

AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA IN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS

ARMAGAN EMRE CAKIR

Introduction

The role of the media in the process of European integration is more important than ever. The Union is establishing new mechanisms and improving the existing ones to ensure transparency and democracy rendering public opinion and preferences more influential; citizens' need for information is increasing as the Union includes more items in its agenda; and the peoples of the new Member States require to be regularly informed about the Union. Not only Europeans but also citizens of the neighbouring countries are observant of the goings on in the Union.

Approximately 90 percent of the Europeans say that they do have an interest in issues related to the European Union, and that the most popular sources of information for them are television, radio and daily newspapers compared to discussions with friends, relatives or colleagues, or to the Internet. Yet, when it comes to the evaluation of the objectivity of the coverage of the EU affairs by the media, only around 40 percent of the EU citizens feel that "the coverage of the EU by their national media [is] objective".¹ Similarly, the prevailing impression present in both academic² and non-academic sources is that the media's approach is not very conducive to European integration. In the contribution he submitted to *European Voice* Ronald Vopel, a reader, criticizes the European media acrimoniously, arguing that

... it can no longer be ignored that much of the blame for the re-nationalization of the European debate rests with the media [...] Currently, the European press serves their national audiences and obviously finds it appropriate to press the nationalistic buttons, because it is easy and it

¹ Statistical information taken from (European Commission, 2004a: 18).

² For academic works see *inter alia* (Semetko, de Vreese and Peter: 2004).

works. From a wider perspective, this approach is not only unprofessional, but highly dangerous. I have stopped expecting credible intellectual efforts from journalists and I can only shake my head when I hear their questions and see their articles - primitive would be too friendly a word in most cases. But, as citizens, they should be able to understand that the cancer of nationalism is still there and that one day an issue will come up that again polarizes the European people, with incalculable risks. Unfortunately, it would take journalists to expose the utter irresponsibility of their own profession, and I am not expecting too much in this regard.³

Euro-Mediterranean relations is an area where the need for a trustworthy and contributive attitude of the media is substantial. Ambassador Miguel Moratinos who was the Special Representative of the Union for the Middle East Peace Process between the years 1996 and 2003 once told that "in a region [namely the Middle East] where words remain of paramount importance the media are more than ever a vital instrument for peace"⁴ The media is expected to inform the peoples of European and Mediterranean countries alike, and support the positive efforts of peace and development in the Mediterranean basin. This requires the organized operation of the actors of the media preferably under the umbrella of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The present article starts with a theoretical section about the agenda-setting power of the media. In the next section, examples of regional media arrangements by BSEC and NATO are given for the purpose of comparison. The third section introduces a record of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in organizing programmes related to the media. The last section, presents the results of a survey conducted for the article among journalists.

³ Vopel, 2004: 6.

⁴ Turner, 1998: 4. It is useful to remember that the official view of the Union is that "(t)he Middle East Peace Process is separate from, but complementary to the Barcelona Process". (European Commission, 2004c).

Agenda-Setting Power of the Media

Recent years in media studies have witnessed the rise of a new approach called ‘agenda-setting’. The idea that the media shapes the public agenda had been put forward quite early in the literature: as early as 1922 in his work entitled *Public Opinion* Walter Lippmann was underlining the fact that most of our information about our environment is not the result of our direct experience but conveyed in indirect ways such as the media, and that this information is only composed of ‘pictures’.⁵ In 1963 Bernard Cohen published a book drawing on the idea that the success of the media in telling us what to think may be disputable, but the media is quite successful in telling us what to think about.⁶ Donald L. Shaw and Maxwell E. McCombs who coined the term ‘agenda-setting’ defined it as a function of mass media to influence the relative importance of our attitudes on issues.⁷

Media performs this function of agenda setting by acting as a gatekeeper; messages to be received by an individual are filtered by the media. Some messages are allowed to pass while some others are retained. This rather hypothetical statement got empirical support from field studies. The first of these came from Shaw and McCombs themselves: they examined the importance attributed to the topics covered in the campaigns in the 1968 Presidential Election in the USA. They found a high correlation (+.976) between the topics seen important by the voters, and topics shown important by the media. On the other hand, all the three candidates had emphasised these topics somehow differently than the media.⁸

Literature on the agenda-setting is, however, heavily US-centred; most of the 357 carried out between the years 1972 and 1994 originated from that country. And those that were realized in Europe focused on individual countries. For example, Brosius and Keplinger examined the case in Germany, Siure and Borre studied

⁵ Cit. in (Lippmann, 1977).

