical evaluation of Euranet's first four years of operations and speculates on the future of the network beyond the expiration of the European Commission's current 6 million euro annual funding commitment in 2013. It also offers an evaluation of various aspects of Euranet's operations (programming, web strategy, web 2.0. tools) and the role it has played in the construction of a European identity.

Keywords: Euranet, Pan-European radio, broadcasting, European communication policies

The media and the construction of a European identity

Since its conception in the 1950s, the European Union has made great strides towards consolidating the economic and political affairs of its member nations. As an institution, it has created a common currency and has negotiated the transfer of numerous national competences from its 27 member states to centralised European institutions. Nevertheless, these achievements have not given rise to what could be considered to be a European civil society nor has it managed to consolidate a shared European identity. The numerous initiatives and policies launched by the European Commission and Parliament to create a shared sense of belonging to a pan-European culture have not achieved the same degree of success as its technical initiatives. This dichotomy between a bourgeoning technical cooperation and a weak common identity can be attributed in part to the heterogeneity of the member states in terms of population, size and level of economic development. Studies show that Europeans continue to feel an overriding sense of national, regional and local identity. Manuel Castells defines European identity as:

> A set of values capable of giving the majority of European citizens a sense of common identity and a feeling of belonging to a heterogeneous European culture represented by a system of government they consider legitimate and valuable (Castells, 2004: 16-18).

The current economic crisis has further hampered the process of forging a common identity, as it has threatened the foundations of Europe's economic and social stability. According to Habermas, the achievement of a true European identity is contingent upon the development of mutual feelings of solidarity, loyalty and confidence among member states (Habermas, 2004: 36).

Various studies carried out in Europe have shown that citizens of member states give the Europe Union high marks for the ease with which community members can now travel, study and work abroad. They also appreciate its defence of cultural diversity, and they like having a unified and more potent voice in world affairs (European Commission, 2010).

European cultural convergence and mutual understanding among its citizens cannot be brought about without a parallel convergence in education, linguistic policy, information technology and communications media (Castells, 2004: 20-22).

Conscious of the essential role that the communications media play in the creation of cultural identity, EU officials have promoted a number of communications policies and strategies designed to improve citizens' perceptions of the European project. These policies have been articulated through communication activities carried out across the board by governing institutions and political and social entities (López Gómez, 2007: 24-31).

The UE's communication policy and radio

The European Union's information and public communication policies have always been influenced by the processes of European consolidation and amplification. In the 1950s, negotiations between European states on matters of convergence were conducted with a lack of transparency that at times bordered on an outright concealment of information, as national leaders were fearful that a well-informed citizenry would resist major moves towards pan-European economic and political integration. The only institutional step taken during this period to provide public information was the founding of the Press and Information Directorate-General in the 1960s. This agency functioned as an European community press office serving accredited journalists covering the activities of the European Union's nascent institutions. There was a greater move towards transparency during the 1970s following the establishment of the European Council; for example, the EC actively sought broad coverage of the first direct elections of representatives to the European Parliament in 1979. At the end of the 1980s, under the presidency of Jacques Delors, a new Directorate of Information, Communication and Culture was created to

inform average European citizens about the European project. This new office issued two documents known as the De Clerq and Oostlander reports, which purported to spell out the EU's institutional strategy for public communication for the final years of the twentieth century. However, the model they proposed was vertical and unidirectional, designed to carry out a top-down, bureaucratic style of communication principally devoted to conveying the achievements of European institutions to the public—an erroneous approach that when implemented only served to dampen citizens' enthusiasm for European convergence and leave them further in the dark about the processes underway.

The 2001 *White Paper on European Governance*, which invoked the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity, brought about a turning point in the communication strategies of European institutions. The white paper clearly called upon leaders of member states to orient the rhetoric of their public communications on the subject of the European Union to the real necessities and interests of their citizens. This initiative to decentralise the flow of information gave communication policy an essential role in social dialogue.

The Commission made a commitment to promote communication at both national and local levels through established communication networks, civil society organisations and local authorities. The Prodi Commission vigorously promoted this strategy in a number of publically released documents. (Pérez, 2008: 87-89).

Despite these improvements in the EC's media and audiovisual strategies, radio had not yet been assigned a definitive role in EU communication policy as Europe entered the twenty-first century, (Lax, 2010: 80) although the EC did undertake two important programs designed to promote an integrated European audiovisual market: TV Without Frontiers and Media, both of which were focused on television, film and audiovisual production. Nevertheless, as recently as 2007, the Media project excluded radio on the basis of its strictly audiovisual mandate.

