



PIONEERING VALUES IN EUROPEAN MEDIA



Media
Independence



Transparency



Efficiency



Languages



PREFACE : Valeurs et auteurs, fondation et innovations

Les valeurs et l'histoire d'EurActiv à ce jour ne concernent pas un média en ligne, mais un média européen. Ces valeurs ne sont pas technologiques, mais politiques et humaines. D'ailleurs, tous les médias deviennent en ligne. La plupart visent aussi l'indépendance et la transparence. Ce qu'il reste à faire pour l'Europe, avec d'autres, c'est d'améliorer l'efficacité et la variété linguistique. D'abord chez EurActiv et dans ses réseaux, puis, ensuite, dans les débats sur l'Europe.

Notre mission est loin d'être accomplie ; quant à moi, je vais plutôt inspirer que diriger. Heureusement, nous sommes nombreux à nous réunir autour de ces valeurs. Tout d'abord, le management d'EurActiv.com (renouvelé) ; les autres affiliés au réseau dans 12 capitales ; et bien d'autres médias, dont beaucoup deviennent nos partenaires.

Vous êtes les bienvenus pour en parler : en ligne ou en personne !

Pour accompagner et incarner ces valeurs il y a la Fondation EurActiv, reconnue d'utilité publique par le Roi des Belges. Je remercie son Secrétaire Général jusqu'en 2015, Julian Oliver, compagnon fidèle d'EurActiv. Assisté de Diogo Pinto, il a réuni ces témoignages et résumé nos valeurs. La Fondation EurActiv se concentre maintenant sur des innovations autour de ces valeurs, qui bénéficieront aussi à de nombreux autres médias.

Ce projet n'est pas seulement une célébration de ces quatre valeurs. C'est avant tout, sans pouvoir les nommer, un remerciement à tous ceux et celles qui ont fait, font, et feront ce réseau média. Bravo !

Christophe Leclercq, Fondateur d'EurActiv

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PROJECT CONTEXT: reviewing the values of an innovative European media

This project seeks to explore online media focused on the European Union, to review the past decade and a half of their work and to look forward towards their prospects. Using EurActiv as a case-study it also welcomes constructive comments and feedback from external sources.

Two main challenges have been identified:

1. Defining the field: there are many sectoral publications; there are fewer generic publications and then there are some international or global media that also cover the EU 'en passant', e.g. The Economist, The Financial Times and the International New York Times.
2. There is no common agreement on what are the evolutionary paths of emerging innovations. The implications of any evolutions on the 'best' or right business models are also unclear, creating uncertainty for traditional and even 'modern' media as they seek to respond to competitive and market challenges.

Project Approach: reviewing the last decade and a half of EU-specialised media

From these two challenges three issues arise:

1. Taking EurActiv as a core example does not imply that there is nothing to learn from comparing with others how it has survived and thrived. EurActiv possesses a large archive of published articles, interviews, opinions, videos and blogposts. By inviting contributions from a wide cross-section of EU influencers the project also makes references to past and present competitors as well as from selected global and national equivalents.
2. Which are the main routes through which EurActiv has proved sustainable while others have proved less so? Are there innovations which EurActiv developed that others could have tried? Or, was EurActiv, a digital media from day one, able to avoid some of the challenges of switching from print or 'riding-two-horses' at the same time?
3. What are the main implications of the innovative changes that have emerged since 2000 for clients, the EU institutions and the range of both online and traditional media that try to serve both audiences?

At the core of this project is a classification of four values and some disruptive innovations that seem likely to influence and challenge current and future online media over the next decade or more.

This project does not plan to produce forecasts. However, constructive feedback and any suggestions as to the future of political and policy journalism across Europe are welcome. We welcome comments from those who have followed this journey so far, on the report in general, or about any of the individual contributions which follow.

We would like to extend a most sincere thank you to our contributors without whom this project would not exist. I also thank my colleagues Diogo Pinto and Freddie Martyn for their support. As is customary to state, any errors, omissions or misinterpretations are my sole responsibility as Editor.

Julian Oliver, Coordinating Editor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Pioneering values in European media

Since its inception, EurActiv has championed four values – media independence, transparency, efficiency and languages. At the beginning, these four values summarized the challenges faced by one media aiming at catering for the needs of the “EU community of actors” and, in many ways, they still do the same today.

Looking back, one could say that two of these values – media independence and transparency – have generally been achieved, while the two other remain as aspirational: efficiency and languages are still today challenges that our readers recognize and expect us to overcome.

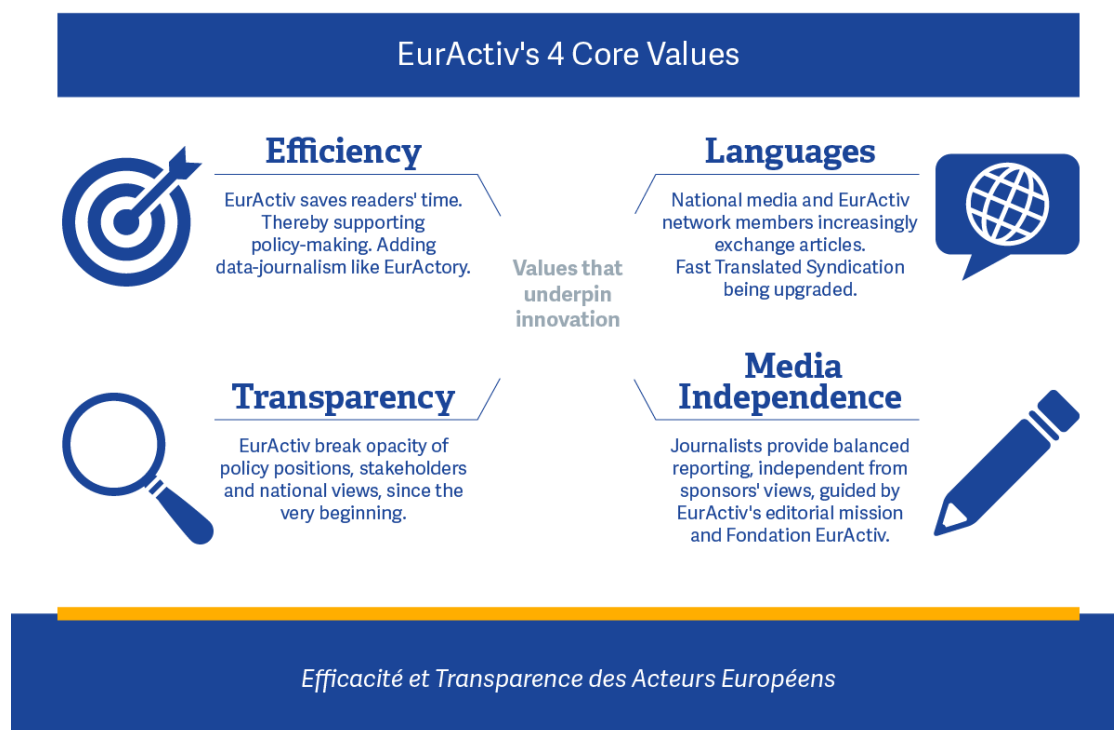
As the many testimonials collected and the results of our most recent readership survey show, EurActiv is largely recognized as an **independent media** and a pioneer of **transparency** in the EU policy-making scene; what these data show too, however, is that much remains to be done in bringing **efficiency** to the process.

In what concerns **languages**, too, and in spite of EurActiv being recognized as a unique player, the wish of the majority to read EU policy news in their own language, and having access to a “Brussels perspective” next to the national ones, is still an area in which the room for improvement is great.

In the same way that EurActiv innovated at the beginning by going “online only”, it kept innovating in many other aspects covered by this report. Today, more than ever before, EurActiv is determined to keep innovating, not for the sake of it, but to make sure it keeps faithful to its values and the aspirations of its users.

Through the increasing network of partnerships with national quality media, on the top of its own network of franchised partners, EurActiv is increasing the speed and the volume of translation and content sharing in all directions. Through truly innovative tools such as EurActory and the still unique LinksDossiers, it is bringing ever more efficiency to the policy process tracking and visualization.

At EurActiv, we are proud of our past, and looking forward to our future. And it makes us happy to see that our users, sponsors, partners and friends, share those feelings with us.



FOUR VALUES CHARACTERISE EURACTIV'S MISSION AND ASPIRATIONS: Media Independence, Transparency, Efficiency and Languages

EurActiv's original mission endures: 'faciliter l'efficacité et la transparence de la Communauté des Acteurs Européens'. Two other prominent values are 'media independence' and 'languages'. Today these four values act as cornerstones to almost everything that EurActiv aspires to achieve:

- **Efficiency:** EurActiv provides free content on all devices, from localised news to opinions, in 12 languages – “saving time for busy professionals”. As of the end of 2015, EurActiv has **794.992 Unique Visitors per month** (19% higher than 2014) and a **total brand footprint of 1.4 million readers**.
- **Transparency:** open debates linking to stakeholders' and political positions, interacting with hundreds of thousands on social media – leading to more transparent policy making. In 2015 alone EurActiv published over 750 interviews, around three per working day.
- **Media Independence:** in its early days EurActiv needed to fight for EU press accreditation, today few question its editorial independence. In recent years EurActiv has negotiated content exchange partnerships with leading national media in its main markets: a further guarantee of its editorial independence. EurActiv is not pro-EU, and certainly not pro-Commission, but is “naturally European”.
- **Languages:** as the EU grew from 15 to 28, EurActiv widened debates across Europe, first from English to French and German and then more languages. Uniquely, among any other independent print or online media, EurActiv provides a two-way daily flow of news and views between 12 European capitals and 12 languages.

Classification of contributions and sources, qualitative and quantitative:

In addition to the author's experience, there are two other sources for this report: 28 contributions from stakeholders, and a very recent readership survey from EurActiv.com. A summary of the latter is also available online. It has a wide and relevant sample of respondents (1,783 people) building on previous similar surveys run in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2010.

There are 25 separate contributions but some qualify for categorisation in more than one section. Contributions vary in length, while most are between 250 and 750 words, one is just 85 words and another extends to 2000 words. There is also no statistical significance in the differences in numbers of contributions between the four values.

TESTIMONIALS 27

Media independence: 9

Transparency: 6

Efficiency: 8

Languages: 4

Findings: two values achieved, two values aspirational

EurActiv's four values have been part of its DNA from the outset. But two are already well-established: being an independent media, and supporting transparency, now itself part of the EU's culture.

The other two values are more aspirational: efficiency is not the EU's best quality and EurActiv could contribute more than it does. As for languages, the EU is rather regressing. There, the EurActiv Network is one of the few exceptions: both technologies and national media partnerships will help it spread its expertise.

Reality Check: 2016 readership survey

- Over a quarter of EurActiv users work in senior management or political leadership;
- 72% of EurActiv users read in their own language;
- EurActiv.com users want a national perspective, while Network users want a Brussels one.

Source: EurActiv – YouGov Readership survey 2016

Media Independence

EurActiv started without much journalistic experience. It had to fight hard in its early years to establish a record of editorial independence, despite being a free media and the recipient of EU funding via open competitive tenders and grants. The publication on its website of an [Editorial Mission](#) spelling out its principles and affiliations to other recognized journalists' associations helps ensure its commitment.

“In order for a pan-European public to emerge on a supranational scale, media need to play an exaggerated role. Not only to look beyond national borders, but to take a European perspective - this is an approach that EurActiv has taken and done pioneering work... Media are also often referred to as a "fourth power" power in a political system. Equally informative and critical reporting - without nation-state glasses - is what distinguishes EurActiv.”¹ **Elmar Brok MEP**

“One of the main functions of mass media is indeed to hold those in power to account and be prepared to go to Court to defend their journalists who take a stand for democracy, free speech and uncovering wrongdoing. EurActiv is more of a niche publisher with different objectives around policy and politics. Independence is crucial to EurActiv's perceived authority.” **Angela Mills Wade, Executive Director, European Publishers Council**

“Of course, a media outlet focusing on EU policy has to be critical of EU institutions: not in an a priori way or with an Eurosceptic approach, but in a constructive and positive way.” **Giampiero Gramaglia, former Editor, EurActiv.it**

« Pour tous ces chantiers EurActiv a un rôle pilote à jouer en raison de son audience, nous l'avons dit, mais aussi de sa séniorité et de sa crédibilité. A titre personnel, je me félicite d'être « guru blogger » pour EurActiv et de voir l'importance du nombre de connexions pour des sujets a priori compliqués, mais que j'aborde simplement et avec une grande liberté de pensée.

¹ Translated from the original, the full German text is shown below.

A EurActiv aussi de mettre la pression sur les Institutions européennes au sens le plus large du mot pour les convaincre que « ce qui ne se sait pas n'existe pas » et que « si le savoir-faire c'est bien, le faire-savoir est au moins aussi important » **Daniel Guéguen, Guru Blogger on BlogActiv.eu**

Transparency

“Efficacité et transparence des acteurs européens” has been EurActiv’s motto since 1999, extract from [Editorial Mission](#) published daily online.

*“Transparency (making all documents available for free) made EU policymaking easier to monitor and, in that sense, EurActiv disrupted traditional lobbying. Thanks to a smart sponsoring model in combination with a strong independent editorial policy, the web portal went from strength to strength and when the publisher came up with the brilliant idea of moving beyond Brussels in the context of the EU’s enlargement, EurActiv’s information brokerage model went to the EU’s capitals.” **Willy De Backer, Founding Editor***

*“Public Affairs transparency is, in my view, at the very core of EurActiv’s commitment to the EU policymaking and public affairs business and shows more than any other aspect the self-understanding of EurActiv. The 360-degree coverage of stakeholder opinions is one aspect of it. The other one is a hidden gem, and I suggest you to have a fresh look at it: the “Public Affairs” section, dealing with lobbying ethics as well as Public Affairs stakeholders, was part of EurActiv from its earliest days.” **Irina Michalowitz, EU Public Affairs academic and consultant***

*“While it took courage to create and expand EurActiv, we owe the leading role it took with a **“Public Affairs Section”** to Christophe Leclercq’s passion for **transparency**, which dates back to his time at the European Commission. ...Parliamentarians and EurActiv have proved crucial in Parliament’s role of improving legislation. Well intentioned pre-consultations by the European Commission have often favoured the views of larger players at the expense of the small, the innovative and the vulnerable. Despite successive exposés of MEPs’ supposed willingness to take money to push specific parliamentary action, the public affairs system that has emerged is remarkably robust. EurActiv resolutely pursued the sometimes devious interaction of the Institutions on the question of the Transparency Register. The current Public Affairs situation may not be perfect, but it would have been a lot worse without EurActiv’s intervention and communications.” **Tom Spencer, former MEP***

Reality Check: 2016 readership survey

- 71% of respondents to the survey identify EurActiv with its value for ‘Transparency’;
- 72% agreed that “independent and fact-based” describes EurActiv.

Efficiency

“What leaders are looking for is, yes, an efficient tool, but also a trustworthy one that they know is bringing a truly diverse landscape of perspectives together on a daily basis. Knowing that EurActiv is drawing upon its on-the- ground network in so many countries and its partnerships with other media partners only reinforces

EurActiv's reliability as the go-to platform for monitoring." **Caroline Jenner, CEO, Junior Achievement Europe.**

"Together, the EurActiv network provides free access to localised news and opinion on EU affairs in 12 languages. Would anyone care to estimate how much it would cost the EU Commission to do that by outsourcing it via a communications project?" **Mathew Lowry, Founder of BlogActiv.eu, contractor for EurActiv.com**

Since 2000 the number of actors working towards a 'European public sphere' has grown significantly. The EurActiv network rejected the old correspondent system in the early days of the internet. European Movement Germany has a similar goal to EurActiv: publicity for social actors who fundamentally see the European level positively. EurActiv's idea was clearly good because it has been copied (cites "dpa Insight EU", "Eurotopics", "Politico Europe").

The perceived relevance of European politics has multiplied in recent years. The presence of European actors does a lot to boost society's knowledge of Europe. Social media and mobile internet also contribute to the creation of a European public sphere. Social media presents a great opportunity for groups like EurActiv and European Movement to involve people in debates and break down language barriers.² Abstract of contribution from **Bernd Hüttemann, Generalsekretär der Europäischen Bewegung Netzwerk Deutschland e.V.**

Reality Check: 2016 readership survey

- 72% of respondents to the survey identify EurActiv with its value for 'Efficiency';
- Well over two thirds of users visit EurActiv between 8am and 6pm during week days: clearly for work.

Languages

While the use of English has increased within European Union circles over the past 20 years, EurActiv has remained committed to promoting news and debates in as many languages as are self-sustaining. In this respect EurActiv is unique among the online EU *commentariat*, most of which remain monolingual. There are a few bi- or tri-lingual publishers but no-one else provides an equivalent reach to the mother tongues of over 80% of European citizens.

The following extracts provide a summary of comments on EurActiv's LANGUAGES:

"Since 1999 important steps have been taken regularly to enhance the audience: interactivity, blogs, videos and especially an impressive multilingualism make EurActiv for many citizens interesting and become an important information and discussion portal in pan-European issues." **Elmar Brok MEP**

« Alors que l'Europe a évolué et est passée de 15 à 28, a ainsi fait EurActiv. Une fois de plus le site a élargi l'Europe, premier Anglais, français et en allemand, puis à Bruxelles pour apporter toutes les capitales des

² the full German text is shown below.

pays Acquis. Les questions européennes et la culture au sein de la bulle ont été exportés vers l'est via le Sites du pays EurActiv et ses éditeurs de pays bien placés non seulement apporté de Bruxelles à un plus large public, mais a également donné Bruxelles les moyens d'entendre d'autres points de vue bien au-delà des limites de la Place Schuman. » **Robert Madelin, Senior Adviser for Innovation in the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)**

“EurActiv accompanied the most recent European elections campaign with independent editorial coverage, not funded by the European Parliament. EurActiv network partners launched in October 2013 an EU Elections section in 11 languages. Localised content, in each of 11 national languages, ensured that European stories had a local angle and local stories included the European context.” **Natalie Sarkic-Todd, EurActiv**

*“EurActiv has stretched the concept of Europe geographically, **linguistically** and philosophically”.* **Tom Spencer, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs, Brunel University**

“EurActiv was – and largely remains – unique in offering coverage in Romanian not only of news of what is going on in Brussels, but also of Romanian news that is relevant to the Brussels end of things. A genuine effort at informing the debate on a local basis, in the local language. And this coverage in their language continues in many EU Member States and even beyond: in Serbia and (until recently) Turkey. It has become a vital tool both for local journalists, who don’t have the resources for a Brussels-based correspondent, and for all who need to understand what’s going on at the EU level.” **Jonathan Scheele, British Commission official for 38 years**

Reality Check: 2016 readership survey

- 81% of respondents to the survey identify EurActiv with its value for ‘Languages’;
- 97% of users see EurActiv as being European

Improvements on four values: Looking to the future

Contributors were invited to comment on which value they felt EurActiv could make most improvement in future.