⁶ Cohen, 1963.

⁷ McCombs and Shaw, 1972: 177.

⁸ Yuksel, 2001: 36-41.

the Danish media, and Asp chose to work on the case in Sweden.⁹ Though few, there did appear studies that went beyond this. Peter's study¹⁰ for example did not take the EU level into consideration but at least had "a cross-national comparative perspective" examining "whether the amount of European Union (EU) coverage in television news affected the extent to which EU citizens perceived European integration to be important".¹¹

The need for studies that will go beyond the comparative level and pay attention to the EU is obvious. Independent transnational actors as well as those of the EU itself should also be taken into consideration as dependent and independent variables. It is not the aim of the present article to introduce a 'European model' of agenda-setting power of the media.

For comparative purposes, shortly examining the place of the mass media in the functioning of two international organisations, BSEC and NATO may be illustrative.

The Black Sea Economic Co-operation Organisation (BSEC)

The Black Sea Economic Co-operation organization was set up in Istanbul on 25 June 1992 by the following 11 countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova and Romania. On 16 April 2004, the number of the member countries rose to 12 with the admission of Serbia and Montenegro. The aim of the BSEC is establishment of BSEC-wide security, stability and prosperity via regional economic co-operation.¹²

⁹ *Ibid.* See also Walgrave *et al's* study which gives a comparative table of important studies in the literature.

¹⁰ Peter, 2003.

¹¹ Findings of Peter's study are interesting though: "More EU coverage did not automatically increase the perceived importance of European integration. The occurrence of the agenda-setting pattern rather depended on the nature of elite opinion. The more EU stories people watched in countries in which political elites disagreed about European integration, the more important they considered European integration. If elite opinion about European integration was consensual, this pattern did not occur." p. 683.

¹² For more information on BSEC, see (BSEC, 2004).

BSEC attributes importance to the role of the mass media in achieving its aims. The Parliamentary Assembly's *Recommendation 47/2000 on the Role of the Mass Media in Promoting Co-operation in the Black Sea Region* basically emphasizes the function of the mass media in creation and development of a democratic society in the Black Sea region. To foster the co-operation in the field of mass media co-operation in particular, the Recommendation calls the Parliaments and Governments of the BSEC Member States to take a series of actions extending from calling upon "the specialised committees on mass media of the national parliaments to evaluate the present coverage by the print media and television of the Black Sea cooperation process and to take appropriate measures with the view of enhancing the contribution by the mass media to developing further on the multilateral cooperation in the Black Sea region" to encouraging "specialisation of journalists in the political, economic, social and cultural affairs of the BSEC region, to facilitate mutual visits of the journalists interested in the Black Sea region, as well as their participation in the meetings of the BSEC, PABSEC¹³ and other related bodies". The Recommendation attributes special importance to television and says that "(t)elelevision is the most important source of information for the majority of audience of the Black Sea region" (p. 35). In this framework, the Recommendation records that

... the Romanian PABSEC delegation proposed to organise a meeting of heads of national public/state televisions from the BSEC Member Countries under the auspices of the PABSEC. This meeting could discuss the institutional framework of future cooperation. The Romanian Television Society (SRTV) has confirmed its readiness to host this meeting in Bucharest in the first half of May 2001.

¹³ Acronym for the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation.