The European Commission had promoted a European-wide radio project in 1993 under the name of 'European Digital Radio' (also known as 'Radio-E'), which can in many ways be considered the predecessor of today's Euranet radio network. European Digital Radio was conceived as a mid-term public broadcasting scheme intended to catch the wave of the rapidly developing digital audio broadcasting technology referred to as DAB or Eureka 147. The network, which comprised Radio France International, Deutsche Welle, the BBC World Service and Radio Vlandern International, was to broadcast news and information about the European Union in German, English, French and Italian. All the partners of this group were public broadcasting corporations with proven experience in serving an international listener base. Dissatisfied with the shortcomings of DAB technology, the European Union finally cut off funding for this project in the late 1990s, and the initiative subsequently foundered for lack of high-level support. Although the BBC pulled out of the group, RFI and Deutsche Welle briefly continued to maintain a working relationship, an experience that would later prove useful when the two formed the core of the Euranet management team during its first phase of development between 2007 and 2009.

The failure of European Digital Radio left serious voids in both EU communication policy and media coverage of European events and issues. The marginal role that was subsequently given to radio in EC communication policy did not correspond to the levels of radio penetration throughout Europe. It is estimated that the total number of radio listeners in the European Union stands at about 200 million out of a total population base of 500 million. Furthermore, an analysis of data obtained through various Eurobarometer surveys carried out during 2010 shows that 58% of Europeans rank radio as the medium with the highest levels of credibility and user confidence, compared with 49% who cite television, 42% who place their trust mainly in newspapers with a national distribution and 37% who rank Internet as the most reliable source of information. The EU countries in which radio enjoys the highest levels of credibility are Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Estonia. The lowest levels of citizen confidence in radio as an information source are registered in Italy, Hungary and Greece. It should be noted in any case that the credibility of information provided by all traditional media has eroded over the last few years (European Commission, 2010: 126-127).

In terms of radio coverage of European affairs, 51% of European citizens believe that radio shows objectivity towards the EU, 11% judge its coverage to be too positive and 11% consider it too negative. Nevertheless, 46% are of the opinion that radio offers insufficient coverage focused on Europe, compared with 35% who believe it provides sufficient coverage and 4% who think its coverage is excessive. In general terms, 78% of people living in the 27 states that currently make up the European Union feel that they are not very well or not at all informed about the European Union, compared to only 18% who feel they are adequately or well informed on the same topic. European authorities have been rightfully concerned by statistics that show that although two-thirds of European citizens believe that the European Union plays an important role in their lives, the same proportion feel poorly informed about its functions and about Europe in general (European Commission, 2008: 144-161). Member of the European Parliament Luis Herrero-Tejedor brought this preoccupation to the floor of the European Parliament in a 2005 speech in which he noted:

> "If people are to exercise an authentic citizenship, access to information about the EU is crucial. As beneficiaries of EU policy and active participants in a European democracy, citizens have the right to complete and impartial information clearly stated in their native languages and made available through easily accessible channels".

In the same speech, Herrero-Tejedor emphasised the importance of making the best possible use of the communications media to ensure that information about the EU reached every European household through television, radio and Internet (European Parliament, 2005).

Real progress was made in developing an effective EU communication policy when Durao Barroso assumed the presidency of the European Commission in 2005 and Margot Wallström became the first vice-president and commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication Strategy. As commissioner, Wallström gave this explanation of a new strategy introduced as Plan D:

> We have put new emphasis on communication with citizens by listening to them as well as talking to them, honing our communications tools in order to better understand their opinions and facilitating a transparent space for consultation and debate in which the citizens can express themselves directly. We want to bring our message closer to the citizens and adapt it to their interests and preoccupations [...] We have modernised the instruments of communication in order to utilise more television, Internet and other new media eager to connect the wider audiences (Wallström, 2009: 68-69).