Media Independence: a robust tradition of neutrality

“Europe [today] seems behind the curve of events, forced to react to a succession of crises with short-term measures, whereas a sense of European solidarity and common purpose can only emerge round longer-term perspectives.” **Tony Venables, Founder ECAS**

“EurActiv has a robust tradition of neutrality between political parties and national positions. However, it would be taking balance too far if EurActiv decided to remain neutral on the question of the British leaving the European Union. EurActiv is by its very nature a key to the institutional development of the

European Union. To be neutral on Brexit is like a fish being against water". **Tom Spencer, academic and former MEP**

"Here the Union can and should do more to support and help [media]." **Elmar Brok, MEP**

Transparency: debating topics often left aside

EurActiv should debate topics that need to be heard but are often left aside by mainstream media: today's minorities are often tomorrow's majorities.

More attention should be paid not just to "EU actors" but also to "non-actors" those who feel excluded by "better regulation" and dictates of the market and trade. **Tony Venables, Founder ECAS**

Several contributors made the point that given EurActiv's authority and credibility in terms of European policies and debates the media can afford to update its traditional editorial neutrality along the lines of being pro Europe, without being pro EU e.g. Angela Mills-Wade & Tom Spencer

Efficiency: targeting the right people at the right time

"EurActiv [is] well-placed to add a new value for a successful future: responsibility – no news is neutral, and it is worth taking a stand by making 'big politics' a focus where it deserves." **Caroline Jenner, CEO, JA-YE Europe**

"Targeting specific leaders & experts (EurActiv); decision-makers will demand synthetic & to-the-point data, supported by figures but also ethics and a degree of passion & emotion (classic strengths of NGOs). Spinning is out, bonding is in." **Florence Ranson, Director of Communications, FoodDrinkEurope**

Languages: breaking down linguistic barriers

"Languages: aim high, use social media to break down barriers." **Susan Danger, Managing Director, AmChamEU**

« L'innovation dont je parle est une innovation profondément technique. Les medias et surtout les medias polyglottes comme EurActiv doivent à mon avis se positionner comme des utilisateurs experts, et s'approcher de ces réseaux d'innovation pour leur permettre de faire un cycle de mise à l'épreuve de leurs améliorations rapide, d'être le laboratoire vivant du multilinguisme de la prochaine génération.

Pour EurActiv comme utilisateur expert de tout moyen de traduction il y a des intérêts objectifs évidents de s'approcher des réseaux d'innovation autour du logiciel du multilinguisme. Et c'est par ce biais la que la plus grande contribution peut découler d'une coopération européenne. » **Robert Madelin, Senior Adviser for Innovation, European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC)**

Reality Challenge: 2016 readership survey

- EurActiv users want to see a national perspective on EurActiv and a Brussels perspective in national media;
- Over 80% would rather wait for a decent quality translation, than get an immediate and lower quality one with a machine translation tool.

TEAMS & GOVERNANCE – From 4 to 100

Starting with four people in a rented apartment, EurActiv has expanded to over one hundred people in 12 countries. In the last decade and a half, over 100 trainees have received business training from EurActiv, some of whom have climbed to senior management within the company.

Today, journalists count for half of the team; some part-time, the balance is made up of commercial, administrative and technical professionals.

Brussels Network Office: at the heart of the EU institutions

The Brussels team is now located in the International Press Centre Building in the heart of the EU institutions quarter. It is regularly used by some 35 professionals. A conference room and work stations are also provided for visiting team members, clients and guests from across Europe.

Senior team leaders include the CEO, Finance Director, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Head of Marketing, Network & EU Projects Director, the Head of EU Community project, IT team leader and the Head of Training & HR and, in different roles, the Secretary General of Fondation EurActiv and the Founder.

Core Network Members – Now integrated offices

Together with Brussels, Berlin, Paris and London form the ‘core’ network members. The latter three offices have smaller teams: typically composed of a couple of commercial professionals, an editor and one or more reporters. These three teams are fully integrated with each other and the office in Brussels sharing a common IT platform, contacts-database and other pieces of software and intelligence. In 2015, this cross-country integration was evident during the Euro crisis. The case-study prepared by EurActiv Greece [‘Euro Crisis & Network Cooperation’](#) illustrates this good network cooperation.

EU Projects & Network team – Coordinating a multilingual team

The Network team was created before the “big bang” in 2004 shortly after the opening of the first four affiliates in Central Europe, from 2002. This decentralised approach to journalism, the initial “translation work-bench”, was co-founded by a project called CrossLingual, with (now) DG CONNECT. EurActiv Slovakia launched a Slovak version and the founder of EurActiv.sk, Ivan Stefunko became Network Director.

The majority of EurActiv team member live and work outside of Brussels. This fits the readership and the way Europe actually works. The team “under the EurActiv brand” contains around 100 people. The “very extended team”, including direct contacts and national media partners, is set to grow rapidly.

The European Parliament election in 2014 “This time it’s different” is a noteworthy product of wider Network team cooperation. Natalie Sarkic-Todd’s contribution describes work performed in a consortium as part of a winning tender issued by the European Parliament as well as editorial content and coverage of the elections, which was independent and produced by EurActiv. This latter work, deploying editorial and communication resources to cover the European elections across its media network in 12 EU countries and 12 languages, according to media monitoring carried out by the European Parliament in the EU 28, resulted in significantly increased coverage during the campaign and saw a peak of over 2 million readers.

Another example of good cross-country coordination has been the work carried out on behalf of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, on Development Policy since 2013. The agreement is signed by *Fondation EurActiv* but most of the work is sub-contracted to EurActiv.com in full transparency with the Gates Foundation. This has involved EurActiv teams in Brussels, London, Paris, Berlin and Madrid to provide a regular series of articles, interviews, workshops and analyses in up to four languages. Other media have provided development news stories with Gates Foundation support: Le Monde, El País and The Guardian, the last two also exchanging articles with EurActiv. Only EurActiv has been trusted to provide coverage of development policy developments.

“Some well-deserved recognition to the successive EurActiv teams spread around Europe. All EurActiv teams are quintessential to our improvement and future growth. Altogether, more than 330 people³, in the 12 capitals, have helped and been trained by EurActiv throughout the years.” **Julian Oliver, Founding Secretary General, Fondation EurActiv**

Governance and Board – Following best practices and principles

EurActiv prides itself on following good governance principles and practices. EurActiv.com, as a Public Limited Company, is obliged to follow UK rules and regulations in respect of transparency: such as full publication of its annual accounts and independent external auditing. The Company has a majority of non-executive directors, which helps ensure regular and routine oversight of how both organisations are managed, funded and accountable. One third of the directors of EurActiv are subject to re-election at the Annual General Meeting of shareholders, each year.

Testimonials: “several testimonials and contributions pay tribute to EurActiv’s founder: Christophe Leclercq. Without his vision, energy and persistence it is unlikely that EurActiv would or could have been sustained so successfully. As Christophe would also add it could also not have been achieved by him alone. He has attracted a wide range of people who have brought their own talents, insights and contributions for longer or shorter periods as team members, partners, board members and friends. Above all Christophe has been loyally supported by his wife, Sharon, who has barely missed a board meeting or significant EurActiv event despite having given birth to their three children and maintaining her own independent professional life since the incorporation of EurActiv.” **Julian Oliver, Founding Secretary General of Fondation EurActiv**

Fondation EurActiv - seeking to shape European Union policies

Fondation EurActiv is a public service foundation under Belgian law and acts primarily to bring together individuals and organisations seeking to shape European Union policies. It shares its mission ‘faciliter l’efficacité et la transparence de la Communauté des Acteurs Européens’ with EurActiv.com. It does not lobby, except to promote online media independence, and is not aligned to any political faction or faith group.

³ This number refers to 15 years of turnover both in EurActiv.com and the rest of the EurActiv Network. While senior management positions are the most steady, middle management positions have a turnover around every five or so years, and trainee positions have a yearly turnover.

OTHER STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES: in addition to the four core values

Content: original, quality, value-added and diversified

An ‘original business model’ ‘diversification of content’, ‘diversification of revenues’ quality, ‘value-added content’ **Slobodan Sibinčič, European Business Press**

Secret to success – An understanding of the ‘EU bubble’

“EurActiv has an open secret to success: it understands its readers and the “EU bubble” in particular – and has continuously managed to adapt accordingly.” **Irina Michalowitz, EU Public Affairs academic and consultant**

European Public Space – A particular positioning

“Ihr seid der öffentliche Marktplatz Europas!” [‘You are Europe’s public market place (or public space)!’] – **Bernd Hütteman, European Movement Germany**

Another differs “Where we did not succeed, on the other hand, was in creating a European public space” at least in Brussels. But then, this contributor continues, “the desperate efforts of DG Communication did not succeed in that respect either, a clear indication that the Brussels bubble does not equal a real European public space.” **Willy De Backer, Founding Editor, EurActiv.com 1999 – ‘07.**

Christophe Leclercq, EurActiv Founder, wishes to clarify his view: « I share the dream about a European public sphere, but it’s a dream. EurActiv’s role is not to create it, but to build bridges supporting it. Initially with our decentralized network. Now also with our partnerships with national media. We help bring the debates where people are: in the countries! And, of course, in their own language!”.

Stakeholder dialogue – A space for debate

“I would like to pay tribute to EurActiv for its unbroken record of daily European news, its ability to package issues round institutional processes, whilst bringing in the stakeholders as well and making sense of an increasingly confusing decision-making process. On countless occasions when planning activities, someone asks “should we contact EurActiv?” The organisation has also been very involved in the debate about how the EU can communicate better and has developed innovative next steps, like the EU community project. No serious EU actor can afford to ignore EurActiv.” **Tony Venables, Founder ECAS**

This latter point is endorsed by a former official “Information about what the EU was doing was at a premium – even for me as an EU official.” **Jonathan Scheele, British Commission official for 38 years**

Advocacy & representation of minority opinions – A voice for EU players

A former MEP also pays tribute to EurActiv expanding European debate by sometimes promoting a minority or more obscure point of view “EurActiv has stretched the concept of Europe geographically, linguistically and

philosophically. It is as valuable for its detail as for its generalised assertions. There have of course been times when many of us have wondered what on earth EurActiv was banging on about, but this politician turned academic will be forever grateful for ... EurActiv over the past fifteen years.” **Tom Spencer, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs, Brunel University**

The Founder of European Citizens Action Service recognizes EurActiv’s role as a voice for EU players: *“First of all, I would like to pay tribute to EurActiv for its unbroken record of daily European news, its ability to package issues round institutional processes, whilst bringing in the stakeholders as well and making sense of an increasingly confusing decision-making process...The organisation has also been very involved in the debate about how the EU can communicate better and has developed innovative next steps, like the EU community project. No serious EU actor can afford to ignore EurActiv.”* **Tony Venables Founder and Director European Citizen Action Service**

Public Affairs – Filtering for the right information

Another long-time user pays tribute to EurActiv as a reliable source for Public Affairs professionals who need to prove that they know their facts: *“EurActiv emerged when the internet started to change the role of Public Affairs professionals from information brokerage to information filtering. The major benefit was twofold: EurActiv provided a concise overview over the most important policy developments at EU level – in a digestible format. Additionally, EurActiv provided something unique and extremely useful: a round-up of stakeholder policy positions for each policy issue – always presenting, but not taking sides”.* **Irina Michalowicz EU Public Affairs academic and consultant**

Tom Spencer endorses this practice of presenting the facts as objectively as possible with an anecdote: *“To this day I read the FT and EurActiv if I want to know the truth, and other newspapers, if I want to see what the British people have been told about Europe”.*

Investigative journalism – Need for in depth coverage

“Personally I don’t think it is the role of EurActiv to be investigative in the classic mass media sense. Apart from anything else this is one of the most expensive parts of a newspaper’s editorial work. Nevertheless, it is always interesting to take breaking stories of such scandals and make the link directly with policies under discussion or indeed historical ones to make the links.” **Angela Mills Wade, European Publishers Council**

“From Wikileaks to Vatileaks, the work of investigative journalists has given important results and it could add value to EurActiv.com. I don’t think that their work has to be paid in advance: their work makes their media more attractive and more interesting for sponsors and partners.” **Giampiero Gramaglia, former Editor, EurActiv Italia.**

Social media – creating a larger space for discussion

“Brussels-based organisations, companies, associations, consultants and think tanks have, in a way, become media owners. They aim to help shape discussions, without any intermediary and often without any filter but their own. They use owned, paid or social media to reach their goal more or less successfully.” **Florence Ranson, Director of Communications FoodDrinkEurope**

Florence continues: *“Targeting is the big challenge in an environment like Brussels, where everyone is trying to catch the attention of specific people, to shape the debate and have their voice heard. There is no such thing as targeting the “Under 50 housewife” group of several millions. We are talking individuals: targeting means that you carefully select the listeners/readers who will be impacted by your arguments, those whom you know will listen to you for various reasons. Powerful supporters. Potential multipliers.”*

“EurActiv was an early adopter of social media – communication tools that only now conquer EU policymaking and Public Affairs. EurActiv established its presence on Twitter and Facebook in 2008, when the Public Affairs community as well as business at large was still wondering whether these tools would influence political communication at all. What makes EurActiv special today, is that with its social media activities: blogs, opinions, videos, extensive section coverage, and published positions, it offers more and more interpretative voices beyond mere information, and still keeps its concise style and journalistic independence.” **Irina Michalowitz, EU academic & consultant**

Euroscepticism – more un-biased views for a balanced debate

“Osons le dire, la politique d’information et de communication de l’Union européenne est un désastre. Au cours des dernières années, ce fût plus ou moins toujours le cas. Mais actuellement, la situation est pire que jamais, ce qui est très grave car la non communication de l’Union vis-à-vis du citoyen, la non promotion de ses valeurs, de ses atouts, de ses résultats contribue massivement à alimenter un euroscepticisme qui gagne du terrain élection après élection.” **Daniel Guéguen, Guru Blogger, BlogActiv.eu**

“EurActiv should probably reflect the forces of Euroscepticism and more subterranean movements “out there” and is well placed to do so with its different language versions. But the European debate can only be captured with more journalists on the ground – not just translation - so EurActiv becomes a melting pot of the different highly nationalistic interpretations of decisions which are less and less European- ie EurActiv x 28.” **Tony Venables, ECAS Founder**

Brexit – EurActiv ‘European’ by nature and should stand by a stronger EU

“I continue to receive the daily update now I’m back in the UK and find it a valuable tool. The filtering options mean that I’m not deluged by information, but articles that are of interest show up. And the EurActiv blog updates provide some useful arguments and insights, even where I disagree with them. It will be indispensable in the ongoing debate on Brexit.” **Jonathan Scheele, former EC official 1974 – 2012.**

“EurActiv has a robust tradition of neutrality between political parties and national positions of which I approve. However, it would be taking balance too far if EurActiv decided to remain neutral on the question of the British leaving the European Union. EurActiv is by its very nature a key to the institutional development of the European Union. To be neutral on Brexit is like a fish being against water.” **Tom Spencer, former MEP, EU academic**

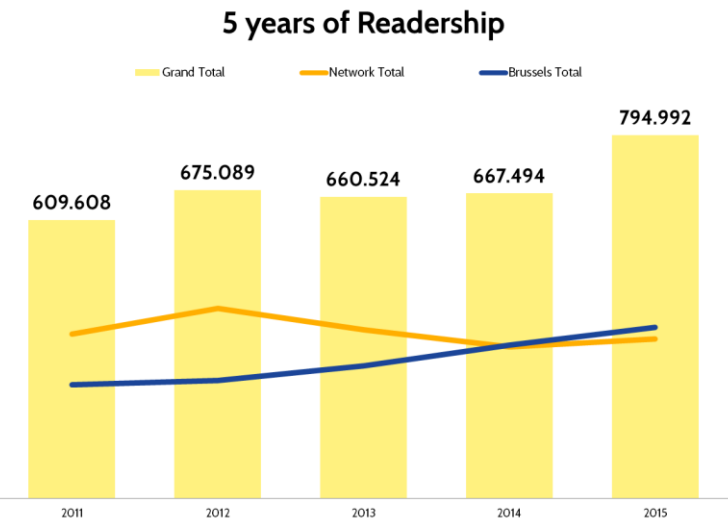
Married to a British citizen, Christophe Leclercq, cannot help having a view on this topical issue, despite EurActiv’s openness to all arguments on the issues. In fact, here is what he wrote in an opinion with Sharon Spooner: [**“UK in Europe: for better not for worse”**](#).

A STRONG TRACK RECORD MARKED BY MILESTONES

Achievements: from a weekly in English to a pan-European media network in 12 languages

Since 2000 EurActiv has expanded from an initial team of 4 and publishing on Fridays in English to a team of over 100 professionals, publishing in 12 languages 24/7. Readership trends, source: Google Analytics, are shown in the graph below.

Readership and credibility: a readership on the rise



The EurActiv Network has 794,992 Unique Visitors per month.

Euractiv.com’s reach is enhanced by its national Network Partners, under the EurActiv brand. The majority of EurActiv journalists and EurActiv readers reside outside Belgium.