This meeting was indeed held on 16 and 17 May 2001 in Bucharest as the ‘1st Meeting of the Heads of the National Public Television Stations of the BSEC Member States’,¹⁴

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

NATO’s day-to-day relations with the mass media is deeply-rooted. The Alliance has its own TV and radio unit, and frequently organizes press conferences. Meanwhile, organized use of the mass media for agenda setting by NATO seems to have focused on two points:

- a) Preparing public opinion both in NATO countries as well as in the candidates for the enlargement of the Alliance: This activity of NATO is mainly focused on establishing the image of the Alliance in the public opinions of the new members as well as of the partner countries. For instance, the winner of the Manfred Wörner Fellowship in the year 2000 was a project the final aim of which was “to develop positive attitudes in the Ukrainian society towards the European integration process, including NATO”¹⁵.
- b) Affecting public opinion in the operation areas of the Alliance: In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Skopje NATO is involved in activities related to mass media. In Bosnia-Herzegovina the Alliance created its own radio station (Radio Mir or Peace Radio). However, the fact that an operation was being carried out in the area at that time led NATO to get involved in restrictive activities: “For more than six months in late 1997 and 1998, the NATO Stabilisation Force, under orders from the Office of the High Representative controlled key broadcast transmitters there for ‘security protection’”¹⁶. In Kosovo, the Alliance was accused of putting a ban on media.¹⁷ The NATO

¹⁴ CIRCOM, 200: 1

¹⁵ For the full text of the project see (Yuschenko, 2001).

¹⁶ Price, 2000: 10.

¹⁷ Sullivan, 2000: 32.

Headquarters in Skopje offers a regular analysis of the media in the form of daily review of the local press. This analysis includes among other things the coverage of the topics related to NATO and the Headquarters¹⁸. In evaluating the activities related to media, NATO refers to perception management under the general rubric of ‘psychological operations’ and draws on the American experience in the field¹⁹.

The European Union (EU)

The fulcrum of the EU’s approach to mass media is its Audiovisual Policy. Plausibly because of the fact that the first pillar of the Union has primacy over the two others, the main page of the Policy starts by indicating that “(t)he audiovisual sector directly employs over one million people in the European Union”²⁰. This emphasis on the economic side is traceable all over the approach of the Union towards the media. The main aim is rather to create a regulated and harmonious liberal market of media. The first two aims of the main achievements of the Policy are given as:

1. a regulatory framework allowing the realisation of an effective single market for broadcasting and aiming at protecting minors from access to harmful audiovisual content,
2. support mechanisms at a European level to complement the systems existing at national level,²¹

However, the Union has enriched this approach by including further elements; it took the mass media as a tool to uphold its main principles and to make itself known to its present and prospective citizens. Especially after the official recognition of the cultural dimension by the Treaty of Maastricht a new aim stands among the among the other two aims of the Audiovisual Policy:

¹⁸ See (NATO, 2004).

¹⁹ For an interesting evaluation see (Collins, 2003).

²⁰ European Commission, 2004b.

²¹ *Ibid.*

3. external measures, in particular the defence of European cultural interests in the context of the World Trade Organisation.²²

One of the key documents of the Audiovisual Policy, the *Green Paper on the Convergence of the Telecommunications, Media and Information Technology Sectors and the Implications for Regulation Towards an Information Society Approach*²³ refers to the work of the Council of Europe in the context of human rights democratic values and freedom of expression:

The Council of Europe is currently working on aspects of the Information Society relating to human rights, democratic values and the freedom of expression and is expected to adopt Resolutions on these issues at the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in Thessaloniki in December 1997.

The ‘Television without Frontiers’ Directive, on the other hand, has among its aims that of spreading the concept of ‘being European’ by “promot(ing) the distribution and production of European audiovisual programmes, for example by ensuring that they are given a majority position in television channels' programme schedules”.²⁴ To reinforce this concept the Union intervenes in the audiovisual sector:

EU intervention in the audiovisual sector is ... part of a strategy to give Europeans a choice. Unless Europeans are able to watch stories, dramas, documentaries and other works that reflect the reality of their own lives and histories,

²² *Ibid.*

²³ COM (97) 623.

²⁴ Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities [Official Journal L 298 of 17.10.1989]. Amended by Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997 [Official Journal L 202 of 30.07.1997].

as well as those of their neighbours, they will cease to recognise and understand them fully.²⁵

The reference to ‘neighbours’ here might be a good start to proceed to the role of the mass media in Euro-Mediterranean relations.