The strategy laid out in the European Commission's groundbreaking Plan D (Democracy, Dialogue and Debate) called for a decentralised, bidirectional model of communication and feedback designed to promote mutual understanding among Europeans by reaching and engaging them at the local level with programming that expressed a transnational perspective (European Commission, 2005). The announcement of plan D was followed up by the Commission's *White Paper on a European Policy for Communication*, which set out a strategy for transforming its unidirectional style of institutional communication into a stronger, two-way dialogue focused on citizens (European Commission, 2006). The white paper articulated the Commission's goal of ensuring adequate coverage of European issues in the media and fostering public awareness and debate concerning pan-European issues throughout all member states. Accomplishing this goal would require the development of a stronger and more open relationship with the media, the implementation of new information technologies and the implication of social organisations, political parties and public administrations throughout the EU at all levels (European, national, regional and local).

Although the white paper provided only a broad outline of the Commission's intent, subsequent publications, such as *Communicating Europe in Partnership* (European Commission, 2007), provided further information about its plans and priorities for communications in Europe, which included a pan-European multimedia network. According to the plan, the institutions within this network would be granted multi-year contracts to develop media content that focused on European issues and concerns. The European Commission and Parliament had intermittently co-financed a number of radio and television programmes, but from this

moment on, it made a clear commitment to back a broadcasting network that would produce Eurocentric programming on a regular basis. The participating broadcasting organisations would implement common strategies and formats but were to have editorial autonomy concerning the content they produced. Resources were allocated to strengthen the production capacity of Euronews and to establish three media networks: Euranet (radio), Paneuropean TV (television) and Presseurop (Internet).

This new policy marked the commission's definitive recognition of radio as an essential tool in the work of creating a European civic identity. The mission of the projected pan-European media consortium was to increase public interest and engagement in European affairs and provide wider coverage of European issues. Policy followed on the heels of strategy. In April 2008, the Commission released *Communicating Europe Through Audiovisual Media* (European Commission, 2008 b). This document opened with a statement that reiterated the determination to transform European communication expressed by the European Council in June 2007. As television and radio were the main sources of news and information for the majority of European citizens, they were given key roles in this landmark initiative. The communication strategy going forward positioned these two media as the pillars of pan-European communication, to be complemented by the emerging medium of Internet. The pan-European radio network was designed to create a multilingual 'European public sphere' in which citizens throughout the continent could access news and information presented from a transnational perspective and express regional viewpoints.

Communicating Europe Through Audiovisual Media laid out the mission and editorial policy for Euranet. It established that although the European Union would underwrite the cost of the initiative, it would respect the independence of all affiliated stations. Point 3.2.1 of this document established a 5.8 million euro annual budget allocation for the project and guaranteed funding for at least 5 years. In return for the Commission's support, the network was to produce and broadcast 4,221 hours of content 'by Europeans for Europeans'. The European Commission estimated that Euranet would reach between 12 and 19 million radio listeners and set its expectations for Euranet website traffic at between 60 and 80 million visits annually.

In reality, plans for Euranet were already underway several months before the project was made public. Although the name 'Euranet' did not appear in the annual work programme on grants and contracts in the field of communications released by the Commission for 2007, the document spoke of a 'EurRadio network' and included a budget item of 5.5 million Euros earmarked for the creation of a pan-European radio network under the category 'audiovisual productions and multimedia projects'. This funding steadily increased over the following years, rising to 5.8 million in 2008, steadying at 6 million for the years 2009 and 2010 and shooting up again to 6.3 million in 2011 (annual work programmes for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011).

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

On February 26, 2008, Commissioner Wallström presented the project as a medium- to long-term initiative backed by an EC financial commitment of at least 6 million Euros in annual funding guaranteed through 2012. The challenges ahead were to expand the network to include an affiliate station in each of the 27 member states and to broadcast in the EU's 23 official languages by 2013.

The configuration of the Euranet network

During the first phase of Euranet's development, Radio France International (France) and Deutsche Welle (Germany) provided management leadership for the network. The other 14 founding members were Polskie Radio

(Poland), RTBF (Belgium), Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (The Netherlands), Magyar Radio (Hungary), Bulgarian National Radio (Bulgaria), Punto Radio Castilla y León (Spain), Radio Praha (The Czech Republic), Radio Romania International (Rumania), Radio Slovenia International (Slovenia), Skai Radio (Greece), Polskie Radio Szczecin (Poland), RFI Romania (Rumania), RFI Sofía (Bulgaria), and Europa Lisboa (Portugal). The last three entered as affiliates of Radio France International. These 16 affiliates represented 13 EU member states and broadcast in a total of 10 different languages: German, English, French, Bulgarian, Spanish, Greek, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese and Rumanian.