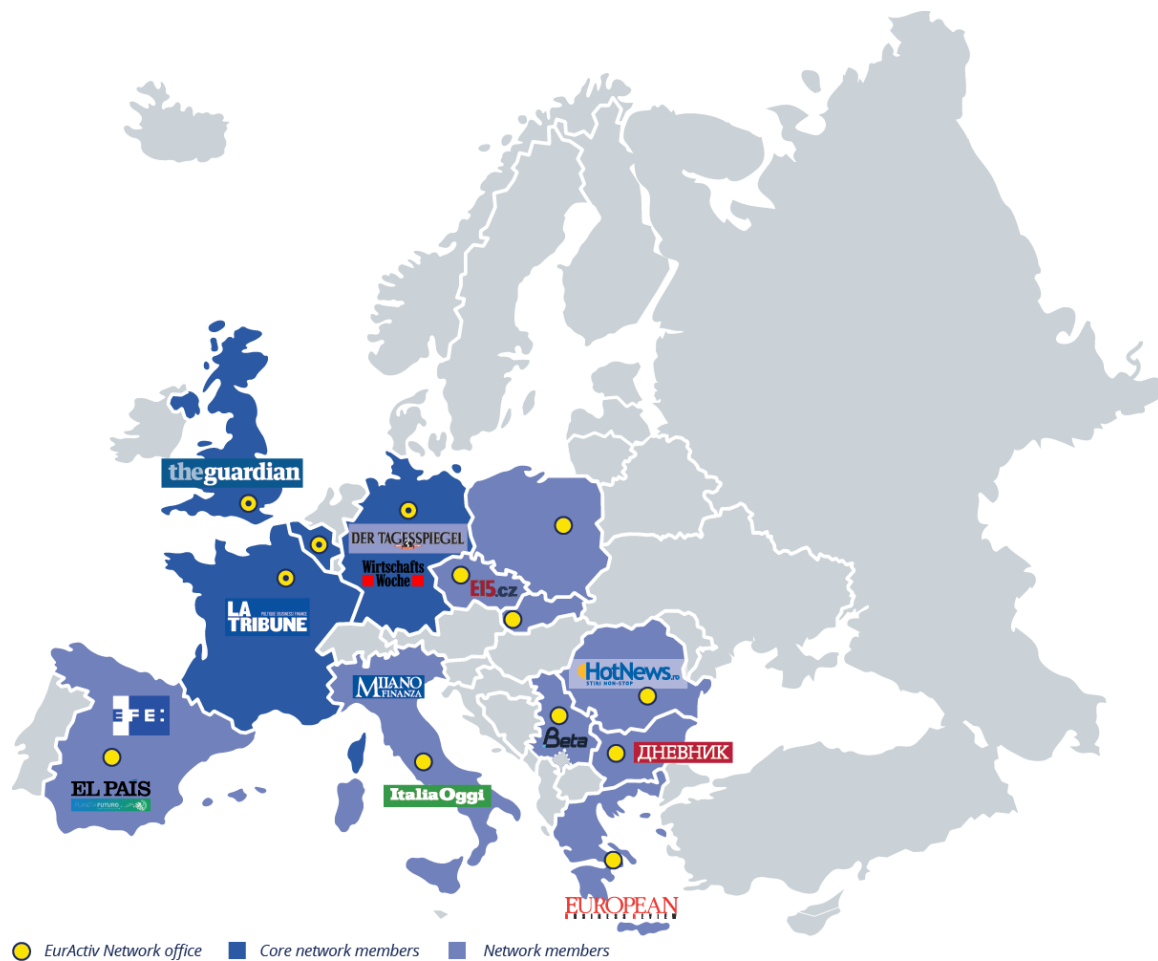
The chart below shows the evolution of Unique Visitors for the EurActiv ‘family’ (EurActiv.com plus the other Network Partners) since 2011.

EurActiv’s brand footprint totals 1.4 million users a month. This number is estimated by looking into how many people read EurActiv’s editorial content on and off the EurActiv websites (represented in yellow and blue-stripe pattern). The growing number of content partnerships has attracted new readers of EurActiv content via other media (25% of total editorial content readership).

Added to this, EurActiv’s social media reach has also increased in the last year and even more so since the last readership survey in 2010. By adding these various numbers together, EurActiv has estimated its brand footprint (i.e. the reach of EurActiv’s brand and editorial content in terms of unique readers).



Today media moves within a global village. Sharing content across borders has become part of daily news consumption. EurActiv has internalised this concept from the very start, and is now expanding its outreach to mainstream media. These partnerships are an important part of the strategy to deliver the best EU journalism possible: See Media Partners map below, for further details click [Media Partners](#).



Retrospective achievements: expanding across Europe, while strengthening a core around Brussels (see previous EurActiv timeline)

The early days: from bathroom to charlemagne 1999 – 2004

Euractiv.com PLC was incorporated in the UK. An initial team of 4 worked out of a rented top-floor apartment. Pierre Orfinger, the initial Technical Director, worked in the bathroom with the server well protected in the bath!

In 1999 EurActiv had its initial launches in the Economic & Social Committee and European Parliament (incl. Elmar Brok MEP and Olli Rehn, later Commissioner and now MEP).

Willy De Backer was recruited as first Editor. The EurActiv portal was launched in 2000 in English, once a week on Fridays, complementing the European Voice's print publication on Thursdays.

The EurActiv team then moved into spare offices provided by Centre for European Policy Studies, CEPS. Rapid expansion of the editorial team meant renting additional office space in the suitably named Rue de la Presse, 1000 Brussels.

In 2000, EurActiv and partners won a DG InfoSociety *eContent* tender to develop a multilingual portal in 2000 [TBC]

The European Year of Languages was launched in 2001.

By then, the team members numbered 13, including Frédéric Simon, now Publisher, and Dan Luca, now Sales & Marketing Director.

EurActiv, SYSTRAN and CEPS then won a second eContent project to launch a CrossLingual Network, but Central European partners were not entitled to receive EU funds, so EurActiv sub-contracted them a few tasks.

2003 saw the launch of the initial Network partners in Slovenia, Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia.

Network expansion: 2004 to 2009: rebranding, and adapting to a growing EU

In 2004, EurActiv got a new look and logo.

EurActiv Romania was then launched by Dan Luca and Manuela Preoteasa.

EurActiv Slovakia also launched a Czech version in Prague.

Fondation EurActiv was launched in 2004 by Alexander Riedl with Julian Oliver as Secretary General.

The EurActor™ membership initiative was launched in Brussels for trade associations, chambers of commerce and NGOs.

The EurActiv Project Office then moved from Place du Congrès to the International Press Centre Building, 1 Boulevard Charlemagne, 1041 Brussels. The “new Berlaymont” was inaugurated at the same time.

EurActiv Hungary launched in 2005. That marked EurActiv in ten languages: three central in English, French & German plus seven Network Partner languages.

New services offered on EurActiv.com included Jobsite, Agenda and Yellow pages.

Team numbers reached 25 in Brussels and 25 in Network Partners' offices.

EurActiv Paris became operational and EurActiv Berlin was in preparation.

EurActiv experimented with social media during the 2009 European Parliament elections and launched BlogActiv™

Integration & Media exchanges 2010 to Date: reinforcing the network and partnering with trusted quality media

EurActiv's own offices and journalists in Paris and Berlin were shortly joined by a Public Affairs office in Westminster, London.

These three offices were increasingly integrated with the Brussels Network Office as part of EurActiv.com rather than being operated as franchise operations, as elsewhere.

One of EurActiv's original policy sections, Environment, attracted the attention of The Guardian and a content exchange partnership was signed, whereby The Guardian could take a number of EurActiv's articles for re-publication and accreditation and EurActiv could do same in reverse.

As a result, in addition to country partnerships under the EurActiv brand, the Network encompassed content exchange deals with eleven leading national media. These served to both extend the footprint of EurActiv content beyond instances when other journalists quote EurActiv, and enrich the experience EurActiv can offer readers on its own sites: see Media **Network Map** on Page 18.

CHALLENGES AND INNOVATION: Sustaining, integrating and providing

External challenges: sustaining media in smaller countries, and lack of support from the EU

There have been challenges and deviations on route:

Some countries have proven too small to sustain a franchise partnership; other countries have proved hostile to independent or free media. Slovenia, Latvia, Iceland and Montenegro fall into the first category; Hungary and Turkey into the second.

EU media policy and support has been erratic: in the 2000 to 2005 period the Commission adopted a largely *laissez-faire* policy stance – member states were more dominant in some cases providing substantial state aids via free or subsidized mail for newspapers, bulk purchases of newspapers and even direct financial aid to specific media (and almost all countries continue to support public broadcasting).

In 2006, under the direction of Vice President Wallström, the European Commission adopted a White Paper on Communications (and EurActiv welcomed this initiative by publishing its own [“Yellow Paper”](#) urging 12 more radical actions under 4 headings: Diversify, Decentralise, Disseminate and Decide). The White Paper was less than successful. It was largely ignored by the then President of the Commission and was relying too much on direct communication Commission-to-citizens, rather than leveraging media.

The European Journalism Centre renewed the call for a more proactive media policy with [“8 ways the EU could help journalism”](#) suggestions in 2012 but, despite a high-level group report, little emerged until the Digital Single Market proposals of 2014, which are a necessary but not sufficient support, since the DSM tackles mainly the technological and regulatory aspects and not the economic challenges.

EurActiv has expanded without any external financial loans, investments in integration, technology and team training have all been achieved from re-investment of own resources, net current assets remain positive at end 2015.

External perspectives: contributors comment on EurActiv’s values

In order to provide balance and perspective this report relies heavily on contributions provided by consulting with many external partners and a few EurActiv team members.

A wide range of past and current clients, representatives of consultancies, civil society organisations, academics and alumni have submitted written and video statements⁴. Selected quotes are used as illustrations throughout this report – the full texts and videos are reproduced in annexes.

⁴ Extract from invitation to external contributors “To make matters simple, please review the 4 values and choose the value that you think EurActiv scores best on and which value could it improve on most over the coming years? Then we will send you a couple of leading questions on your chosen value(s), on which you provide written answers in EN, FR or DE – your choice.

EurActiv has been recording EU news and policy debates since 2000 and a selection of extracts from articles and blogs are included.

Disruptive innovators: setting a standard for the European media industry

When EurActiv.com was launched in 2000, in a predominantly print-centric world, it was seen both as an innovator and a disruptor of the then traditional public affairs environment. Weekly, monthly or intermittent print newsletters and annual monitoring contracts were shown the door. Consultancies and law firms were forced to respond as clients shifted their allegiances to free online publications of EU news and policies. In came the novelty of hyperlinks leading to original source documents, electronic databases and much more efficient and transparent methods of managing EU policies. We did not ask contributors to identify other disruptive innovators but we acknowledge the concept proposed by a couple of them.

By 2000 digital journalism was relatively rare but becoming feasible. For example, most PCs were monochrome or 'green and black', download speeds were slow and unreliable. Print was still by far the preferred medium for EU institutions and public affairs communication. When EurActiv launched its website it did so without any print or journalistic legacy: it began by offering once-a-week publication of previously available information and a free online Guide to European public affairs organisations: but in doing so was already a disruptive innovator.

EurActiv: "innovation baked into the culture from Day One"

EurActiv has been assisted by the fact that *"innovation was baked into the culture from Day One"*, **Mathew Lowry, Founder of BlogActiv.eu**

The original EurActiv business model foresaw policy sections managed by 'Section Coordinators' also known as reporters: thus anticipating by more than ten years the practice of sponsored editorials. Except that as far as EurActiv was and is concerned section or any other sponsorship does NOT privilege views from its sponsors: *"We maintain our **independence** with an **innovative business model** and do not privilege views from sponsors"*. See [Editorial Mission](#)

Subsequent innovations include, for example, LinksDossiers™, EurActors™, BlogActiv™ and its franchise Network of independent but integrated publication in 12 languages. EurActiv's business model of Cross-Lingual™ and trans-national co-operation has proved viable and sustainable.

"EurActiv emerged when the internet started to change the role of Public Affairs professionals from information brokerage to information filtering. The major benefit was twofold: EurActiv provided a concise overview over the most important policy developments at EU level – in a digestible format. Additionally, EurActiv provided something unique and extremely useful: a round-up of stakeholder policy positions for each policy issue – always presenting, but not taking sides." **Irina Michalowicz, EU academic & consultant**

Major trends of Disruptive Innovations are identified below:

Disruptive innovators set to impact the future of online European media

These findings lead to a set of insights categorised here as Disruptive Innovations or 'the only constant is change'. Six major disruptive trends are likely to impact online European media in future:

1. **Client-led:** e.g. how users choose to use AdBlockers and to use social media to select news and views, the rise of community and citizen journalism, shorter attention spans and preferences for more video and photos.
2. **Brand journalism & native advertising:** global media are experimenting with sponsored content. Examples include NYT, News International, The Guardian & Daily Telegraph among others, companies, trade associations, trade unions and even churches are commissioning editorial content.
3. **Digital natives:** new generation of technology companies who now do news, rather than news companies using more technology e.g. Vice, BuzzFeed, Quartz, Google News, Facebook etc.
4. **Platforms and devices:** plethora of platforms and devices promoted by telecom and other hardware suppliers - PCs, laptops, tablets, smart phones, smart watches and other 'wearables'.
5. **Public v. private funding:** member states and the EU continue to offer varying types of funding; private investors face an uneven playing field across Europe; crowdfunding is a relatively fast-growing newcomer.
6. **EurActiv itself:** has been and some expect it to continue to be a disruptive innovator.

Other challenges are more political or specifically of EU origin:

- Fragmentation of political support for EU and growth of Euroscepticism, as shown in recent opinion polls and national and European Parliament elections, as well as by several contributors.
- Erratic and inconsistent support by member states and the EU to media policy over past decades, as presented by EurActiv at an event on 10 February 2015: see link
- Disproportionate funding provided by the EU for communication (via contracts) vs. direct to media: see 'EU strategy for independent and sustainable media' published by *Fondation EurActiv*, 2014.

CONCLUSIONS: EurActiv remains strong, moving forward with established values

THE EU REFORMS IN EVOLUTIONARY WAYS

Or, as **Florence Ranson** puts it, *“The Brussels bubble seems relatively sheltered from revolutions, it works more in evolutions. Media are taken at a different pace, they are generally looked at sceptically before being tried, adopted more or less reluctantly and then used extensively. Changes do not happen overnight.”*

EurActiv continues to publish and has grown sustainably through various crises including September 11, strikes, lockdowns,, rejection of the proposed EU Constitution in 2005; rejection of Lisbon Treaty in 2008; delays in appointment of Commissioners in 2009/10; introduction of Transparency Register; economic recession and Euro crises; and most recently the near exit of Greece, the wave of migration and the current prospect of a potential British exit.

“Does this mean that EurActiv is safe for the future? Certainly not. What it takes is a few young innovative disruptors with some brilliant ideas and a decent but realistic business model... So where will this new disruption come from? My guess is that it will be linked to whatever happens to the European Union itself. The current EU, built on the ideology of everlasting economic growth and the miracles performed by the free market, cannot and will not continue to stagger and survive from one crisis to the next. In the end, it will fail and from its ashes will be born a new PhoenixEurope. Maybe with a new Phoenix EurActiv?” **Willy De Backer, Founding Editor and now Head Communication & Publications, ETUI**

Thus EU media have waxed and waned or been re-branded and may re-appear Phoenix-like with the result that the market today for EU news and opinion is probably more lively, vibrant and diverse than ever. It is a different scene from 2000, more fragmented and segmented by new waves of social and digital native media. The European public space remains embryonic and works after a fashion: technology in the form of machine translation may yet offer it a more sustainable future.

To quote **Florence Ranson** again: *“The younger generation predominantly uses YouTube as a search engine. The information we consume has to be not just fast but quickly digestible so we can move on rapidly to the next item. Tomorrow’s decision-makers and interest groups will embrace these rules. They will demand synthetic and to-the-point information material, not just substantiated by figures but also supported by ethics and a degree of emotion. Communications and media relations are shifting more and more to the human dimension. Out go the big figures, statistics, turnovers, etc. and in come the people, the personal stories, the sustainable aspects of policy-making and decision-taking. Spinning is out and bonding is in.”*

Mathew Lowry, Founder of BlogActiv.eu and prolific author on media puts it succinctly *“There’s never been a better time to innovate in media”* and goes on to conclude *“And today, via EC-funded research, EurActiv is piloting new concepts [in Data Journalism] like EurActory and PolicyLine, which will – if successful – be integrated into the main site in turn. EurActiv, in other words, has an innovation pipeline that is less about venture capital and more about culture.”*

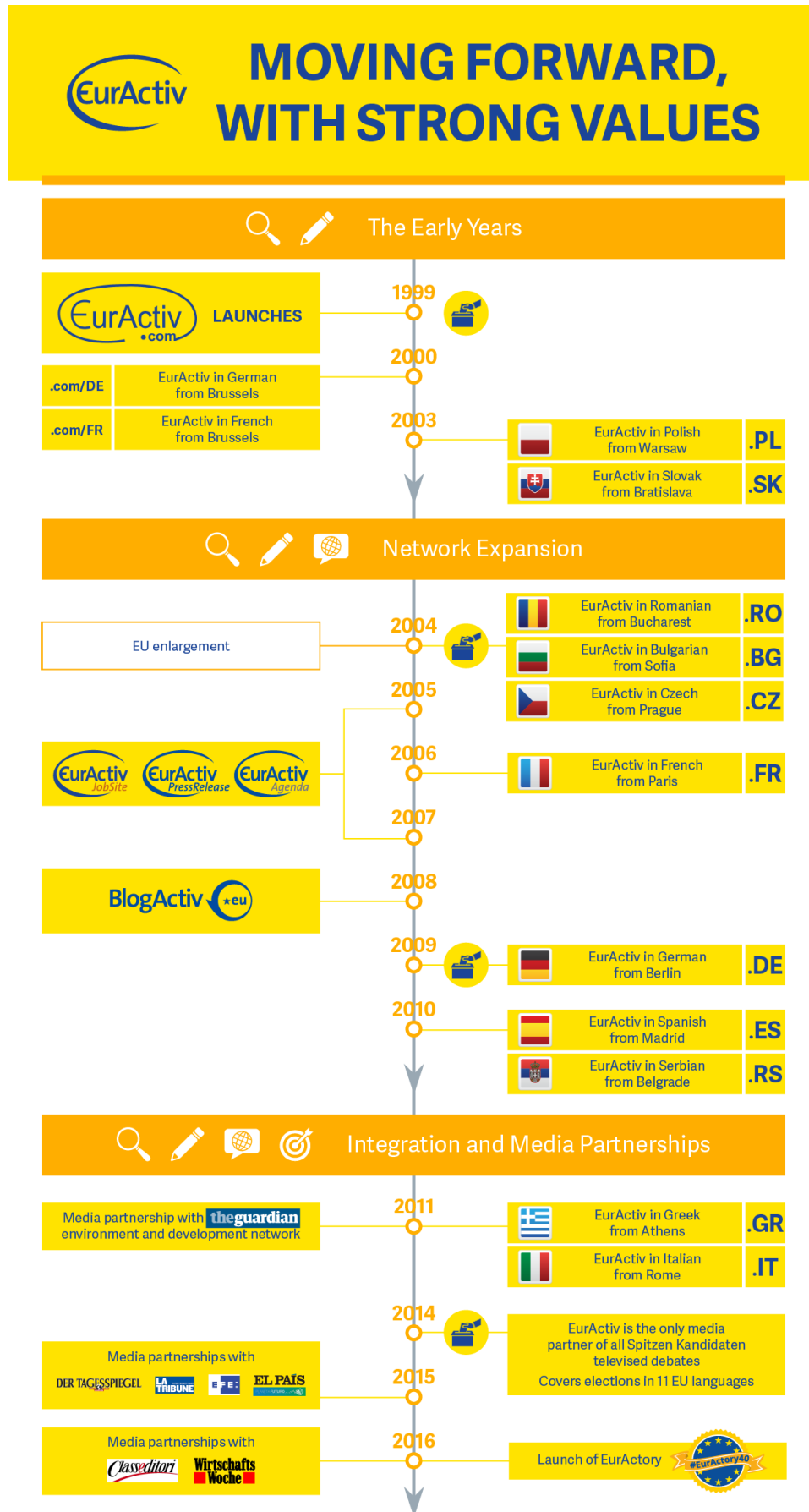
Christophe Leclercq, Founder and inspiration of EurActiv from its earliest concept through to today, also adds his own concluding remarks:

“EurActiv has faced many challenges since its beginning. This “Values Project” serves as a way for all to remember EurActiv’s successes and mistakes, to be learned from and evolved upon.