It would not be pretentious to claim that the Barcelona Declaration²⁶ in the context of the relations between the European Union and its Mediterranean neighbours is as pivotal as the Treaty of Rome is in the process of European integration. The Declaration which was adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held between 27-28 November 1995, establishes a framework by indicating some general aims and means, to be filled in by the parties. In particular, it introduces three types of partnership that together constitute the package of ‘Euro-Mediterranean Partnership’:

1. A political and security partnership: This item of the package aims at establishing a common area of peace and stability. “(A) strengthened political dialogue at regular intervals” is supposed uphold such concepts like ‘democracy’ and ‘human rights’, ‘international law’.
2. An economic and financial partnership: With
 - a) The gradual establishment of a free trade area in the Euro-Mediterranean area,
 - b) The implementation of appropriate economic co-operation and concerted action in the relevant areas, and finally
 - c) A substantial increase in the Union’s financial assistance to the Mediterranean partners,

this partnership pursues the following objectives:

- a) Acceleration of the pace of sustainable socio-economic development,

²⁵ COM (2004) 154 Final.

²⁶ For the full text of the Declaration see (European Commission, 2004c) .

- b) Improvement of the living conditions of the partners' populations, increase in the employment level, and reduction in the developmental differences in the Euro-Mediterranean region, and
 - c) Encouragement of regional co-operation and integration.
3. A partnership in social, cultural and human affairs: In this context, the partners propose to work for promotion of understanding between cultures and of rapprochement of the peoples in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The first two pillars of the partnership rest on 'state', 'super-state' levels whereas the third pillar of the package allows actions of 'sub-state' and 'inter-state' actors. In other words, 'sub-state' and 'inter-state' actors have little room for manoeuvre in the fields of 'political and security partnership' and 'economic and financial partnership', but they do have a function for the realisation of the aims under the 'partnership in social, cultural and human affairs'. The media among other actors of the latter kind are explicitly cited in the declaration twice under the section on political and security partnership:

(T)hey [the parties] reaffirm that dialogue and respect between cultures and religions are a necessary precondition for bringing the peoples closer. In this connection they stress the importance of the role the *mass media*²⁷ can play in the reciprocal recognition and understanding of cultures as a source of mutual enrichment

and

(T)hey accordingly agree to strengthen and/or introduce the necessary instruments of decentralized cooperation to encourage exchanges between those active in development within the framework of national laws: leaders of political and civil society, the cultural and religious world, universities, the research community, *the media*²⁸,

²⁷ My emphasis.

²⁸ My emphasis.

organizations, the trade unions and public and private enterprises;

Moreover, the Work Programme in the Annex of the Declaration has a separate title for the Media:

Media

Close interaction between the media will work in favour of better cultural understanding. The European Union will actively promote such interaction, in particular through the ongoing MED-Media programme. An annual meeting of representatives of the media will be organised in this context.

The Action Programme for the Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations²⁹ details the operational side of the issue. It “contains concrete and feasible activities, proposed by both the EU and its Mediterranean Partners”. ‘Youth’, ‘education’ and ‘media’ are given as the three concepts on which the Programme focuses, media being “an effective means to reach out to the general public in all countries”. The Commission reiterated the importance of the Euro-Med Audiovisual Programme which comprised, at the time of the Action Programme, five projects amounting to 18 million Euros.³⁰ The goal of the Audiovisual Programme is “to promote co-operation among European and Mediterranean operators in the audio-visual sectors and foster regional projects in the fields of radio, cinema and television.”

Another programme introduced in the Action Programme is the Regional Programme on Information and Communication. Its aim is “to improve the visibility of the Barcelona Process and its perception by the general public and opinion makers (media, political institutions, businessmen and civil society”.

Besides, a number of countries volunteered to initiate activities targeted to the aims of the Action Programme: Austria undertook

²⁹ European Commission, 2002.

³⁰ The Audiovisual Programme is in its second stage now.

the organisation of the Expert Seminar on the Role of the Media where

Media business representatives, journalists, writers, and academics [would] discuss how to raise the awareness of the significance of the images about different cultures and civilisations produced and transported by the media ...;... elaborate ways on how the media may include a wider public in the dialogue; and analyse and promote the possibilities of the media in the Euro-Mediterranean countries concerning the dialogue between cultures.