The network as initially constituted showed promise in spite of the absence of affiliates from key countries such as Italy and Great Britain. The network's founders sought to forge collaborations between different types of radio stations and broadcasting companies; Euranet was comprised of a heterogeneous group of public and private broadcasting enterprises that served a widely dispersed range of local, regional and international audiences. Although these differences enriched and broadened the network's vision of European radio, they also contributed to its organisational weaknesses. The absence of the majority of European's largest broadcasting corporations from its roster made it difficult for Euranet to reach a mass audience and its radius of operations was uneven—although the network had two radio stations in Poland, it lacked affiliates in Great Britain and Italy. However, regardless of their size and geographic distribution, the majority of its member organisations brought an essential competence to the groundbreaking enterprise: a proven track record in multilingual international broadcasting. The following is a brief introduction to the affiliates that made up Euranet's starting line-up in 2008.

- - RFI (Radio France International) is an intercontinental broadcasting service funded by the French government. It transmits programs in a range of languages, primarily via short wave and satellite, although it also maintains FM stations in some areas. In 2008, it served approximately 900,000 European listeners and an estimated 35.6 listeners worldwide.
- - Deutsche Welle is the official international broadcasting service of the Federal Republic of Germany. It broadcasts in 29 different languages. Deutsche Welle and RFI provided leadership for Euranet during its initial phase of operations.
- - Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (Netherlands Radio Worldwide) has a long and distinguished tradition of international broadcasting. It offers news, information and cultural content in 10 languages to listeners on almost every continent.
- - RTBF (Radio télévision belge de la communauté française) is a Belgian national broadcasting company serving the French-speaking regions of Wallonia and Brussels. Its general channel, La Premiere, was chosen out of the group of channels it operates to broadcast the bulk of its Euranet programming.
- - Euranet has two affiliates in Poland. Polskie Radio is the country's largest national broadcasting organisation. It maintains a wide network of stations throughout the country and operates six different channels that offer generalist, news and musical programming. It also operates an international channel, making it yet another Euranet partner with a tradition and experience in this key area. The other Euranet Polish affiliate is Polskie Radio Szczecin, situated in north-western Poland, which broadcasts regionally within Western Pomerania.
- - Magyar Rádió (The Hungarian Radio Corporation) offers a range of public radio programming aimed at a national audience. It ended a decades-long tradition of foreign language broadcasting in July 2007.
- - Radio Praga (Ceski Radio) is the official national radio service of the Czech Republic. With programming in six languages, it ranks among the European stations with the strongest traditions of foreign language broadcasts. Although it terminated its short wave transmission in January 2011, it maintains its former short wave audiences via Internet, satellite transmission and affiliate news services provided to stations in other countries such as Slovakia, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia and Rumania.

- - Bulgarian National Radio, the public radio broadcast corporation of Bulgaria, maintains programming in 11 languages and administers 2 national channels (Horizonte y Hristo Botev) and 7 regional radio channels throughout the country.
- - Radio Romania International is another national public radio service. It broadcasts in 12 languages.
- - Radio Slovenia International is the state-run radio service of Slovenia. It broadcasts in Slovenian, English and German.
- - Skai Radio is a privately owned Greek radio station operated by the Skai Group, one of the country's largest media consortiums. Before becoming a member of Euranet, it had collaborated with other international programs and services such as BBC World, the Voice of America and Deutsche Welle.
- - Punto Radio Castilla y León is a privately held regional network associated with the Spanish channel Punto Radio.

Euranet's other initial partners included three affiliate stations of the Radio France International network: RFI Romania, RFI Sofía and Radio Lisboa Europa.

The Euranet network underwent various changes over the first five years of its existence, perhaps the most notable being the exit of affiliate members Deutsche Welle and Magyar Radio. We will provide an overview of the situation that led to their decision to leave the group further on, but it is worth noting here that the loss of two key members and the network's only direct link to German radio audiences constituted a great setback to the overall Euranet project. However, the network successfully recruited new members.

Radio Maelkebotten, a local not-for-profit Danish radio station based in Federicia, joined Euranet in August 2009. It produces content in Danish and English for the network. The next new affiliate to sign on was Radio II Sole Ore, an Italian channel with a wide presence throughout Italy that joined in the spring of 2010. It offers several programs featuring Eurocentric content.