EurActiv started as an innovative disruptor for other media. It is now one model of media network cooperation, glad to be copied, and eager to cooperate with national media.

I would like to extend a thank you to our many partners and clients, without whom we would not be able to provide a free and transparent service to our many dedicated users.”

TIMELINE



OVERVIEW OF VALUES

EurActiv's 4 Core Values



Efficiency

EurActiv saves readers' time. Thereby supporting policy-making. Adding data-journalism like EurActory.

Languages

National media and EurActiv network members increasingly exchange articles. Fast Translated Syndication being upgraded.



Values that underpin innovation



Transparency

EurActiv break opacity of policy positions, stakeholders and national views, since the very beginning.

Media Independence

Journalists provide balanced reporting, independent from sponsors' views, guided by EurActiv's editorial mission and Fondation EurActiv.



Efficacité et Transparence des Acteurs Européens

DETAILED OUTLINE

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Media Independence

- 1) José Manuel Barroso, Former President of the European Commission

Video testimonial from 2009

- 2) Elmar Brok, Member of the European Parliament

Die Bedeutung europäischer Medien für eine freie Gesellschaft Von *Elmar Brok MEP*

„Die Presse muss die Freiheit haben, alles zu sagen,
damit gewisse Leute nicht die Freiheit haben, alles zu tun.“

Stewart Alsop (1914-1974), amerik. Journalist

Für die Entwicklung einer europäischen Gesellschaft und Öffentlichkeit braucht die Europäische Union journalistische Medien wie EurActiv. Eine genuin europäische Presse hat eine besondere Bedeutung für die gesellschaftliche Integration unseres Kontinents ebenso wie für eine kritische Betrachtung der europäischen Politik. Dies schreibe ich als überzeugter Europäer, als EU-Parlamentarier - und explizit auch als ehemaliger Journalist, der die Entwicklung EurActivs von Beginn an mit großem Interesse und großer Neugier mitverfolgt hat.

Für die Entstehung einer gesamteuropäischen Öffentlichkeit spielen supranational angelegte Medien eine hervorzuhebende Rolle. Nicht nur über den nationalen Tellerrand zu schauen, sondern einen europäischen Blickwinkel einzunehmen - dies ist ein Ansatz, bei dem EurActiv in den vergangenen 15 Jahren echte Pionierarbeit geleistet hat. Und seitdem sind wichtige Schritte unternommen worden, um die Zielgruppe beständig zu erweitern: Interaktivität, Blogs, Videos und vor allem eine beeindruckende Mehrsprachigkeit machen EurActiv für viele Bürger interessant und zu einem wichtigen Informations- und Diskussionsportal in gesamteuropäischen Belangen.

Medien sind darüber hinaus die oft als "vierte Gewalt" bezeichnete Macht in einem politischen System. Gleichermäßen informative wie kritische Berichterstattung - und dies ohne die nationalstaatliche Brille - ist das, was EurActiv auszeichnet. Guter Journalismus scheut sich nicht, den Finger in die Wunde zu legen, Dinge zu hinterfragen und auf Missstände aufmerksam zu machen. Nicht zuletzt aufgrund meiner beruflichen

Tätigkeit vor meiner erstmaligen Wahl zum Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlamentes im Jahr 1980, als ich für den Rundfunk und für Zeitungen journalistisch gearbeitet habe, ist mir dies persönlich ein besonders wichtiges Anliegen.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist das Thema Pressefreiheit ein wichtiger Aspekt. Gerade wenn nationale Regierungen diese einschränken, kommt den inter- und supranationalen Medien eine zusätzliche Bedeutung zu. Das Europäische Parlament hat sich immer mit Nachdruck für Presse- und Medienfreiheit stark gemacht und deren Unverzichtbarkeit für eine freie Gesellschaft stets betont. Leider werden in vielen Ländern - auch europäischen - Journalisten oft verfolgt, bedroht und sogar inhaftiert, weil sie sich mit ihrer Arbeit auch für grundlegende Menschenrechte einsetzen. Eine unabhängige Presse fungiert jedoch als kollektiver Ausdruck freier Meinungsäußerung und ist einer der wichtigsten Akteure in der Medienlandschaft. Sie hat die Rolle als Hüterin der Demokratie inne.

Eines ist jedoch klar: Die Europäische Union kann nur dann glaubwürdig sein, wenn Presse- und Medienfreiheit innerhalb der EU selbst gewährleistet und geschützt sind. Hierfür tragen die Regierungen der Mitgliedstaaten die Hauptverantwortung. Einschränkungen darf es nur im Ausnahmefall geben, wenn etwa die innere Sicherheit gefährdet ist - dann aber auch nur unter strengen Vorgaben und zeitlich befristet. Die EU sollte hierbei nach innen wie außen eine noch entschlosseneren Haltung einnehmen und für ihre Werte und Prinzipien eintreten.

Mit der Allgegenwärtigkeit des Internets in unserer durchdigitalisierten Gesellschaft ist unverkennbar: Die Entwicklung zu Online-Medienplattformen mit einem globalen Charakter sowie einer globalen Ausstrahlung auf eine steigende Zahl von weltweiten Nutzern ist unumkehrbar. Und das ist gut so! Längst haben diese Plattformen ihren festen Platz in unserer Gesellschaft eingenommen und tragen zu erhöhter Vielfalt und mehr Pluralismus bei. Nie in der Geschichte der Menschheit war es leichter, sich Informationen zu verschaffen. Dies fördert kritisches Denken, trägt maßgeblich zum Austausch und zur Entfaltung von Meinungen bei und stärkt damit nicht zuletzt auch die Demokratie.

In diesem Sinne ist zu wünschen, dass die Bedeutung unabhängiger und kritischer europäischer Medien mit allen EU-Bürgern als potenzieller Zielgruppe weiter zunehmen wird. Hier kann und sollte auch die Europäische Union noch mehr Unterstützungshilfe leisten. Dass das EurActiv-Konzept eines supranationalen Ansatzes bei der Berichterstattung erfolgreich ist, beweist die Vielzahl weiterer Medien mit einem ähnlichen Ansatz, die in den vergangenen Jahren entstanden sind und die europäische

Presselandschaft bereichern. EurActiv hat hier mit viel Leidenschaft und Innovationsfähigkeit eine Vorreiterrolle gespielt.

[616 words]

TRANSLATION

The importance of European media for a free society

The European Union needs journalistic media such as EurActiv for the development of a European society and for the public. A genuine European press has a special significance for the social integration of our continent as well as a critical review of European policy. I am writing this as a committed European, as EU parliamentarians - and explicitly as a former journalist who has followed the development EurActiv from the beginning with great interest and curiosity.

In order for a pan-European public to emerge on a supranational scale, media need to play an exaggerated role. Not only to look beyond national borders, but to take a European perspective - this is an approach that EurActiv has taken and done pioneering work over 16 years. Since 1999 important steps have been taken to enhance the audience constantly: interactivity, blogs, videos and especially an impressive multilingualism make EurActiv for many citizens interesting and become an important information and discussion portal in pan-European issues.

Media are also often referred to as a "fourth power" power in a political system. Equally informative and critical reporting - without nation-state glasses - is what distinguishes EurActiv. Good journalism is not afraid to put its finger in the wound, to question things and to draw attention to abuses. Not least because of my professional life before my first election for Members of the European Parliament in 1980, when I worked as a journalist for the radio and in newspapers, this is for me personally a particularly important concern.

In this context, the issue of press freedom is an important aspect. Just when national governments limit this, the international and supranational media have an additional meaning. The European Parliament has always campaigned strongly in favor of press and media freedom, and always stressed the indispensability of a free society. Even European - - journalists often persecuted, threatened and even imprisoned because they committed to her work for basic human rights

Unfortunately, in many countries. However, an independent press to function as a collective expression of freedom of expression and is one of the main players in the media landscape. It has held the role as a guardian of democracy.

But one thing is clear: the European Union can only be credible if press and media freedom within the EU itself are guaranteed and protected. For this purpose, all the governments of the Member States the primary responsibility. Restrictions there may be only in exceptional cases, such as when the internal security is threatened - but then only under strict rules and limited in time. The EU should in this case take an even firmer line internally and externally, and stand up for their values and principles.

With the ubiquity of the Internet in our society through digitized is unmistakable: The evolution to online media platforms with a global nature, as well as a global broadcast on an increasing number of global users is irreversible. And that's good! Long since these platforms have taken their place in our society and contribute to increased diversity and pluralism in. Never in the history of mankind, was it easier to gain information. This encourages critical thinking, contributes significantly to the exchange and development of opinions, thus strengthening not least democracy.

In this sense, it is important the independent media are accessible to all EU citizens as a potential target audience and that this market continues to grow. Here the European Union can and should do more to support and help [media]. The EurActiv concept of a supranational approach to reporting has been sustainable. In recent years, the European media landscape has been enriched, as a wider range of online media with a similar approach have emerged. EurActiv has played a passionate and innovative role in broadening the place of online media across Europe.

Elmar Brok MEP

Words 640

Tags: Media Independence, press freedom, multilingualism, guardian of democracy, independent media,

3) Miguel Castro, Global Media Partnerships, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

“EurActiv has made a great difference for the international development policy community. In Brussels, Paris and Berlin, we now have an efficient institution that, through its independent journalism, facilitates the necessary debates and valuable discussion around overseas development aid and Europe’s role in fixing some of the biggest challenges the world faces. International aid, poverty reduction measures, diseases eradication efforts and fighting inequality require of an intelligent policy-making community that is timely informed, and EurActiv does that.”

Miguel Castro
Global Media Partnerships, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

[77 words]

Tags: ‘Media Independence’; International Development; Efficiency; EU policies, policymaking community

4) Giampiero Gramaglia, Former Editor-in-Chief, EurActiv Italy

An Italian perspective: better Europe, more Europe.

To my mind, the problem is not where EurActiv stands in terms of media independence: the problem is how we could improve it. Financial soundness is the best guarantee of independence from the political power, but of course it has a cost in terms of independence from sponsors and partners if you are providing free information –or ‘information for free’-. It is essential that sponsorships and partnerships be clearly stated and that the sponsored sections be clearly separated by the other areas.

From Wikileaks to Vatileaks, the work of investigative journalists has given important results and it could add value to EurActiv.com. I don’t think that their work has to be paid in advance: their work makes their media more attractive and more interesting for sponsors and partners.

The fact that EurActiv exchanges editorial content with national media doesn’t erode or increase, per se, media independence: it depends on the quality of the national media and on the exchanged content. When you are sharing contents with The Guardian, or El Pais, you are increasing your credibility all over Europe.

Of course, a media outlet focusing on EU policy has to be critical of EU institutions: not in an aprioristic way or with an Eurosceptic approach, but in a constructive and positive way. The positions of the EU Institutions have to be presented correctly, as well as the critics coming from the Governments or from the citizens. EurActiv can also declare its stand on certain issues, advocating a better Europe, which immediately becomes more Europe.

Giampiero Gramaglia
Former Editor-in-Chief, EurActiv.it

[250 words]

Tags: ‘Media Independence’; advocacy; investigative journalism; EU policies

Pas de « Better regulation » sans « Better information »

Rappelons-nous la phrase choc du Président Juncker : « Nous voulons être grands sur les grandes choses et petits sur les petites choses ». Dans l'esprit du Président de la Commission et de son alter ego Franz Timmermans, les grandes choses sont géopolitiques : l'Euro, les réfugiés, la sécurité ; ou institutionnelles : le package Better regulation pour améliorer la gouvernance de l'Union.

Dans la hiérarchie des priorités : information et communication relèvent sans nul doute des « petits dossiers », pour lesquels, effectivement, les résultats obtenus au cours des 12 derniers mois peuvent être qualifiés de « petits » et même d'inexistants.

Osons le dire, la politique d'information et de communication de l'Union européenne est un désastre. Au cours des 15 dernières années, ce fût plus ou moins toujours le cas. Mais actuellement, la situation est pire que jamais, ce qui est très grave car la non communication de l'Union vis-à-vis du citoyen, la non promotion de ses valeurs, de ses atouts, de ses résultats contribue massivement à alimenter un euroscepticisme qui gagne du terrain élection après élection.

Dans cette bataille pour une vraie communication européenne, EurActiv a un rôle majeur à jouer, d'abord en raison de sa très large audience. Mais informer ne va pas suffire. Les dossiers et les procédures de décision devenant sans cesse plus complexes, le souci d'informer doit s'accompagner d'une volonté pédagogique pour expliquer les contextes et commenter les enjeux. Pour prendre un exemple concret, on ne peut pas informer sur un sujet clé de l'Union, par exemple les ETS ou le Circular Economy Package sans donner un éclairage précis sur les actes délégués et les actes d'exécution que ces deux textes contiennent.

Il importe donc à la fois d'être précis et clair, ce qui n'est pas facile. Mais chacun doit comprendre que plus les textes sont compliqués plus ceux qui les commentent ou les expliquent c'est-à-dire les journalistes en premier lieu doivent simplifier et schématiser sans perdre pour autant la crédibilité technique. Rude tâche. Plus on veut faire court et simple, plus ça prend du temps.

A cette nécessaire excellence dans l'information doit s'ajouter une réflexion sur la communication, c'est-à-dire sur l'image, la visibilité, la crédibilité de l'Union. Plus les dossiers sont complexes comme on l'a dit et plus les acteurs de l'Europe (élus, fonctionnaires, lobbyistes, journalistes) se réfugient dans une sorte de pensée unique où toute critique est absente. Certes, il ne s'agit pas de critiquer pour le plaisir de critiquer, mais il est désormais urgent – et même urgentissime – de débattre sur tous les sujets clés : débattre entre nous acteurs de l'Europe et avec les citoyens européens.

Pour tous ces chantiers EurActiv a un rôle pilote à jouer en raison de son audience, nous l'avons dit, mais aussi de sa séniorité et de sa crédibilité. A titre personnel, je me félicite d'être « guru blogger » pour EurActiv et de voir l'importance du nombre de connexions pour des sujets a priori compliqués, mais que j'aborde simplement et avec une grande liberté de pensée.

A EurActiv aussi de mettre la pression sur les Institutions européennes au sens le plus large du mot pour les convaincre que « ce qui ne se sait pas n'existe pas » et que « si le savoir-faire c'est bien, le faire-savoir est au moins aussi important ».

Tags: indépendance, euroscepticisme, savoir-faire, faire-savoir,

TRANSLATION

No 'Better regulation' without 'Better information'

Remember the shock sentence of President Juncker: "We want to be big on the big issues and small on the small things." In the spirit of President of the Commission and its alter ego Franz Timmermans, great things are geopolitical: the Euro, refugees, security; or institutional: the Better regulation package to improve governance of the Union.

In the hierarchy of priorities: information and communication falls undoubtedly into "small cases" for which, in fact, the results obtained in the last 12 months can be described as "small" or even nonexistent.

Dare we say, the information policy and the European Union's communication is a disaster. Over the past 15 years, it was more or less always the case. But now the situation is worse than ever, which is not very serious because the communication vis-à-vis the Union citizen, not promoting its values, its strengths, its results contributes massively to supply a euroscepticism gaining ground election after election.

In this battle for a true European communication, EurActiv has a major role to play, first because of its very large audience. But information is not going to be enough. Folders and decision procedures becoming increasingly complex, the need to inform must be accompanied in an educational context with a will to explain and comment on issues. To take a concrete example, we cannot inform on a key issue of the Union, such as ETS or Circular Economy Package without giving impact assessments on delegated acts and implementing acts that these two texts contain.

It is therefore important both to be precise and clear, which is not easy. But everyone should understand that the texts are more complicated over those who explain or comment that is to say, the first journalists should simplify and organise without losing the technical credibility. Rude task. We want to do more short and simple, it takes time.

Given that excellence in information is a necessity, one must add a reflection on communication, that is to say the image, visibility, credibility of the Union. More complex cases are as we have said and most of Europe actors (politicians, officials, lobbyists, journalists) take refuge in a kind of doctrinaire where criticism is absent. Certainly it is not to criticize for the sake of criticism, but it is now urgent - and even most urgent - debate on all key topics discussed between us players in Europe and with European citizens.

For all these reasons EurActiv has a leading role to play because of its audience, as we have said, but also of its authority and credibility. Personally, I am delighted to be a "guru blogger" at EurActiv and see the importance of the number of connections for a priori complicated matters, but I simply addresses and with great freedom of thought.

