

# Preface

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In 1986, the Euromedia Research Group published its first two books, *New Media Politics* (Sage) and the *Handbook* on European media systems (Campus). They were the first tangible products of a group of scholars who met for the first time in 1982. In November 2014, the Euromedia Research Group gathered for its 56<sup>th</sup> meeting, finalizing its 13<sup>th</sup> book in a series of books reflecting upon the transformations of mass media and public communication. What unites these scholars is their consistent interest in how media and communication policy acts and should re-act in response to these transformations.

The latest book is on *Media in Crisis*, and its various implications on values and risks for society. This issue fits well into the long term perspective of the Group which observed and experienced an exciting array of what has been called innovations during these more than 30 years. Cable and satellite television, digitalization of all formats of communication, personal computers and, finally, the internet, the world wide web and social media have demanded and provoked critical appraisal and reflections.

It has proved a suitable cycle to meet twice a year. In these meetings, group members inform one another on recent developments in the countries they know best, followed by reports on their individual or collective research efforts. Most interesting and stimulating, however, are the subsequent debates on research papers, often preliminary versions of book chapters. Contrary to blind peer-reviews by mostly anonymous scholars, the Euromedia Research Group developed a culture of open and constructive criticism. Such critique is by no means less direct than in any blind peer-review process. But it has the advantage of offering the option of starting a debate or conversation. Often, this process uncovers unknown knowledge – if not wisdom – by Group members and frequently teams of book chapter authors changed subsequent to the exchange of opinions, with critics joining as authors.

Thereby, writing a book becomes a true Group exercise. No chapter finds its way into our books without being discussed time and again. All meeting participants contribute their fair share to each chapter, in accordance with their specific field of competence. As a result, most chapters have more than one author, and some authors contribute to more than one chapter. This line-up of authorship reflects the interactive way of working within the Euromedia Research Group.

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To us, the members of the Euromedia Research Group, the book is the manifestation of our debates over several years. And to our readers, we hope, the book is inspiration for further reflection.

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