Latvijas Radio, Latvia's national multi-channel public broadcasting corporation, became an affiliate member in 2011. Two other media groups also joined the network in 2011: the Community Media Association, a network of community media organisations in Great Britain, and a German network formed through the sector professional organisation AMS-NET, which at the present moment includes radio Bielefeld, Radio Gütersloh, Radio Herford, Radio Hochstift, Radio Lippe, Radio WAF and Radio Westphalia.

Since September 2011 Euranet has been comprised of a total of 18 broadcast affiliates operating in 16 member states that provide steady programming in 15 languages. It has also strengthened its position in various European countries through collaborations to share its content with non-member associate stations and broadcasting networks such as Radio Aragón in Spain.

One of Euranet's most interesting projects has been the creation of the 'Euranet University Circle', a group of university radio stations that collaborates directly in the production and transmission of the network's programming. According to various studies, university students represent one of the demographic groups with the highest levels of interest in topics related to the European Union. Reaching out to this group has therefore been a key objective since Euranet's earliest beginnings. The University circle currently comprises 9 radio stations[1] on the campus of institutions of higher education in 6 member nations: Germany (Bonn campus 96.8, University of Bonn); Ireland (Trinity FM, Trinity College Dublin); Sweden (Radio Campus Örebro, Örebro University); Poland (Radio Kampus, Warsaw University); Romania (UBB Radio, Babeş-Bolyai University); and Spain (Radio Universidad, University of Salamanca; UNED Radio, the National University of Distance Education of Spain; the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the University of Vigo). The majority of these stations not only transmit Euranet programs, but also actively collaborate in content production. Their websites provide information about Euranet,

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[1] Based on data provided by Adam Burakowski (University Circle Coordinator) during an e-mail interview conducted in July 2011. Information updated in September 2011.

and in 2011 the group played an important role in the creation of 'Connect Euranet: Connecting U and the EU', an ongoing online forum conceived to bring young Europeans together to exchange opinions and debate European issues. A new forum that offers European young people a chance to direct questions, ideas and comments to EU decision makers and institutions is launched each month. Past forums have addressed such topics as employment, youth mobility and climate change.

Euranet's Organisational Structure

Euranet was originally constituted as a consortium of independent network affiliates. It operated under this structure with representatives of Deutsche Welle and RFI occupying the highest positions of responsibility within the consortium during the first two years of its existence (from 2007 until May 2009). A change in the organisation's legal status, made public by the Warsaw Declaration of May 27, 2009, marked a radical departure from this initial model.

Eager to enhance the flexibility and viability of the group's decision-making processes, members of the network spent the months leading up to the Warsaw Declaration creating a new legal entity designed to replace the original Euranet consortium structure under the name of EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping). The group formally announced this change in legal status and issued a 'pan-European declaration of cooperation and communication' at the Warsaw meeting. The decision implied a profound transformation of Euranet's organisational structure. Deutsche Welle and Magyar Radio left the group, citing a conflict between its new legal structure and their status as public entities. With the exit of Deutsche Welle, the group's leadership would no longer be divided between two major partners; going forward, RFI would assume this role alone. Two general directors, one responsible for the business and financial aspects of its operations (Erlands Calabuig), and another responsible for programme content (Petra Kohnen), would now make up the network's management team.

Further changes to Euranet's organisational structure were made at the annual meeting held in Greece in 2009. In order to improve operational efficiency, the group decided to delegate formerly shared management responsibilities to a single chief operating officer responsible for all of Euranet's operations. Erlends Calabuix of RFI, who at that time was serving as the organisation's general financial director, was chosen to fill this new position. According to the new arrangement, the CEO is responsible for the editorial, financial and administrative activities of the organisation. A general editorial director (COO for editorial content) is now responsible for the editorial teams. Current COO for editorial content Dominique D'Olne heads two divisions: web and social networks (headed by Florin Orban) and radio (headed by Jan Simmen). Financial responsibilities are divided among three positions: financial manager (Marlyse Balage), accounting manager (Sonia Marcellin) and internal consultant (Florent Chauviré). Two other positions cover administrative functions and assistance to the general director. The organisational structure also includes three language-based working groups and an editorial committee made up of the heads of the affiliates' own information services.