It is for EurActiv also to put pressure on the European Institutions in the broadest sense of the word to convince them that "what is unknown does not exist" and that "if the expertise is good, 'know-how' is at least as important."

Daniel Guéguen, Guru Blogger, BlogActiv.eu

[561 words]

Tags: Media Independence, communication, euroscepticism, public affairs, freedom of thought

6) Nathalie Lhayani, Fondatrice, EurActiv France

Video Testimonial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEwimlrVJ84&feature=youtu.be>

Tag Media Independence

7) Angela Mills Wade – Executive Director of the European Publishers Council

Media Independence: pro-Europe but not necessarily pro-EU

Written interview

Q. 1. A functioning democracy needs journalists, editors and publishers to hold those in power to account. On a scale of 1 to 5, where does EurActiv stand in terms of independence?

One of the main functions of mass media is indeed to hold those in power to account and be prepared to go to Court to defend their journalists who take a stand for democracy, free speech and uncovering wrong-doing. EurActiv is more of a niche publisher with different objectives around policy and politics. Nevertheless [media] independence is crucial to EurActiv's perceived authority. EurActiv rates 4 out of 5.

Q. 2. After LuxLeaks and SwissLeaks, should EurActiv work more with investigative journalists? Who should/can fund this work?

Personally I don't think it is the role of EurActiv to be investigative in the classic mass media sense. Apart from anything else this is one of the most expensive parts of a newspaper's editorial work. Nevertheless it is always interesting to take breaking stories of such scandals and make the link directly with policies under discussion or indeed historical ones to make the links.

Q. 3. Does EurActiv's exchange of editorial content with national media erode or increase media independence?

I don't think one is contingent upon the other. What is important is that EurActiv has clear editorial policies in place to deal with media independence, whatever the sources.

Q. 4. Can a media focused on EU policy, supported by a 12 country network, be critical of EU institutions?

EurActiv should be critical of the work of the EU Institutions.

It is EurActiv's duty as an independent media to expose the failings of any particular policy area or proposal and stimulate a debate around the subject matter.

Being pro Europe does not imply that EurActiv must be pro EU or everything that the EU institutions do or propose.

Angela Mills Wade

Executive Director of the European Publishers Council

Words: 220

Tags: Media Independence, investigative journalism, pro-Europe, pro-EU

8) Manuela Preoteasa, Founder of EurActiv Romania

“Europe is our home”

Child (in Paris, after the terrorist attacks, at one of the places where people were bringing flowers and candles, asked by a reporter if he understands what happened):

Yes, because they are really, really mean. (...) And... We have to be really careful, we have

Father: Oh, no, don't worry... We don't need to move out. France is our home.

Child: But, daddy, there are bad guys.

Father: Yes, but there are bad guys everywhere.

Child: They have guns... They can shoot us because they're really, really mean.

Father: It's OK. They might have guns, but we have flowers.

Child: But flowers don't do anything, they're for, they're for...

Father: Of course they do, look, everyone is putting flowers. It's to fight against guns.

Father: It's to remember the people who are gone.

(EurActiv.ro, 18 November 2015, transcription of a report broadcast by Channel Plus.)

Back in time in November 2004 When I and the initial team officially launched EurActiv Romania, 11 years ago, in the presence of an important friend of Romania, Ambassador Jonathan Scheele, former head of the Delegation of the European Commission, no one could have imagined that, one day, we will report live on six coordinated terrorist attacks in the very heart of Europe.

Today, with dignity and a high civic consciousness, France and the rest of Europe are recovering after the shock. While officials respond with talks of war and police forces with cross-border anti-terror actions, the courageous and extraordinary answer of ordinary people is that of solidarity and decency: flowers, candles and a massive not-to-

How can Europe be described over past 11 years? The key words are prosperity,

These were also the main coordinates of how Romania, as an accession country, saw the European Union, when it opened EU negotiations. The interest in the country concerning EU-connected issues was, at the time, huge, but highly superficial – most of the people simply wanted to know when will Romania be part of the European Union and were focused, in tabloid-like fashion, on the potential negative effects.

EurActiv Romania wanted to be a balanced and relevant voice, capable of reflecting in a balanced manner the effects of the accession process and, more appropriately, of the effects of European integration.

At the time, the atmosphere in Romania was split between corruption and the desire of a high majority of the population to be part of the European Union. Media was similarly divided between corrupt and well-paid outlets and a handful of honest journalists struggling to survive. Corruption touched everything.

Although under-prepared, Romania joined the European Union on the 1st of January 2007. The accession was celebrated with fireworks in the capital's symbolic square of the Revolution. The image of the European Union and the way people saw the process of integration were kept, however, as ideals by some, or were registered in tabloid fashion by others. While most attention in the media was placed on minor and endless political scandals, internal corruption remained the main issue of the country.

During this times, the policies of the European Union managed to avoid getting caught in the focus of Romanians. Most media outlets succeeded in almost completely ignoring those writing on EU policies. These subtle themes, although in the center of attention in Europe, were clearly not considered newsworthy by major media. Nothing scandalous happened in this field, so policy-news were no news at all.

The ignorance of the mainstream media (of course, with some notable exceptions, like a few TV programmes, radio channels and some specialized journalists/editors) has remained unchanged until the global financial crisis. Since then, the way Europe is affected started to get more and more coverage in the Romanian media. The Greek bailout, developments in Portugal and in Spain - we could say that the Romanian population was rather well informed on Europe's problems but less so on its potential. Despite the aforementioned media coverage, once the borders opened up, gradually, Romanians saw, through their own eyes, what the European Union meant. They travelled to others parts of Europe, some of them got paid in euros for temporary jobs, others benefited from EU sponsored funds or scholarships. Step by step, most people realized that less corruption means more prosperity for more people, means schools, health care, other standards of living, dignity. Also, they realized that they have the power to vote. In this sense, the people living abroad mobilized in the past years, in some cases in truly extraordinary ways - when they saw their votes wasted in the hands

Today in late 2015, much has changed. A powerful anti-corruption fight has started and specialized agencies have begun capturing the big fish. Having said that, corruption is still an important issue that can at times hit some very sensitive nerves. This has been the case of the fire in the Collective nightclub. This tragedy, in which 56 young people lost their lives, has persuaded massive numbers of Romanians say "enough is enough".

Thus, while the heart of the European Union bleeds because of terrorist attacks, Romania bleeds because of its endemic corruption. The obscenity of the whole system was revealed in this catastrophic event, with authorities favouring and protecting unsecure public spaces through their corrupt practices. The population was outraged and major protests broke out. The king was finally seen to be naked.

In response to these devastating situations, both in France and in Romania, people cried and offered flowers - a bridge of tears and flowers across borders and time. 25 years ago, another generation of Romanian young people faced weapons with flowers for the soldiers who were ordered to shoot. It is unlikely that actual killings might have occurred, but the former communist leaders placed their bet on fear - much Today, this malleable monster, fear, can take so many faces and can be seen in so many places. Fear can make a massive number of victims, as it hits civilization in its heart and challenges democracy and its key values: freedom, dignity, responsibility and honesty.

Today, the role of independent media has become more challenging than ever.

Manuela Preoteasa

Founder of EurActiv Romania

Words: 1042

Tags: Europe, Accession, Corruption, Media, Terrorism.

9) Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament

Dear EurActiv friends, thank you for inviting me to your #Media4EU conference, I am sorry I can't be with you today.

Our European common media policy praises the defence of our culture and our values through media. Every day, the European Institutions protect the right to be informed, defend the rights of the media, and especially its economic independence, in order to enhance pluralism in Europe. The recent attack against the French magazine Charlie Hebdo reminds us what is at the root of European values and action: the defence of the freedom of the press. It means that institutions, decision-makers and actors have to be scrutinised, analysed, assessed, criticised, and can be mocked to some extent. Politicians don't always enjoy it, me neither! But it corresponds to the profound nature of our democracy: transparency.

The changes we made, and will make, to allow a major scrutiny of policy-making by the citizens, facilitated by the good and fair work of the press, show our support to an increased transparency of the European Institutions.

The recent events in Paris also remind us that we desperately need an independent press, but also balanced information. New tools, such as data analysis, can definitely contribute to better journalism. But new tools, like old tools, can contribute to sensational, false information, and can irresponsibly trigger feelings of threat.

We will continue to praise balanced, checked information for the European citizens, throughout the technological changes. Here, EurActiv, friends, keep up the good work, keep scrutinising European affairs for the good of all European citizens

Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament (January 2015)

Words: 257

Tag: Media independence

Transparency

10) Willy De Backer, Founding Editor at EurActiv (1999-2007)

EurActiv as disruptor. A brief look at past, present and future

When we started EurActiv in 1999, we could not have foreseen what an influence our new internet venture would have on the future of European Union news reporting. At the time, European Voice was the only media 'voice' trying to bring traditional newspaper journalism to the European scene. It was therefore no surprise that, during a first meeting with the *Economist*-sponsored weekly newspaper, its commercial and editorial team seriously underestimated and even ridiculed the 'new kid on the block'.

What they thought would make it impossible for us to survive was exactly what made our venture successful. EurActiv's biggest asset at that time was that its business guru/publisher and its chief editor had no journalistic experience at all. Having both of us worked in the European institutions, we had discovered a real market for EU information that went beyond classical journalism. Most lobbyists and policymakers needed to find the right information at the right time and so our 'information brokerage' model with direct internet links to the most

important institutional and lobbyist documents ('LinksDossiers') very fast became an indispensable tool of all EU policymaking. Transparency (making all documents available for free) made EU policymaking easier to monitor and, in that sense, EurActiv disrupted traditional lobbyism. Thanks to a smart sponsoring model in combination with a strong independent editorial policy, the web portal went from strength to strength and when the publisher came up with the brilliant idea of moving beyond Brussels in the context of the EU's enlargement, EurActiv's information brokerage model went to the EU's capitals.

Where we did not succeed, on the other hand, was in creating a European public space; but then the desperate efforts of DG Communication did not succeed in that respect either, a clear indication that the Brussels bubble does not equal a real European public space.

So what about the present? EurActiv is now no longer disruptive. It is the new Normal. It is at the heart of the Bubble and has lots of smaller and bigger imitators (Politico), who most likely will not succeed and survive because there is just not enough money to be made to keep a big media operation going.

Does this mean that EurActiv is safe for the future? Certainly not. What it takes is a few young innovative disruptors with some brilliant ideas and a decent but realistic business model and EurActiv could go the same way that European Voice went. So where will this new disruption come from? My guess is that it will be linked to whatever happens to the European Union itself. The current EU, built on the ideology of everlasting economic growth and the miracles performed by the free market, cannot and will not continue to stagger and survive from one crisis to the next. In the end, it will fail and from its ashes will be born a new PhoenixEurope. Maybe with a new Phoenix EurActiv?

Willy De Backer

Founding Editor 1999-2007

[495 words] December 2015

Tags: Transparency, Disruption, Information broker, Lobbying, European public space, efficiency

If Marty McFly had been a lobbyist...back to the Future of EU Public Affairs

Abstract:

- *EurActiv and EU Public Affairs have been interconnected from past to present*
- *Three values have been key to success: substance, transparency and reciprocity*
- *EurActiv and Public Affairs professionals are [is] well-placed to add a new value for a successful future: responsibility*

21 October 2015 was “Back to the Future Day” – the day to which Marty McFly time-lapsed in the legendary movie “Back to the Future Day” from 1985. Looking back into the past and forward into the future of EU Public Affairs and EurActiv is a similar endeavour, and just as much fun.

When EurActiv set up shop in 1999, I was a young political science student in search for a suitable master thesis topic. After reading and reading, I got hooked by the idea of networking and interest groups, and the issue of influence, at EU level. Out of this initial interest, a fascination developed that culminated not only in a master thesis, but also a PhD thesis, two monographs and a series of articles on EU lobbying – and eventually a career in EU public affairs. I am telling you this because my own development and the evolvement of EurActiv over the past 16 years personalise the story of where EU Public Affairs is coming from and what it is steering towards.

EurActiv has accompanied me throughout my entire career, first as a major source of practical information for my research, then as the platform where I could find the most concise case-study material for university lessons, next as job-seeker, and over time in different capacities as a marketing companion for publications and arguments. And – a major aspect in all networks – on a very personal level with many of EurActiv’s senior managers. And I’m not an atypical case.

Looking back at EurActiv’s service offer in its early days and comparing it with today, I believe that EurActiv has an open secret to success: it understands its readers and the “EU bubble” in particular – and has continuously managed to adapt accordingly.

Here is what you can expect in the following lines: Find out which three values connect Public Affairs work and EurActiv, how they have proven crucial in 1999 as today, and what is needed additionally to move safely to the future of 2020.

1. Substance

The first value I want to share with you is substance. Public Affairs professionals in the EU have been and continue to be information brokers – be they in-house lobbyists, associations, consultants or policymakers. Their professional success depends on how well they know their facts.

EurActiv emerged when the internet started to change the role of Public Affairs professionals from information brokerage to information filtering. The major benefit was twofold: EurActiv provided a concise overview over the most important policy developments at EU level – in a digestible format. Additionally, EurActiv provided something unique and extremely useful: a round-up of stakeholder policy positions for each policy issue – always presenting, but not taking sides.

Additionally, EurActiv has been an early adopter of social media – communication tools that only now conquer EU policymaking and Public Affairs. EurActiv established its presence on Twitter and Facebook in 2008, when the entire Public Affairs community as well as business at large was still wondering whether these tools would influence political communication at all.

Public Affairs officials in 2015 not only need to be fast in getting and filtering information, they need to be good at interpreting the vast amount of information, and focus on the important aspects. What makes EurActiv special today, is that with its social media activities: blogs, opinions, videos, extensive section coverage, and published positions, it offers more and more interpretative voices beyond mere information, and still keeps its concise style and journalistic independence.

2. Transparency

The second value governing Public Affairs is, as paradoxical as it may seem to some readers, transparency. EU lobbying may be hard to understand from the outside – but it is utterly transparent. Why? Because it is so much about information exchange that secrets cannot be kept for long, and it is about credibility that can only be gained if arguments can withstand public scrutiny. Public Affairs professionals, who try to disguise their motives or even present false facts, suffer a major reputational loss and are often out of business. Lies are talked about in EU circles.

Whilst transparency has always played a role, the EU Transparency register has established a new quality level. When created in 2011, many Public Affairs professionals feared the register as a PR tool that would lead to lobby

bashing rather than better information. Four years and a number of improvements later⁵, lobbyists and many related professions register to demonstrate their integrity.

Public Affairs transparency is, in my view, at the very core of EurActiv's commitment to the EU policymaking and public affairs business and shows more than any other aspect the self-understanding of EurActiv. The 360 degree coverage of stakeholder opinions is one aspect of it. The other one is a hidden gem, and I suggest you to have a fresh look at it: the "Public Affairs" section, dealing with lobbying ethics as well as Public Affairs stakeholders, was part of EurActiv from its earliest days.

3. Reciprocity

The third value explains EurActiv's business model and how free-of-charge content has become successful.

Public Affairs has been and continues to be a people and networking business. Networking leads to opportunities for influence – on all sides. Networks work best when they are reciprocal – especially in the EU where paradoxically information and support is so easily available (compared with many other public administrations).

In 1999 as now, Public Affairs professionals gather and inform each other of the latest gossip, trends and developments soft and hard facts that keep lobbyists on top of their jobs. There is no need to pay for such information, and alternative ways are always open and usually faster.

EurActiv never tried to contest this practice – its content was always free - without any fear of the imposition of fees. Consequently, EurActiv was quickly read widely, but everyone wondered what EurActiv's business model was and how the idea of gathering sponsors around policy areas could work out. Well, the proof is here. By accepting how the EU works, EurActiv has early on embraced one of the most successful rules of modern online marketing: give and you get.

Back to 2020 – where next?

⁵ See **Transparency grows alongside EurActiv** by Tom Spencer, founder of ECPA for more details on how EurActiv contributed to a better Transparency Register.

The quick glimpse back to the future of EurActiv and EU Public Affairs leaves many aspects uncovered. When contemplating about the future of 2020, I believe that one additional value will become important: responsibility.

Europe faces a severe backlash of nationalism, and a menacing loss of solidarity between member states. We witnessed humiliating communication processes around Greece's financial collapse with damage to all participants. We currently follow a series of difficult, sensitive, hurtful and even aggressive debates between Member States on how to solve the refugee crisis. Such sentiments certainly always existed, the EU is not an altruistic charity organisation. However, solidarity amongst member states was and is vital for the European experiment.

Lobbyists have always been intermediaries. They have an important role to play in order to avoid communication disasters beyond repair. Public Affairs leaders do not limit themselves to the public policy domains but get involved in big politics. With EurActiv's expansion of its services into 12 languages, is at a formidable place to contribute: no news is neutral news, and it is worthwhile taking a stand by making big politics a focus where it deserves it.

Irina Michalowitz, EU Public Affairs academic and consultant

Words: 1227 words

Tags: Transparency, Reciprocity, Responsibility, public affairs, social media

EurActiv, the independent online EU policy media, deployed its editorial and communication resources to cover the European elections across its multi-lingual media network in 12 EU countries and 12 languages. It did so in the interests of providing non-biased, fact-based public information on the people and policies at the heart of the election campaign.ⁱ

Europe in Crisis

In 2014, it really was different. Europe had been hit by the deepest financial crisis and worst recession since the 1930s’ depression. The Euro was in meltdown, youth unemployment reached an all-time high – a staggering 50% in Greece and Spain – and recovery was painfully slow. People were protesting in the streets at the austerity measures imposed by governments and the reckless risk-taking of the banks.

The role of the European Parliament

The Parliament wanted people to know that they had a voice through their elected representatives in Europe. The tone was important – Europe’s politicians had not got it right. The

campaign needed to acknowledge the crisis but also point to the need to act to solve the challenges facing Europe. In such a context, how to communicate to citizens that by participating in the European elections they had the power to change their lives for the better? The campaign strategy and branding were developed with this very much in mind.

“This time it’s different: now we have more power to decide what happens in Europe.”



European Parliament launches information campaign towards 2014 elections



The strategy was to fire the starting gun for the campaign earlier than previous elections - at the EU State of the Union



address at the European Parliament in Strasbourg (September 2013). The slogan “This time it’s different” was launched to Europe’s media, with a video trailer to set the tone, followed by press briefings to media across the EU.