France pledged to provide “better information to the professional operators on the possibilities offered by Euromed Audiovisual”. Sweden promised to launch a new regional culture co-operation programme focusing on media/journalists, as well as programmes for training of journalists in Turkey and Gaza/The West Bank and international courses on media for participants from Mediterranean Partner Countries.

After the two years that have passed since the inception of the Action Programme, a follow-up assessment of the achievement of the aims of the Programme in general, as well as a general assessment of the congruence between the performance of the mass media and the relations between the Union and its Mediterranean partners might be useful. Such an evaluation is a huge task that requires much more than the capabilities of an academic article. Nevertheless, the present article endeavours to contribute to an evaluation of that kind with a modest survey. The aim of the survey is to assess the interest in and acquaintance with the Euro-Mediterranean relations of a segment of the members of the media. Among the objectives of the survey are to see whether the Euro-Mediterranean relations are covered in the media neutrally and constructively and whether the media finds the Euro-Mediterranean partnership successful.

The Survey³¹

This section presents a general evaluation of the Euro-Mediterranean relations and the contribution of the media thereon by journalists actively following the events. A small survey was carried out for this purpose on the journalists who were accredited for the “Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of Euro-Mediterranean Foreign Ministers” that was held at Dublin Castle on 5 May 2004 - 6 May 2004. The questionnaire form was first brought to their attention in the press centre during the Meeting and then was also sent on 17 May 2004 via e-mail to a blanket list of 763 journalists³² by the Press Office Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin.³³ The identity of the participants was withheld by the Press Office, so was their profile. The extension of their e-mail address however reveals that a majority of them are journalists (working for public and private institutions as well as freelance) while a minority come from civil organisations and think-thanks. The list included a plethora of journalists from the Member States of the EU Irish and British ones coming the first, although a considerable number of addresses of different origin such as Japanese and Turkish also appear in the list.

Almost one tenth (76) of the journalists whose name appeared in the list actually attended the meeting, and more than half of these participants paid attention to the survey. Unfortunately, none of the journalists answered the printed version of the questionnaire during the two-day meeting, and the response rate to the e-mailed version also remained very low. In total, 53 questionnaires were returned, 3

³¹ I hereby express my indebtedness to Ms. Nathalie Lerendu from the organisation staff of the Ministerial Conference for her help and support in the realisation of this survey despite her very busy work schedule.

³² This is the total number of the journalists who had their name accredited before the Conference.

³³ Before the Meeting, the Press Office Department indicated that “attendance at the political conferences and meetings taking place during the Irish Presidency [was] limited to politicians and journalists in possession of a Press Card [and that] (t)herefore [they could not] authorize any academic professionals to attend.” This made it impossible to interview the participating journalists personally.

of which were not taken into consideration because of incompleteness.

The questionnaire form itself is presented in Annex-II. Below is an evaluation of the questionnaire:

a) Profile of the Respondents

Profile of the respondents is assessed with two characteristics inquired about before the questions. These are the ‘field of the respondents’ and ‘country of origin’.

Criteria 1: Field of the Respondents

- 17 respondents (34%) indicated that they were from public TV/radio;
- 10 respondents (20 %) indicated that they were from a news agency;
- 8 respondents (16 %) indicated that they were from a private TV/radio;
- 5 respondents (10%) indicated that they were freelance journalists;
- 4 respondents (8 %) indicated that they worked in other patterns such as working for magazines or newspapers;
- 6 respondents (12 %) did not indicate any field.

Field Indicated 44 (88%)					No Field Indicated 6 (12%)
Public TV/Radio	News Agency	Private TV/Radio	Freelance	Other	
17 (34%)	10 (20%)	8 (16%)	5 (10%)	4 (8)	

If this dispersion also reflects the actual involvement and interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations, we may say that public media is more dominant in this context.

