

## Preface

The book shows the result of an effort by the Euromedia Research Group to reach an understanding of current and relevant developments in relation to European media policy. *Power, Performance & Politics* describes the dominant forces leading to certain patterns of development in the European Media landscape. This modular textbook is designed primarily for undergraduate unit courses on media and communications courses and follows on the three books *Media Policy: Convergence, Concentration & Commerce (1998)*, *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe (1992)* and *New Media Politics: Comparative Perspectives in Western Europe (1986)*. The initial focus of the Group on policy for new electronic media has been extended to the press and attention is no longer confined to Western Europe. The new book provides a comparative and integrative analysis of the processes of change in the European media landscape in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, rather than a country-by-country assessment of static and dynamic structures, elements and events in a single country. Therefore, the book opens with an overview of recent trends in European media policy by Vibeke G. Petersen & Mario Hirsch.

Certain aspects of the development of the media required an extension of the perspective. This include the emergence of online media – outlined by Josef Trappel – and the crises of the traditional press, described by Els de Bens, together with the implications of commercialisation and transnationalisation. It would, however, be inadequate to concentrate only on the evolution of commercial television (described by Rosario de Mateo & Laura Bergés), digital television (Hans Kleinsteuber), daily free sheets, and mobile content providers (Bernt S. Ostergaard). Such an approach would overstate the dynamic factors. For a complete picture, changes of established structures have to be taken into consideration. Public service broadcasting, as shown by Olof Hultén, played a pivotal role over the last two decades in many European countries and manages to position itself within the rapidly changing environment.

Moreover, well known lines of media development such as commercialisation, transnationalisation and concentration may not be ignored. The social-science oriented authors of the book try to develop a line of argument towards new models and perspectives for these problems. Denis McQuail suggests a revisited conception of diversity as a central principle of media policy, Jeremy Tunstall points to the revitalised media nationalism and Werner A. Meier shows why and how the state and the economy have advanced rather than restricted media concentration over the last decades. He suggests new media policy initiatives by the civil society and by media companies themselves. Finally, Kees Brants raises the fundamental question of whether market conditions enable traditional and new media to contribute to the requirements of democracy, namely providing information and a platform for voicing and exchanging of ideas, critically controlling power-holders, and guaranteeing a diversity of opinions for the citizenry.

The book is written by scholars from all over Europe and represents a diversity of views on current media developments. The book as a whole was planned and discussed by the Group although chapters are the responsibility of individual authors. All chapters are new and original contributions.

The Euromedia research group is a network of media social scientists from seventeen European countries. This network of European researchers that began life in 1982 as a workshop on media policy was convened by Karen Siune of Arhus University, within the framework of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). Since then it has continued on its own initiative, changing in membership over time, but having the same working methods and purposes. It aims to collect and exchange information and to develop and apply frameworks that help to describe and analyse developments in media structure and policy in the European region.

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