The role of the media

How to interest the media in the European elections at such a time of turmoil? EurActiv took soundings from its media network, as well as European journalist associations and journalists covering the EU to advise the EP on tools, timing and techniques to target its communication with and through the media. Media surveys and focus groups helped to fine-tune the strategy, ensuring relevance and resonance. Whilst there had been a reluctance from the EP to launch the campaign early, it was acknowledged that communicating to 500 million people across borders needed the media to act as a multiplier. And for that we needed time – time to build the story.

Presidential debates

What else was different? Well, for the first time following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the European political parties put forward candidates for the European Commission President. This linked the electoral outcome to the EU executive, attempting to bring representative democracy a step closer. Televised presidential debates took place in Athens, Brussels, Florence and Maastricht –covered by mainstream media and attracting audiences through TV, print, online and social media. EurActiv covered the debates in a continuous online narrative.

Is media the measure of success?

Ultimately the success of an election campaign is measured by turnout, not media coverage. On the election evening live from the EP in Brussels it was announced (prematurely) that for the first time since European elections in 1979 voter turnout had increased. Unfortunately, after the final votes were counted that turned out to be wishful thinking.

But the campaign did achieve some significant media milestones. The early, targeted media campaign resulted in far more, sustained media coverage than any European election campaign beforeⁱⁱ. For the first time, media were consulted on the best topics, tools and techniques to reach target audiences. Social media also played a larger part in the European elections than before, with Twitter alerts the preferred news tool for journalists, the EP's Facebook page surpassing its target of 1 million friends and the EP piloting online debates between MEPs and stakeholders by video hangout.

Was it really different this time?

From the economic context, political process to the election campaigns, there was a sense that something was different in the 2014 European elections. The European People's Party won the majority of seats in the Parliament and in line with the new process their candidate became President of the European Commission. Direct EU democracy may not be quite there yet, but the seeds have been sown. When the European political parties begin to prepare for the next elections in 2019, including European primaries, we will see just how far they have taken root.

Meanwhile, Greece almost crashed out of the Eurozone, the refugee crisis exploded and nationalism is at heights reminiscent of pre-war years (with significantly more nationalist MEPs in the European Parliament). And as Britain renegotiates its membership of the EU in advance of an in/out referendum there is little sign of the EU solidarity or leadership needed to resolve common issues.

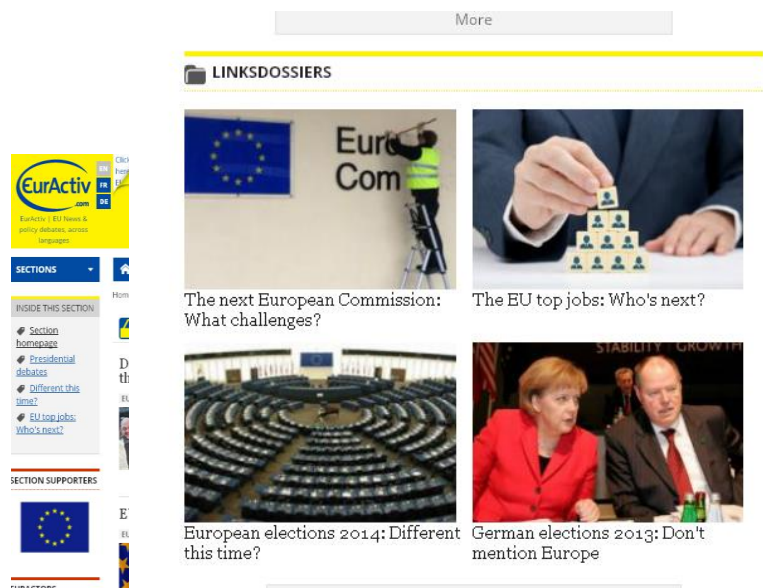
You can be sure EurActiv will be following these developments and reporting to its readers across European countries, cultures and languages.

For details of EurActiv's activities during the 2014 European elections please see the Case Study below. For content and coverage visit the [EurActiv.com](http://www.euractiv.com) website. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014>

ELECTION SECTIONS: independent editorial content and coverage

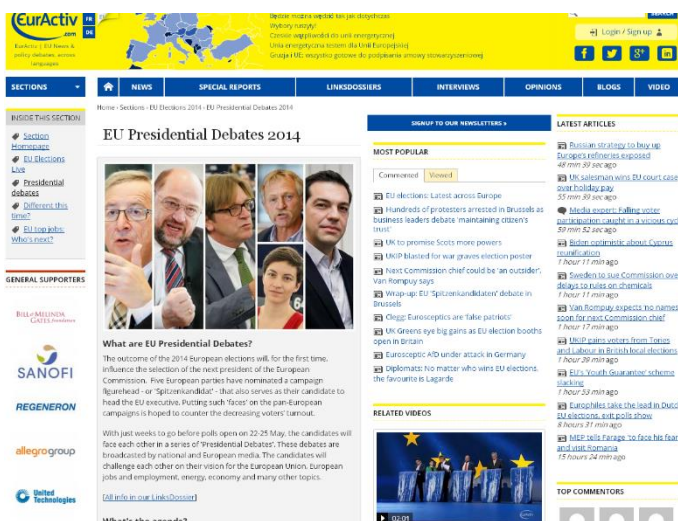
EurActiv accompanied the European elections campaign with independent editorial coverage, not funded by the European Parliament. EurActiv network partners in 11 countries launched in October 2013 an EU Elections section on their media platforms:

- EurActiv.com
- Dnevnik.bg
- EurActiv.cz
- EurActiv.fr
- EurActiv.de
- EurActiv.gr
- EurActiv.it
- EurActiv.pl
- EurActiv.ro
- EurActiv.sk
- EurActiv.es



SUSTAINED COVERAGE:

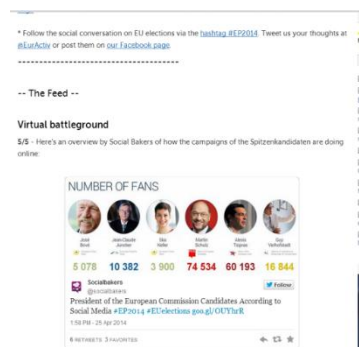
The editorial teams in Brussels and across the network shared editorial planning and stories to ensure that the latest news on the elections was reported across borders, including videos and Links Dossiers. Localised content, in the national language, ensured that European stories had a local angle and local stories included the European context.



PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

EurActiv was an official media partner and present at all 3 of the big televised EU Presidential Debates (Maastricht : 28 April | Florence : 9 May | EP, Brussels 15 May).

We created one continuous storyline using the editorial tool Storify which allowed us to combine social media with editorial content. We also used social media to extend outreach.



ELECTION LIVE COVERAGE

EurActiv editorial teams (Brussels and the network) assured the live coverage of the EU elections with a live Storify, a feed of EP election results (from Sunday 9pm), a filtered #EP2014 Twitter feed, and much more.

EurActiv's live coverage continued through the Election Night and ran until Tuesday 27th of May 2014, with coverage of the informal European Council meeting discussing the election results on Tuesday 27th evening.

EurActiv continued coverage of the new EP, the EU top Jobs (President of the Commission, President of the European Parliament, President of the EU Council, High Representative for Foreign Affairs) and the Parliament hearings for the new EC Commissioners until the instatement of the new European Commission by end 2014.

EurActiv was part of a consortium that won a tender to provide communication services to support the European Parliament's institutional information campaign on the European elections 2014. EurActiv provided strategic media advice and media services to the consortium (see Case Study for details). EurActiv's editorial content and coverage of the elections was independent and not funded by the European Parliament.

According to media monitoring carried out by the European Parliament in the EU 28, EurActiv's coverage significantly increased during the campaign and saw a peak of over 2 million readers.

EurActiv's role in the European Elections 2014

CASE STUDY

EurActiv was the strategic media and dissemination partner of the communications consortium that created the European Election Campaign 2014 for the European Parliament. EurActiv provided media advice and insights, media events and communication support to ensure the campaign was relevant from the media perspective. In parallel, independent editorial content and coverage was provided on 12 EurActiv sites in 12 languages.

COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT

EurActiv led the consortium's pre-campaign assessment of the European Parliament's use of communication tools. This involved an audit of the communication tools and media outreach used by the EP to reach out to target audiences. In addition to an internal assessment involving all EP Information Offices across Europe, external stakeholders and media groups were consulted via online surveys, user groups and stakeholder workshops. Final recommendations were compiled to inform the strategy and planning for the European Elections 2014 communication campaign.

MEDIA STRATEGY & PLANNING

EurActiv was responsible for developing a communications roadmap, which took into account the key political milestones in the pre and post elections phases of the campaign. This was used to inform the phasing and momentum of the election campaign. We also organized national and regional media seminars to inform journalists about the fact that this election would be different, as the result of the elections would determine the next President of the European Commission.

THEMATIC CONTENT & EVENTS

EurActiv network editors also provided strategic advice on national topics of interest for the development of thematic (ReACT) events in particular countries. Five themes were picked and matched with events in a European city:



- Jobs in Paris
- EU in the world in Warsaw
- Money in Frankfurt
- Quality of life in Rome
- Economy in Madrid

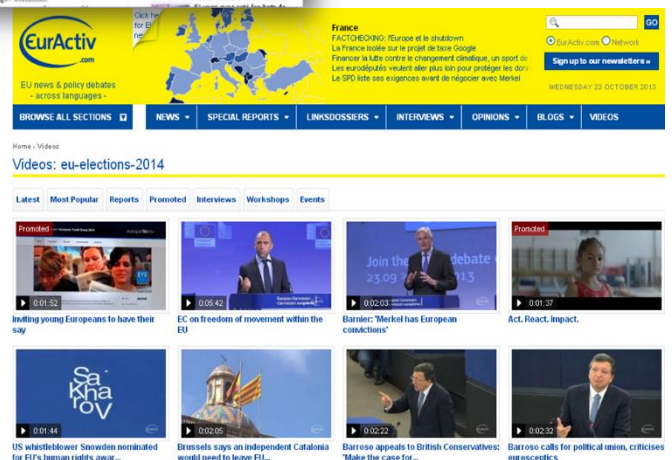
MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS:

EurActiv established several content sharing partnerships around the European Elections with online and print media in France. 20 Minutes (daily, free print and online newspaper reaching several million readers) and Le Huffington Post (online opinion and blogs) agreed to re-publish articles weekly from EurActiv.fr and op eds written by EurActiv journalists and editors. Toute l'Europe also regularly re-published EurActiv.fr election related content in their online newsletters to subscribers.



PARTNERSHIP WITH EUROPARTV

EurActiv disseminated EuroparlTV videos not only on the EurActiv.com website, where the videos were promoted and given maximum visibility, but also on the websites of the EurActiv Network in EU countries. Twice per month an update about new EPTV videos was sent to 10 EurActiv network partners who embedded those (or other editorially relevant Europarl TV videos) in their articles.

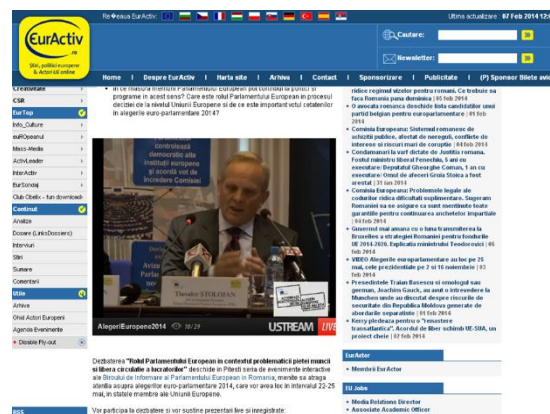


These usually included at least 1 of the thematic videos linked to the elections campaign.

Each partner embedded at least 2 videos per month.

SUPPORT FOR THE EPIOs

EurActiv proposed specific media modules to support the EP Information Offices in EU Member States during the election campaign. EurActiv partners in 11 countries were tasked with supporting the EPIOs with different activities around the European Elections Campaign, such as organization of media seminars (including live-streaming and social media outreach in some cases), identification and invitation of journalists, drafting MEP profiles, fact-checking, facilitating media partnerships, local adaptation of written materials, etc.



In the case of Romania, 4 seminars were live-streamed from major cities and featured on the EurActiv.ro and media partner Hotnews.ro websites, reaching a potential audience of over 2 million viewers. The seminars were attended and reported by news agencies, national, regional and local media.

In Spain, 5 regional media seminars and 4 media briefings were organized in cities across the country. These were attended by journalists from TV, radio, national and regional media who subsequently wrote articles about the upcoming elections. EurActiv supported the Spanish EPIO with both regional outreach and general contact facilitation with leading journalists and opinion leaders, demonstrating direct media impact, combined with indirect media impact through long-term contact facilitation and development for the EPIO itself.



SPEAKERS BUREAU

EurActiv assisted the European Parliament in securing top-level speakers for a series of 6-8 conferences for journalists in Brussels during the period December 2013 – April 2014. Topics included the economy, women and general challenges facing Europe. Thanks to its contacts and network, EurActiv helped the Parliament to create a list of potential speakers, panelists and moderators for the seminars, contacted the people selected by the Parliament and tried to secure the participation of as many relevant speakers as possible. Historians, economists, writers, professors and ex-politicians were contacted. EurActiv.com's editor-in-chief moderated two of the seminars.

This time it's different: a pre-election seminar for journalists

OTHERS Article - Institutions - 06-05-2014 - 08:05

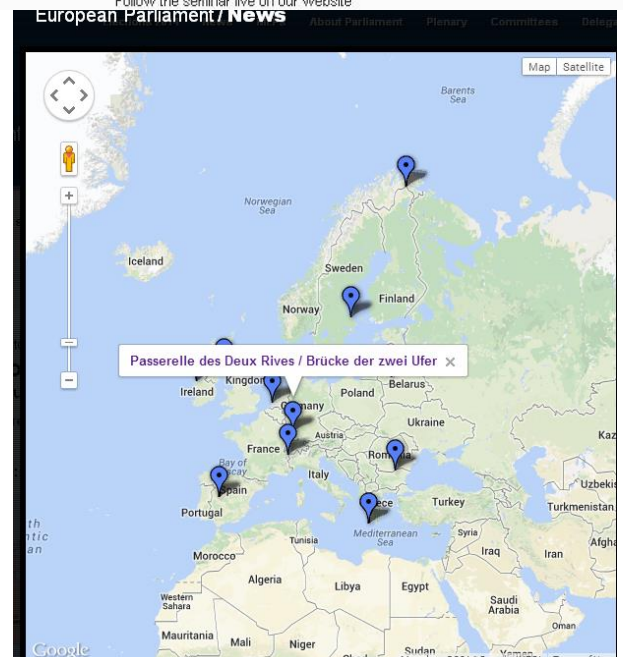


Follow the seminar live on our website

European Parliament / News

FRONTIERS OF THE EU – COMMISSIONING STORIES FOR THE EP WEBSITE

EurActiv commissioned journalists, photographers and audio visual professionals to deliver 14 stories for the Parliament's website from locations representing geographic but also symbolic frontiers of the EU. The stories were sourced and written by freelance and EurActiv journalists and published on the European Parliament website as well as on Foursquare and the EP's Facebook page. They included the northernmost part of the EU in Finland, the highest point in the French Alps, the deepest part of the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Greece, the most westerly point of the EU's fisheries off the coast of Ireland and the furthest point of the EU on a remote island in French Polynesia.



13) Tom Spencer, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs, Brunel University
Transparency & Efficiency grow alongside EurActiv

Abstract:

- Information is the lifeblood of the EU and EurActiv mines it successfully
- Transparency has been and remains a key value at EurActiv
- EurActiv has stretched the European public debate linguistically and done so efficiently

Happy Birthday EurActiv! It is a tribute to EurActiv's current status as an irreplaceable information source that I find it surprising that you are not thirty years old! You deserve our thanks for the sheer courage of coming into existence in the face of technical and political problems.

Information is the life blood of the European Union and EurActiv mines it successfully. It is in Brussels while the media that matter are back in the national capitals. For the British this produced an early bias towards Eurosceptic stories, because they are the only ones that got carried by sub-editors in London. Journalists, however principled, got bored with writing honest copy that was spiked and went nowhere. As the newly elected Chairman of the Conservative MEPs in 1994, I was advised to give a series of interviews to the British press. My first venture was dinner with The Times Europe correspondent. I worked hard to read up on his background and drank no alcohol over supper. Two days later an article appeared in The Times. My arguments had been stood on their head and they even managed to get my name wrong. For the following two weeks I fought a losing battle with the non-existent "Paul" Spencer as readers of The Times responded to the views of my doppelganger. A week later it was the turn of The Financial Times to be lunched in Brussels. I asked him why The Times played such silly games when the FT did not. He explained it entirely in terms of circulation. The FT depended on its international credibility for its profit and therefore had to invest in proper coverage. On the other hand The Times had few readers on the mainland and could afford to play political games with their European coverage. To this day "I read the FT and EurActiv if I want to know the truth", and add "other newspapers, if I want to see what the British people have been told about Europe". This gap will be crucial in the later stages of the UK Referendum. Success will go to those who understand the issues, as expressed on both sides of the Channel.

EurActiv has a robust tradition of neutrality between political parties and national positions of which I approve. However it would be taking balance too far if EurActiv decided to remain neutral on the question of the British leaving the European Union. EurActiv is by its very nature a key to the institutional development of the European Union. To be neutral on Brexit is like a fish being against water.

While it took courage to create and expand EurActiv, we owe the leading role it took with a "**Public Affairs Section**" to Christophe's passion for **transparency**, which dates back to his time at the European Commission. When founding the European Centre for Public Affairs in 1986, I argued that a new political structure such as a European Union operating under Majority Voting would be dependent on the purity of its supply of information.

Information in the right quality, at the right time and in the right form is the true currency of the EU. The co-operation between European Parliamentarians and EurActiv has proved crucial in Parliament's role of improving legislation. Well intentioned pre-consultations by the European Commission have often favoured the views of larger players at the expense of the small, the innovative and the valuable. Despite successive exposés of MEPs' supposed willingness to take money to push specific parliamentary action, the public affairs system that has emerged after fifteen years is remarkably robust. The ECPA worked because big public affairs players did not want to be subverted by cowboys. **EurActiv resolutely pursued the sometimes devious interaction of the Institutions on the question of the Transparency Register.** The current Public Affairs situation may not be perfect, but it would have been a lot worse without EurActiv's intervention and communications.