According to the most recent arrangement, the general directors of all affiliate Euranet stations and representatives of the European Commission charged with oversight of the project attend the annual board of directors meeting, during which they conduct a year-end review of activities and set the group's agenda for the coming year. The chairman of the board is a representative of RFI (currently Alain de Pouzilhac). Other board positions include five vice-chairmanships, three of which are permanent and are assigned to affiliate members: Punto Radio Castilla and Leon (represented by Florencio Carrera), RNW Radio Nederland (represented by Jan Hoek), and Polskie radio (represented by Pawel Majcher) and two which are held through rotation and change on an annual basis. The rotating chairmen for 2011 are Srekco Trglec (for RSI Radio Slovenia International) and Eugen Cojocariu (for RRI Radio Romania International). These six members and the network's CEO form the Euranet board of directors.

Programming and editorial principles

Euranet was conceived in 2005 in the wake of Plan D: Democracy, Dialogue and Debate and the *White Paper on a European Policy for Communication* to fulfil part of an new EU communication strategy that embraced all the major communications media across Europe.

It grew out of the dual needs to create a public sphere in which to construct a sense of pan-European citizenship and provide citizens throughout Europe with a decentralised, bi-directional media network that delivered transnational information about European issues and events. The European Commission sought to promote a model of communication that would incorporate an international network of audiovisual media rather than to establish an institutional media service under its own auspices. The strategy called for more than channelling news and information regarding the operations and activities of EU institutions and its representatives to the public; its overarching goal was to provide media programming that would give citizens a transnational perspective on European events and issues and a sense of the wide-ranging role that the EU framework played in the lives of all Europeans. Creating a transnational consciousness implied building international media networks whose affiliate members would broadcast Eurocentric content in a variety of local languages. These affiliate members had to be willing to follow a global media strategy yet have the capacity to generate their individual content autonomously. Radio was a perfect media for the task at hand and the Euranet project squared perfectly with the aspirations expressed in the new communication strategy.

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

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

Euranet transmits 110,000 minutes (approximately 2,000 hours) of independently produced, Eurocentric programming each year. Each station devotes between 30 and 60 minutes of air time to European issues distributed throughout a wide variety of news and entertainment programmes, the latter of which cover European sports, travel and culture. According to data provided by the network for 2011, Euranet reaches an audience of nearly 15 million radio listeners.

In order to give the overall programming of participating stations a more Eurocentric tone, Euranet-produced content is distributed throughout their programming schedules rather than presented as a separate feature sponsored by the European Union. Each station adapts these contents to suit their style of broadcasting. The most interesting aspect of Euranet is its capacity to set up and administer international broadcast collaborations while respecting each partner's personal way of doing things and connecting with audiences. Point 1.1 of Euranet's charter clearly states its commitment to the independence and autonomy of its affiliates: 'Euranet is a network (ERP Consortium) of existing professional media organisations whose employees operate under the principles of their own editorial charters. These guarantee high general standards in all respects of quality and editorial integrity'. The network considers its programming to be a public service and asserts that:

> The mission of Euranet is to transcend the too often national framework of European news coverage by adopting a genuinely pan-European approach—in all the 23 languages of the EU—covering the diverse political, economic, cultural and social events of the Union.
> The power of the Euranet network, which currently has 18 regional, national or international radio stations and reaches nearly 15 million daily listeners in Europe, has brought into being a closer connection between Europe and its citizens.

Point 1.3 of its charter reiterates the autonomy of each partner over the news it broadcasts about Europe:

> The partners and their employees will respect the following principle: The partners in the ERP and their employees will operate independently from any instruction, pressure or request from any EU institution (as

defined by the Treaties), any EU member state or any other state or institution in all matters concerning the content of its EU services.

Content production is approached from three complementary perspectives: coordination, cooperation and the articulation of a transnational perspective. Euranet's goal is to produce diverse, informative programming about issues of substance that is suitable for distribution to other partners in its network. To ensure that that its programming reflects the diversity of the European scene, it divides its coverage into five broad categories: EU policy, the EU as seen through the political perspectives of its different member states, how EU policy plays out in the lives of European citizens, 'transnational perspectives'—case studies of how solutions to problems formulated by one member state might be helpful in solving the problems of others, and 'EU Miscellany'—that all inform European radio listeners about events and happenings beyond their own national borders and the European continent.

Program content is broken down into news, analysis (that features special reports on subjects of interest to citizens) and live coverage of events and happenings. The editorial work involved in the production and distribution of Euranet's content is complex and must be coordinated from two different angles: on one hand, it entails handling communications between affiliate members, and on the other hand, it includes guaranteeing the continuity of a joint strategy, ensuring that all principles of the charter are respected, establishing a common agenda for following current events and news in Europe and carrying out the routine tasks of the editorial committee. To accomplish this level of coordination and information exchange between the geographically dispersed professionals in its network, Euranet uses an internal communication platform that combines an intranet system and a wiki.