EurActiv has stretched the concept of Europe geographically, **linguistically** and philosophically. It is as valuable for its detail as for its generalised assertions. There have of course been times when many of us have wondered what on earth EurActiv was banging on about, but this politician turned academic will be for ever grateful for the coffee and conversation with many members of EurActiv over the past fifteen years. Let me pay tribute to the whole EurActiv team, surrounded as they are by bright yellow everywhere and packed into glass boxes. Take heart that your confined conditions can be justified on the grounds of **efficiency**, rather like that of battery hens. Furthermore I am assured that your bright yellow environment does not cause liver damage. I look forward to wishing you all a happy thirtieth birthday.

Tom Spencer, Visiting Professor of Public Affairs, Brunel University

21st October 2015

Words: 827

Tags: transparency, efficiency, languages, public affairs, Transparency Register

14) Slobodan Sibinčič, Secretary General, European Business Press

EurActiv has joined European Business Press as a member only recently but it brought a fresh view on how to do business in the traditional environment of print publications. With its original business model EurActiv paved the way for other business media companies. EurActiv's strength is diversification of the content that is used by a wide target audience and also diversification of the revenue sources, never relying just on one.

Doing so EurActiv always maintains high quality and high value added content and services for its clients.

Slobodan Sibinčič

Secretary General, European Business Press

Words: 85

Tags: 'original business model' 'diversification of content', 'diversification of revenues' quality, 'value-added content'

15) Sir Graham Watson, former Member of the European Parliament

This Time It's Different: European elections 2014

EurActiv is a key player on the European media scene. It informs and educates, providing a valuable tool to policy makers and observers alike in twelve languages. EurActiv also identifies the tough policy choices to be made and provides a forum for democratic debate. I have found its journalistic standards to be high and its analysis sharp. I am happy to provide this testimonial to EurActiv's core values and high standards over past decades, long may they continue.

In 2014, EurActiv again played a vital part in the debates around the European polls held across 28 countries. Editorial content and coverage of the elections was provided by EurActiv. European elections, held every five years, are a vital pillar of European democracy. Without a free and independent media sector democracy cannot survive."

Sir Graham Watson, former MEP 1994-2014 & President of ALDE since 2014.

Words: 131



Efficiency

16) Susan Danger, Amacham EU

17) Caroline Jenner, CEO, Junior Achievement Europe

EurActiv can debate topics that need to be heard but are often ignored

Written Interview

How do you see EurActiv, the media, helping leading executives improving their efficiency of monitoring and influencing EU affairs?[CJ] *I think that what leaders are looking for is, yes, an efficient tool, but also a trustworthy one that they know is bringing a truly diverse landscape of perspectives together on a daily basis. Knowing that EurActiv is drawing upon its on-the-ground network in so many countries and its partnerships with other media partners only reinforces EurActiv's reliability as the go-to platform for monitoring and influencing EU affairs.*

Are there any innovations that EurActiv can introduce and promote that would assist the business community further?[CJ] *EurActiv has an established community of readers and followers that is growing. The way EurActiv interacts with its community could be enriched so that it is much more dynamic and two-way. As there are different target audiences, the strategies could be multiple and differentiated. EurActiv is already leading in leveraging digital—the step towards making the most of its online community seems the next frontier.*

Can one make Europe more exciting in terms of media coverage? How might it work?[CJ]. *Providing 'both sides of the story' is not the same as initiating active debate. EurActiv can certainly play a bigger role in this. For example, EurActiv can debate specific topics that need to be heard—but are often ignored by mainstream media.*

Caroline Jenner,
CEO, Junior Achievement Europe

Words: 120

Tags: Efficiency, EU affairs, community, digital, debate

Euro Crisis & Network Cooperation: Greek case-study

DECIDE whether to box 3 case studies separately from other contributions

During the multidimensional crisis on a political and economic level, EurActiv Greece's main objective was to provide a balanced reporting, by closely cooperating and exchanging views with other national sections, especially from Germany and Brussels-based EurActiv.com.

The euro crisis and a possible Grexit caused a high level confusion to Greek readers.

Various reports in the EU and national press provided different information on the issue (sometimes misleading) and as a result, many readers started suspiciously seeing the reports of the foreign press.

EurActiv's model granted a great opportunity to take advantage of a whole network and provide specific and reliable information.

German cooperation

EurActiv Greece was in close contact with EurActiv in Berlin exchanging views and content regarding the crisis, as the relations between Greece and Germany reached a record low.

The biased approach of the national media resulted in an unjustifiable serious crisis between the two societies, with sometimes hate speech dominating in the headlines.

Our goal was to get over this prejudice and the political games of specific cycles, and try to cooperate with our EurActiv colleagues across Europe.

Sometimes, some [joint](#) articles were written.

French cooperation

The same happened with EurActiv France, as Paris played a crucial role during the negotiations:

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/euro-finance/french-industry-push-investment-shock-athens-318111>

The outcome of this cooperation was that when Greek readers were seeing an article jointly written by EurActiv Greece and Germany, they felt more confident about its content and the information provided.

Brussels cooperation

Responding to EurActiv's value of objective and reliable reporting, EurActiv Greece was constantly consulting with the editorial team in Brussels.

EA.com journalists were in direct contact with EU officials close to the bailout negotiations, and as a result, they were providing EurActiv Greece with the feedback they were getting.

In Athens, we tried to filter the news coming from government officials as well as the reports of the Greek press.

Before we wrote an article, we always verified the information we had with our colleagues in Brussels.

It was a challenging task, as we tried to keep a balanced reporting and simultaneously, provide Greek readers with reliable and trustful information.

Plenty of EurActiv Greece's articles went viral in the Greek press. Surprisingly, the crisis helped EurActiv Greece to enhance its reputation and at the same time, ensure its presence in the EU media "closed circle" of Greece.

Almost all of our predictions, based on the close cooperation with our EurActiv colleagues, were at the end confirmed, something that was widely recognized by Greek readers.

Dispassionate reporting on Grexit

A characteristic example of EurActiv Greece's dispassionate reporting on Grexit was the "Katainen's" case.

While the Greek media was reporting that the Commission would not cooperate with a leftist government and that a Grexit was approaching, EurActiv Greece tried to keep its distance from these scenarios and see the actual facts.

We didn't try to show the "bright side of the things" but on the contrary, present the facts, host the opinions of all stakeholders, and let the reader make independent judgment of the reality.

Just before the general elections in Greece, Commission Vice President Jyrki Katainen told EurActiv Greece in Strasbourg that the EU executive "will respect democracy and is ready to cooperate with any government in Greece".

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/elections/first-attempt-elect-stavros-dimas-president-greece-fails-310922>

This article not only made EurActiv Greece quite famous in Greece, but at the same time it changed the content of the political debate in Athens.

It was breaking news in Greek mainstream TV media as well as a headline in the mainstream newspapers and news websites.

Regarding the big issues of the Greek political/economic scene, what we managed to achieve is people saying "let's see what EurActiv says on the issue", which is quite crucial for our ultimate goal to build up trust with our readers.

Our intention is to further develop our cooperation with the national sections of EurActiv across Europe.

We believe it's the only way to respond to the mid-term challenge of EU readers: To find reliable sources of information in a fragile EU media scene.

Nikos Lampropoulos

Founder EurActiv.gr

Words: 668

Tags: Efficiency, Media Independence, Transparency

EurActiv's media innovation pipeline

There's never been a better time to innovate in media, so it's good to be back to EurActiv.

Eight years ago I helped launch BlogActiv, before leaving for the world of EU communications agencies. Give or take a month or two, my short stint fell in the middle of EurActiv's 15 years of life so far. It's good to be back, albeit part-time, to help the Media Innovation team with the next stage in EurActiv's evolution.

Because once you look back, it's actually quite a story.

Not fitting the mould

Personally I think EurActiv gets a raw deal from some in Brussels, a city where most people find it much easier to criticise someone else than actually do something themselves.

After all, for any observer of online media *or* EU affairs these past 15 years, EurActiv just doesn't fit. Consider:

- it's that rarest of objects: an EC-funded project that resulted in a self-sustaining, successful business. Most don't.
- and not just any sort of business: an *online media* business, born in the first dotcom, which survived the first dotcom crash. Most didn't.
- and not just any online media business – an *EU-focused* media business. Few survive.
- and not just one business – while EurActiv.com is produced in three languages by teams in four capitals, there's also a network of franchises in ten more countries, each covering EU affairs from their national perspective, in their national language.

Together, the EurActiv network provides free access to localised news and opinion on EU affairs in 12 languages. Would anyone care to estimate how much it would cost the EU Commission to do that by outsourcing it via a communications project?

Digital native

To understand how it got here, you first need to consider how the online media landscape has changed since 2000.

Back then, legacy media were still outsourcing their websites as they struggled with the upcoming revenue plunge a few of them could dimly see approaching. But they still had no idea just how bad things were going to get.

In parallel, a bewildering array of content start-ups were busily burning through venture capital as if it would never stop. But it did – those start-ups are now a distant memory.

Today, the legacy media that survived have fully digitised their newsrooms, upended their processes, created new content forms, adapted to social media and incorporated native advertising. All of that ... to face their fifth (or is it sixth?) existential threat in the form of programmatic advertising, mobile uptake and ad blockers. There will doubtless be more.

Watching their struggles, a new generation of digital native media emerged a few years ago: BuzzFeed, Vox, Upworthy, Quartz, Vice, Circa and more are (or were) *technology companies that do news*, rather than news organisations using technology. After revolutionising everything from business model to technology, they have raised hundreds of millions in venture capital to expand globally.

Finding its own path

EurActiv followed a different path. As a dotcom content start-up, it created a business/editorial model that now looks conservative compared to the brand journalism focus of many of today's digital natives. Moreover, it expanded internationally without venture capital to become a unique niche player with on average over 660k monthly unique visitors across its network.

I've spent a grand total of 6 months working at EurActiv, so I'm not well placed to say how they did this, but I do know how it feels to walk back into the office after eight years away.

It still feels like a dotcom start-up. There's still that buzz from the news- and translation desks, and the constant to-and-fro between them and the IT team sitting next to them. There are still tiny rooms for stand-up meetings, weekly team stand-ups every Monday, and a steady programme of events and workshops with members who pay to be part of the EurActiv club – something other news operations have only just started doing. There's still a big bowl of fruit at the entrance and team photos in the kitchen. Everything's still bright yellow.

But in many ways it doesn't feel like a 'normal' stand-up. There is no table tennis, beanbags or pinball machines. No beer in the fridge or cuddly toys. People may have stock or stock options, but there's no sense of getting rich quick by building the next Uber for pet-minders.

Instead, they're thinking about the next innovation in news.

Innovation pipeline

Because if there's an answer to the place, it's that innovation was baked into the culture from Day One.

Well before I joined they had already created a site using XML-based content management, and have migrated to open source, and obsessively improved interface and design, several times since I left.

BlogActiv was first piloted as a separate blogging platform – today we'd have called it a Minimum Viable Product, but this was 2007, not 2011. It worked, has been integrated more and more into the main site in successive redesigns, and now generates an average of ?? new posts per week.

And today, via EC-funded research, EurActiv is piloting new concepts [in Data Journalism] like EurActory and PolicyLine, which will – if successful – be integrated into the main site in turn.

EurActiv, in other words, has an innovation pipeline that is less about venture capital and more about culture. I don't know what's next, but it's good to be back.

Mathew Lowry,

Fresh Integral Communications / Cohereal

Words: 888 words

Tags: Efficiency, Media, Innovation, digital, culture, multilingual

INSERT in a SIDE BOX – may need re-drafting and would be strengthened with a strong endorsement, otherwise DELETE

In 2016, the EurActiv JobSite will turn 10. Over the past decade, it has become one of the leading job boards for EU policy, public affairs and communications. Just like EurActiv.com, the JobSite looks beyond Brussels for a truly pan-European focus – publishing multilingual vacancies from across the continent. With 45.000 readers visiting every month, it's safe to say the JobSite has established as a cornerstone of the EU job market. Young European professionals consider the EurActiv JobSite as the go-to site to look for new, exciting opportunities that may change their career.

Through the years, the JobSite has also built up a loyal and dynamic social media community, with more than 30.000 fans on Facebook, and almost 6.000 Twitter followers. Twice a week, 35.000 subscribers receive the latest vacancies thanks to the This impressive readership has naturally attracted the attention of both private and public organisations, who use the JobSite to promote their vacancies, as well as to establish their To celebrate its first ten years, the JobSite is being redesigned to match the new visual identity of EurActiv.com. The JobSite is looking to expand its services and find innovative ways to connect companies and job-seekers, both online and offline. Corporate Sponsorship is an exciting opportunity set to appear on Jobsite in 2016.

Here's to another decade of helping people find the careers they dream about!

Sophie Rasbash

Words 226

21) Florence Rason, Director of Communications, FoodDrinkEurope

Brussels' "Je t'aime, moi non plus" love story with the media

The Efficiency of Brussels-based media relations is a long-standing topic of conversation in European circles. How to best reach out to the various media, whether traditional or online, and most of all make sure that by doing so you will reach out to your key target groups. Often an uphill struggle for decision-makers and interest groups...

The Brussels bubble seems relatively sheltered from revolutions, it works more in evolutions. Media are taken at a different pace, they are generally looked at sceptically before being tried, adopted more or less reluctantly and then used extensively. Changes do not happen overnight.

One of Brussels' other peculiarities is that things here are clearly focused on advocacy, on sharing ideas, opinions and positions, and on trying to convince: call it corporate diplomacy, activism, lobbying or representation of interests... No matter what name you give to your approach, the media in Brussels are expected to play more of an advocacy role than anywhere else. To support this, digital advocacy is on the rise, to match the increasing number of online media and users.

Using traditional media however, has always proven rather difficult for pressure groups based in Brussels. Understandably, editors back home prefer the national angle to the Brussels one in any story. And Europe as such, is often a difficult subject to sell to the average reader. Brussels therefore seems to have developed its own media scene, where on the one hand online media like EurActiv have developed their own approach to European issues, with analysis, various language versions, a focus on videos and interviews or a link with other capitals. The online aspect has proven crucial in keeping a substantial share of the market compared to older print-based Brussels information tools which used to be the daily must-read and have now vanished from the media scene. On the other hand, Brussels-based organisations, companies, associations, consultants and think tanks have, in a way, become media owners. They aim to help shape discussions, without any intermediary and often without any filter but their own. They use owned, paid or social media to reach their goal more or less successfully.

Because targeting is of course key.

The development of social media was not a snap of the finger episode amongst interest groups generally speaking, who took their time to embark on the online adventure, but now they are all tweeting, profiling themselves on LinkedIn and in some cases even proselytising on Facebook! Other social media will eventually follow, despite the reluctance of some players. It is interesting to note however, that a lot of interest groups have started their digital advocacy approach only as an answer to the initiatives taken by policy-makers (often members of the European Parliament). They rarely were leaders. Following that example however, all wannabe influencers now follow and engage with their target groups.

Targeting is the big challenge in an environment like Brussels, where everyone is trying to catch the attention of specific people, to shape the debate and have their voice heard. There is no such thing as targeting the "Under 50 housewife" group of several millions. We are talking individuals: targeting means that you carefully select the listeners/readers who will be impacted by your arguments, those whom you know will listen to you for various reasons. Powerful supporters. Potential multipliers.

This is how organisations and key players in general, seek to establish their presence, show their importance and their relevance.

How does this fit in with the next generation of policy-makers and influence seekers? In parallel with the evolutions mentioned above, we are also witnessing a gradual shift to images (as we already see with the increasing use of infographics and videos). The younger generation predominantly uses YouTube as a search engine. The information we consume has to be not just fast but quickly digestible so we can move on rapidly to the next item. Tomorrow's decision-makers and interest groups will embrace these rules. They will demand synthetic and to-the-point information material, not just substantiated by figures but also supported by ethics and a degree of emotion. Communications and media relations are shifting more and more to the human dimension. Out go the big figures, statistics, turnovers, etc. and in come the people, the personal stories, the sustainable aspects of policy-making and decision-taking. Spinning is out and bonding is in.

So going from a general to a personal approach, targeting and distributing contents directly means that decision-makers and interest groups will reach European policy-makers more spontaneously and more rapidly, with direct arguments. It also means that they will be more directly accountable for what they publish in the media they own or pay for. But will online exchanges of opinions or one-sided advocacy really improve the debate or convince anyone? Can it replace a neutral analysis of arguments by a third party, a journalist for instance, to help readers understand issues and exercise their better judgement?

Florence Ranson

Director of Communications, FoodDrinkEurope

Words: 827

Tags: Efficiency, advocacy, online media, social media, digital advocacy, images,

22) Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission

The best way to foster trust between politicians and citizens is by making informed decisions through dialogue. We, EU policy-makers, must listen to people's concerns and aspirations; we have to consider the social, economic and political impact of our decisions in all Member States and across different sectors and societies. The European Commission is indeed committed to consulting as widely as possible: involving a broad range of stakeholders from NGOs and citizens to regional and national governments; businesses and industry. This is a transparent process and the results are publicly available. And yet, we need to do more .

Fortunately, the digital revolution has created new innovative ways to convey messages to decision-makers. I therefore welcome EurActiv's work in fostering new exchanges, therefore promoting and supporting the EU transparency measures.

I always encourage EU citizens to engage in EU policy-making and EurActiv is a great place to start!

23) Tony Venables, Founder and Director European Citizen Action Service

Listening to citizens

Challenges of including citizens who feel excluded

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to EurActiv for its unbroken record of daily European news, its ability to package issues round institutional processes, whilst bringing in the stakeholders as well and making sense of an increasingly confusing decision-making process. On countless occasions when planning activities, someone asks “should we contact EurActiv?” The organisation has also been very involved in the debate about how the EU can communicate better and has developed innovative next steps, like the EU community project. No serious EU actor can afford to ignore EurActiv.

How has the practice of EU public affairs by civil society changed since 2000? Good question! One can only reply with brief highlights:

- The agenda and the territory are much more overcrowded with an inflation of lobbying processes, creating a real challenge both for transparency and for distinctive voices to be heard. Before 2000 there was more space for new ideas whilst now, for example, we see that there is no room, even for European Citizens’ Initiatives (ECIs) to make their mark.