Individual broadcast stations must simultaneously coordinate their own internal operations and the activities they carry out jointly with Euranet's various language-based working groups. These groups are in constant communication and the heads of information services for the stations that form a given group teleconference each Monday to set the news agenda for the upcoming week.

Euranet has designed its audio programming to facilitate content sharing and distribution; time slots for Euranet programming are configured into each station's format. In addition to its FM, satellite and short wave transmissions, Euranet has made optimal use of Internet technology. In July 2008 it launched www.euranet.eu, an interactive multilingual platform offering content in 18 languages that serves as a common interface for all Euranet partner stations and helps to distribute member content to other audiences throughout the network. Listeners can use the site to consult the programming schedules of all partner stations, view podcasts produced by network affiliates and access their programming via hyperlinks provided in its 'radio á la carte' section. Users can access all Euranet published audio files by language and personalise their own playlists. From the beginning, the website was conceived to be more than just an access point to radio programming; it also contains sections devoted to the analysis of EU issues ('Dossier'), surveys, user comments and information concerning the initiative 'Connecting Euranet'.

Euranet also uses its presence in several social networks to foster debate and dialogue about European affairs. It maintains two profiles in Facebook: Euranet European Radio Network created in December 2009 that has attracted 1,500 followers, and Connect Euranet, which has registered 1,800 followers since it was created in February 2011. Although both profiles offer information about the network and publish hyperlinks to radio programming and articles that link to the Euranet website in their walls, the Connect Euranet site has had more success in involving users and is by far the more dynamic and interactive of the two profiles.

The network also maintains two Twitter accounts, only one of which is currently active. The most recent account, @euranet, was created on October 21, 2010, but has only managed to attract 306 followers. Its tweets contain links to Euranet news features in English, French and Spanish as well as various other languages. A prior account, @Euranet European Radio Network, was created in March 2009. Although it officially registers 752

followers, it has been inactive since November 2010. This account published tweets in English, German, Spanish and French.

If one analyses Euranet's exploitation of the potential of social networks, it is clear that the network has no strategy beyond using them to publish links to its news features. The number of followers it has attracted is very low for a media project that purports to provide pan-European coverage. As its second Twitter account has attracted only half as many followers as its first, it is difficult to understand why the initial account was abandoned. As the network has not managed to generate either spin or a following through social networks, it should consider undertaking a serious review of its 2.0 strategy.

Conclusions

Euranet is an interesting initiative that nevertheless needs further development in a number of areas.

Its democratic structure, which fosters a deeper connection with its widely dispersed European audience, is one of its strongest points. The concept on which it is based—producing radio content geared towards forging a common identity and mutual awareness among citizens of different European countries—is both novel and laudable. The project has committed itself to the complicated task of producing multilingual content, an effort that has paid off thanks to its implementation of a well designed website. Its youth-oriented programme 'Connect Euranet: Connecting U and the EU', which joins the forces of seven university radio stations spread out over Europe and provides monthly forums on topics of interest to all European citizens, is particularly noteworthy.

However, Euranet also suffers from a number of problems. It has failed to establish itself as a recognisable brand within the individual identities of the stations it broadcasts through. Although it rates high marks for the content it produces, this content has a very limited distribution and exposure. The heterogeneity of its affiliate partners (that include state-run international radio services, community radio associations and private broadcasting companies) and the lack of broadcast members that could offer both national and local coverage constitute two factors that diminish the networks effectiveness and hamper its efforts to reach local audiences. Although Euranet is a conceptually innovative enterprise that should be well positioned to take advantage of web 2.0 technology and social networks, it appears to have done little or nothing to promote itself creatively via these channels. The limited number of followers registered on its Facebook and Twitter sites are objective proof of its failure to understand and exploit these resources.

It was made known at the annual meeting of the Euranet board held in Portugal in July 2011 that funding for the network has been guaranteed for the next few years. The network's plans for the future include the expansion of broadcast languages to all 23 official languages of the European Union and the incorporation of additional affiliate members from new member states. Countries targeted for inclusion in the network are Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Finland and Slovakia. Through the expansion of its network and coverage, Euranet hopes it increase its listenership to 45 million by the year 2017.

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