- In 2000 there was momentum with European governance on the agenda, enlargement beckoning and a distant prospect of some constitutional settlement. Quo Vadis now? Europe seems behind the curve of events, forced to react to a succession of crises with short term measures, whereas a sense of European solidarity and common purpose can only emerge round longer term perspectives.

- The re- emergence of nationalism across Europe is far more serious than some extreme manifestations and greatly influences the shift since 2000 from the community method to a more intergovernmental approach. But only the more powerful lobbies are able to intervene, as is now necessary, at different geographical level.

- A real danger in this very uncertain and fragmented environment is that the EU Institutions will become increasingly inward-looking, retreating to a comfort zone of “better regulation” and taking the route of listening primarily to the dictates of the market and trade at the expense of listening to citizens. There is the risk of the EU losing the support of idealistic young people. EurActiv should probably reflect the forces of Euroscepticism and more subterranean movements “out there” and is well placed to do so with its different language versions. But the European debate can only be captured with more journalists on the ground –not just translation-so EurActiv becomes a melting pot of the different highly nationalistic interpretations of decisions which are less and less European- ie EurActiv x 28. More attention will also have to be paid not just to “EU actors” but also to “non-actors” and those who feel increasingly excluded; but how such a frontier could be crossed and daily work to reach the unreachable resourced, is another question.

Tony Venables

Founder and Director European Citizen Action Service 1989-2014

Words: 460

Tags: Efficiency, public affairs, civil society, Euroscepticism

Languages

24) Bernd Hüttemann, Secretary General of European Movement Germany

Glückwunsch, EurActiv! Ihr seid der öffentliche Marktplatz Europas!

Versetzen wir uns kurz zurück in das Jahr 2000. Der befürchtete Millenniums-Crash sämtlicher Computersysteme war ausgeblieben, 9/11 ein ferner Alptraum und der Euro noch nicht in der Tasche. Es gab noch nichtmals ein deutschsprachiges Wikipedia...

Die Enthusiasten in der „Brussels Bubble“ werkten daran, dass die Europäische Gemeinschaft zu einer Union mit neuen Mitgliedern und eigener Währung ausgebaut würde, kaum beachtet von den Menschen in Detmold oder Salamanca – wer schaute denn dort schon EuroNews?! Der paneuropäische Nischen-Sender für Eingeweihte war ein (im Übrigen von den deutschen Sendern ausgebremsster) erster Anlauf, ab 1993 eine „europäische Öffentlichkeit“ jenseits aller Ländergrenzen zu schaffen. Aber die Zahl der Akteure, die sich darum bemühen, hat signifikant zugenommen und schon das gibt 15 Jahre später Anlass zum Optimismus.

Eine Art Initialzündung war die Gründung von EurActiv: „Effizienz und Transparenz der europäischen Akteure“ (Efficacité et transparence des acteurs européens) zu fördern, hatte sich das Team um Christophe Leclercq auf die Fahnen geschrieben. In den Morgenstunden des Internetzeitalters konzipierte es bewusst ein Online-Portal mit Nachrichten über Europa in zehn Sprachen. Kontinuierlich wachsende Nutzerzahlen und immer häufigeres Zitiertwerden in anderen Medien gaben ihnen Recht. Das an altmodische Diplomatie erinnernde Korrespondentensystem löste EurActiv durch Redaktionen in mehreren Ländern ab. Bald war EurActiv breit aufgestellt und folgte damit der Netzwerk-Idee. "Koordinierte Schwarmintelligenz" war im gleichen Zeitraum auch der Ansatz der Europäischen Bewegung Deutschland. Gleiche Zielrichtung, anderer Auftrag. Die EBD schafft Öffentlichkeit für diejenigen gesellschaftlichen Kräfte, die die europäischen Ebene grundsätzlich positiv sehen. Nicht bloß gute Medien gehören zum Pluralismus einer Gesellschaft, sondern auch Verbände und Vereine.

Die EurActiv-Idee muss gut sein, wenn sie kopiert wird. "Eurotopics", "Politico Europe", "dpa Insight EU" um nur ein paar zu nennen ... sie alle zielen nach dem Vorbild von EurActiv auf das Projekt „europäische Öffentlichkeit“ und machen es allein durch ihre Existenz schon ein Stück realistischer. Gut, Kritiker mögen einwenden, dass schon das Sprachproblem in Europa einer „echten“ Öffentlichkeit im Wege steht. Sie mögen auch einwenden, dass Plattformen wie EurActiv bei Lichte besehen hauptsächlich von den ohnehin an Europapolitik Interessierten genutzt werden. Aber ist das auf

nationaler Ebene anders? Wer sich überhaupt nicht für Politik interessiert, greift auch eher zum Kicker als zur FAZ.

Spiegel und Co. mögen Europapolitik immer noch in "Deutschland" und "Ausland" aufteilen. Die Krisen der Globalisierung füllen plötzlich Sondersendungen und Doppelseiten mit EU-Themen. Die gefühlte Relevanz von Europapolitik hat sich in den letzten Jahren vervielfacht. Das ist zwar weniger den neuen Medien zu verdanken als dem Dauer-Krisen-Modus, in dem die EU seit Ausbruch der Finanzkrise 2008 zu stecken scheint. Dennoch ist die mittelfristige Wirkung auf das öffentliche Bewusstsein nicht zu unterschätzen: Die Allgegenwärtigkeit europäischer Akteure und Prozesse tut mehr für die „Europakompetenz“ der Gesellschaft als es zahllose PR-Abteilungen je könnten.

Ein Übriges tun die sozialen Medien und das mobile Internet dazu, dass sich allmählich doch eine internationale, grenzüberschreitende europäische Öffentlichkeit herauskristallisiert. Ein Bundesinnenministerium glaubt noch ohne einen digitalen Kurznachrichtendienst auszukommen. Der Flüchtling nutzt das Smartphone längst als Überlebensstool. So schlägt Twitter bei Eilmeldungen die herkömmlichen Nachrichtenagenturen um Längen. Wer den richtigen Akteuren folgt, bekommt 24/7 eine internationale Presseschau, die mit den Ausschnittdiensten von früher nichts mehr zu tun hat. Politiker

Die Macht der Pressestellen in Ministerien, Parteien und Verbänden und das Monopol der Meinungsführer, Fernsehprofessoren und der Spindoktoren sind endlich gebrochen: Ersetzt werden sie durch ein demokratisches Tool, das den Aktiven und Interessierten Vernetzung und Kontaktaufnahme in Echtzeit erlaubt. Hier liegt eine große Chance für die Europakommunikation – sei es in internationalen Netzwerken wie der Europäischen Bewegung, sei es für „Nachrichten-Broker“ wie EurActiv. Hashtags mögen gewöhnungsbedürftig sein, doch sie bringen Debattenteilnehmer über Sprachgrenzen zusammen, die sich sonst nie über den (virtuellen) Weg laufen würden. Wer diese Kanäle nicht nutzt als moderne „Plakatwand“ (Hallo, wir sind hier, wir haben was zu sagen!), der braucht sich nicht zu wundern, wenn die eigene Botschaft verhallt.

Glückwunsch, EurActiv! Ihr zeigt, dass Internet und Europa genauso zusammengehören, wie Marktplatz und Heimatstadt.

Bernd Hüttemann, Generalsekretär der Europäischen Bewegung Deutschland e.V. @huettemann

TRANSLATION

Congratulations, EurActiv! You are Europe's public market place!

Abstract

- Since 2000 the number of actors working towards a 'European public sphere' has grown significantly
- The EurActiv network rejected the old correspondent system in the early days of the internet. European Movement Germany has a similar goal to EurActiv: publicity for social actors who fundamentally see the European level positively. EurActiv's idea was clearly good because it has been copied (cites other media).
- The perceived relevance of European politics has multiplied in recent years. The presence of European actors does a lot to boost society's knowledge of Europe. Social media and mobile internet also contribute to the creation of a European public sphere.
- Social media presents a great opportunity for groups like EurActiv and European Movement to involve people in debates and break down language barriers.

Let's briefly jump back to the year 2000. The much-feared Millennium Bug had failed to cripple computer systems, the attacks of September 11th were still an as-yet unrealised nightmare and the euro was not quite in the bag. There wasn't even a German-language version of Wikipedia...

Meanwhile, enthusiastic members of the "Brussels bubble" were buzzing about, working towards a European Community that would soon be expanded into a Union with new members and its own currency, barely noticed by the people of Detmold or Salamanca - who was already watching EuroNews then?! The pan-European niche channel for the initiated (which, incidentally, has been an thorn in the side of German broadcasters) was a first attempt in 1993 to create a "European public sphere" which transcended national borders. But the number of actors who endeavoured on increased significantly, which, 15 years later, gave cause for optimism.

The founding of EurActiv served as an inspiration: promoting "Efficiency and transparency of European actors" (Efficacité et transparence des acteurs européens) the team led by Christophe Leclercq took up the cause. Shortly after the dawn of the Internet age, it was conceived as an online portal with news about Europe in ten languages. A constantly growing readership and being ever more frequently quoted by other media vindicated the initiative. It was reminiscent of a classic diplomacy-based correspondent system, undertaken by EurActiv editors in several countries. Soon EurActiv was located across the board, pursuing the idea of a network. This concept of "coordinated collective intelligence" was, over the same period, the approach taken by European Movement Germany (EBD). Same direction, different mission. EBD creates publicity for those social stakeholders that see the European dialogue positively. It is not only the media that belongs to the pluralism of society, but associations and organisations also.

The way the EurActiv model has been copied proves that it is a good idea. "Eurotopics", "Politico Europe", "dpa Insight EU" just to name a few... all destinations along the way for EurActiv in the "European public sphere" project and made all the more realistic by their mere existence. Well, critics may argue that Europe's language problem stands in the way of a "real" public sphere. They also argue that platforms such as EurActiv are just used mainly by those interested in European policy. But is that any different at a national level? People who don't care a jot for politics and want the football scores will browse EuroSport, not the Frankfurter Allgemeine.

Spiegel and co. still want to divide European politics into "Germany" and "abroad". The crises of globalisation suddenly fill special reports and double spreads with EU issues. The perceived relevance of European politics has multiplied rapidly in recent years. Admittedly, this is due less to the arrival of new media, but due more to the permanent crisis-mode in which the EU seems to have been stuck since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008. Nevertheless, the medium-term impact on public awareness should not be underestimated: The omnipresence of European actors and procedures does more for society's "European competence" than countless PR departments ever could.

Thanks to social media and mobile Internet, an international, cross-border European public sphere has gradually emerged. The German Ministry of the Interior still believes that it can get along without a digital short messaging service. Refugees use the Smartphone as a survival tool. Twitter, in terms of breaking news, runs rings around conventional news-agencies. Following the right actors means getting 24/7, around-the-clock international updates, which now has little to do with the cut-out services of yesterday.

The press' power in ministries, political parties and associations, as well as the monopoly of opinion leaders, talking heads and spin doctors is finally broken: it will be replaced by a democratic tool that will allow the active and interested in networking to keep in touch in real time. It is a great opportunity for European communication - be it in international networks such as the European Movement, or with "news brokers" like EurActiv. Hashtags may take a bit of getting used to, but they bring together participants that can debate over language barriers that they would otherwise never have been able to (virtually) overcome. If these channels are not used as a modern "billboard" (Hello, here we are, we have something to say!), don't be surprised if the message fades away.

Congratulations, EurActiv! You have demonstrated that the Internet and Europe belong together, in the same way that the marketplace and city do.

Bernd Hüttemann, Secretary General of European Movement Germany
@huettemann
Words 750 in EN

Tags: Efficiency; Languages; Network; European public-sphere

25) Robert Madelin, Senior innovation adviser, European Commission

Video interview <https://youtu.be/kg0h0dxo7pk>

26) Jonathan Scheele, British Commission official for 38 years

Languages in South-East Europe & Brexit

Even those of us who worked within the EU institutions face a challenge in finding out and understanding what's going on there. And for those outside the Brussels Bubble that challenge is even greater. The need for rapid and up to date information has always been there and, over the decades, approaches to providing it have evolved hugely - from the early days of printed newsheets setting out in excruciating detail only comprehensible to *initiés*, we now see a much more accessible presentation, usable by normal people.

EurActiv was among the first to see – and meet – the need for provision of that information online. Its hard copy predecessors have faded out, and online is now where competitors fight it out.

I became a regular user of EurActiv during a five year posting in Romania in the early noughties. Information about what the EU was doing was at a premium – even for me as an EU official. And coverage in the Romanian media, enthusiastic though it was, was rarely entirely accurate –as is the case in most EU Member States, particularly the one I know best and now live in, the UK.

EurActiv was – and largely remains – unique in offering coverage in Romanian not only of news of what is going on in Brussels, but also of Romanian news that is relevant to the Brussels end of things. A genuine effort at informing the debate on a local basis, in the local language. And this coverage in their language continues in many EU Member States and even beyond: in Turkey and Serbia. It has become a vital tool both for local journalists, who don't have the resources for a Brussels-based correspondent, and for all who need to understand what's going on at the EU level, whether or not they live or work in Brussels.

I continue to receive the daily update now I'm back in the UK and find it a valuable tool. The filtering options mean that I'm not deluged by information, but articles that are of interest show up. And the EurActiv blog updates provide some useful arguments and insights, even where I disagree with them. It will be indispensable in the ongoing debate on Brexit.

Long may EurActiv continue to provide my information!

Jonathan Scheele

British Commission official for 38 years, retiring in 2012.

Senior Member of St Antony's College, Oxford.

[375 words]

Tags: UK, Brexit, Multilingualism, Romania,

EurActiv – Widening Europe, opening minds

I recall discussions in Solvay in 2000 about sponsoring a new, Internet-based news organisation on European affairs, to be called EurActiv. In the early days of on-line media, we were proud to be one of the first sponsors of an organisation that led the way in developing stakeholder dialogue. Back then, we had to explain to people what a stakeholder was – concepts like engagement, dialogue, and participatory governance were new tools being applied in the policy arena (recall the revolutionary White Paper on Governance).

In those early days of Internet information, EurActiv was instrumental in encouraging European stakeholder dialogue with their issue pages providing summaries and links to the various positions. This one-stop approach was novel then and EurActiv can be credited with widening the debates to bring in a multitude of stakeholder viewpoints, many often previously excluded in the less open (backroom) decision-making process. In the early 2000s, EurActiv was the go-to site for anyone needing a good, quick overview of any European topic or debate (and Commission officials often acknowledged that when looking for EU documents, they had more success on the EurActiv site than on the EU [Europa](#) website).

When I was involved in starting up GreenFacts, EurActiv was one of our chief supporters. They stood behind our conviction that the clear communication and understanding of the research and evidence would allow for a more rational, open debate on the issues. Much of GreenFacts' success today as the communications platform for many EU studies and publications has to do with its early alliance with EurActiv in bringing better, open access to evidence into European discussions.

As Europe evolved and grew from 15 to 27, so did EurActiv. Once again the site widened Europe, first from English to French and German languages and then to bringing Brussels to all of the capitals of the Acquis countries. EU issues and the culture within the Bubble were exported eastwards via the EurActiv country sites and with its well-placed country editors not only brought Brussels to a wider audience but also gave Brussels the means to hear other views well beyond the confines of Place Schuman.

As social media tools spread and views narrowed into silos of confirmation bias and name-calling, EurActiv again reinforced its position as the place to open minds and widen debate on European issues. On my own space on BlogActiv, The Risk-Monger, the editors stood by me as EU officials in Copenhagen demanded that embarrassing information be removed or when exposed scientists threatened to sue EurActiv if I did not take down damning evidence from my blogs. This steadfast support I received from EurActiv is part of their longstanding values of widening the debate and opening minds.

Where will EurActiv be in the next 15 years? As the media landscape changes with more citizen journalists and less professionalism, as the economic model for news content tightens, as policy processes shift towards a new, more socially-direct form of engagement usurping dialogue, as Brussels searches for a clear identity in the shifting sands of Europe, how will EurActiv find its place in the European debates? The spirit of widening Europe and opening minds is more important now than it has ever been and EurActiv needs to keep to these founding values.

David Zaruk

Guru Blogger, academic, friend and supporter of EurActiv since 2000

ANNEXES & ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

15 OF BEST ARTICLES

2001 GE-Honeywell appeal against blocked merger

2002

The Euro Arrives-but where are the British?

<http://www.euractiv.com/euro/euro-arrives-british/article-117061>

2003

The telecom markets in 2003

<http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/telecom-markets-2003/article-110399>

2004

1 May 2004 confirmed as date for EU enlargement

<http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/1-may-2004-confirmed-date-eu-enlargement/article-111114>

2005

Disappointment in yes camp after 'non' to Constitution

2006

Commission struggles with services directive

<http://www.euractiv.com/innovation/commission-struggles-services-directive/article-111114>

2007

Analysis: Elements of the EU communication white paper

2008

The European Pact on Immigration and Asylum

<http://www.euractiv.com/social/europe/european-pact-immigration-asylum/article-175489>

EurActiv

2009

EU renewable energy policy

<http://www.euractiv.com/energy/eu-renewable-energy-policy/article-117536#>

2010

Euro 5 emissions standards for cars

<http://www.euractiv.com/transport/euro-5-emissions-standards-cars-linksdossier/article-117536#>

2011 Radiation risks from Fukushima 'no longer negligible'

2013 Chief EU scientist backs damning report urging GMO 'rethink'

<http://www.euractiv.com/science-policy-making/c>

2015 EU leaders to declare: 'We cannot take more migrants'

www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/eu-leaders-will-say-we-cannot-take-migrants-314027



12-15 BEST INTERVIEWS



Eg

5 – 10 OF BEST BLOG POSTS

SERIES OF TEAM PHOTOS

NETWORK MAPS



ⁱ EurActiv was part of a consortium that won a tender to provide communication services to support the European Parliament's institutional information campaign on the European elections 2014. EurActiv provided strategic media advice and media services to the consortium (see Case Study for details). EurActiv's editorial content and coverage of the elections was independent and not funded by the European Parliament.

ⁱⁱ According to media monitoring carried out by the European Parliament in the EU 28. As an indication, EurActiv's coverage significantly increased during the campaign and saw a peak of over 2 million readers.