*Criteria 2: Country of Origin*³⁴

23 respondents (46%) indicated that they were from the Member States of the European Union (15 from Ireland itself, 4 from the Mediterranean members, 4 from non-Mediterranean members except Ireland);

10 respondents (20%) indicated that they were from non-member countries (7 from Mediterranean non-members, 3 from non-Mediterranean non-members);

17 respondents (34%) did not indicate country of origin

Respondents Indicating Country of Origin 33 (66%)				No Origin 17 (34%)
Respondents from Member States 23 (46%)		Respondents from Non-Member States 10 (20%)		
From Non-Med. Member States (MS) 19 (38%)	From Med. MS 4 (8%)	From Med. Non-MS 7 (14%)	From Non-Med. Non-MS 3 (6%)	

An important proportion of the respondents are from the host country. If this is again parallel to the general profile of the participants as a whole including the non-respondents, it may be taken as indicative of a relative lack of will to bother with travelling to Ireland and getting involved in the event. The number of the Mediterranean respondents (4+3) is low.

Now let us evaluate the answers to the questions of the questionnaire taking the two criteria in consideration:

³⁴ Country names are also concealed in order not to give a clue about the identity of the respondents.

b) Evaluation of the Questions:

Question 1: “Do you have a special interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations?”

“Very much”: 11 respondents (22 % of the total number of the respondents),

3 from EU & Non-Med. (16 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),³⁵

0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),

4 from Non-EU & Med. (57 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

4 country of origin not known (26 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Some”: 20 respondents (40 % of the total number of the respondents)

7 from EU & Non-Med. (37 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents),

2 from Non-EU & Med. (29 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

1 from Non-EU & Non-Med, (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

9 country of origin not known (53 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“No particular interest”: 19 respondents (38 % of the total number of the respondents)

9 from EU & Non-Med. (47 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

³⁵ Breaking up the replies into country groups is to make them comparable not within each reply but between replies. For example, for this question, from EU&Non-Med countries 3 respondents opted for ‘very much’, 7 of them opted for ‘some’ and 19 ‘no particular interest’. A comparison within each reply would not be meaningful as the numbers of the participants from country groups are not equal to each other.

3 from EU & Med (75 % of the EU & Med respondents),
1 from Non-EU & Med. (14 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
2 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (67 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
4 country of origin not known (24 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

Respondents who have some or no particular interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations are almost four times more than the ones who have a strong interest. This shows a general lack of interest, and is probably an indication that a considerable number of these journalists follow the events by virtue of office rather than of interest. The number of uninterested respondents is higher for EU & Non-Med. countries compared to the one for Non-EU & Med. countries.

Question 2: “Do you regularly follow the news about Euro-Mediterranean relations?”

“Regularly”: 7 respondents (14 % of the total number of the respondents)

3 from EU & Non-Med. (16 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),
3 from Non-EU & Med. (43 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Sometimes”: 15 respondents (30 % of the total number of the respondents)

5 from EU & Non-Med. (26 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents)
2 from Non-EU & Med. (29 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
6 country of origin not known (35 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Cannot find the opportunity”: 28 respondents (56 % of the total number of the respondents)

11 from EU & Non-Med. (58 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
3 from EU & Med. (75 % of the EU & Med respondents)
2 from Non-EU & Med. (29 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
2 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (67 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
10 country of origin not known (59 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

The total number of respondents who cannot find opportunity to follow the news about the Euro-Mediterranean relations is considerably high. Similar to the previous question, the number of respondents who follow the news is higher in the case of EU & Non-Med. countries compared to that of Non-EU& Med. countries.

Question 3: “Do you find the opportunity to attend media seminars/workshops or to read in the context of Euro-Mediterranean relations to develop your accumulation?”

“Mostly”: 4 respondents (8 % of the total number of the respondents)

2 from EU & Non-Med. (11 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Sometimes”: 11 respondents (22 % of the total number of the respondents)

- 4 from EU & Non-Med. (21 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
- 2 from EU & Med. (50 % of the EU & Med respondents),
- 1 from Non-EU & Med. (14 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
- 1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
- 3 country of origin not known (18 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Cannot find the opportunity”: 35 respondents (70 % of the total number of the respondents)

- 13 from EU & Non-Med. (68 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
- 2 from EU & Med. (50 % of the EU & Med respondents),
- 6 from Non-EU & Med. (86 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
- 1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
- 13 country of origin not known. (76 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

We again see that the majority of the respondents could not find the opportunity to attend media seminars/workshops or to read in the context of Euro-Mediterranean relations to develop their accumulation. Here however, the pattern is slightly different: the rate of the participants from the Non-EU & Med. countries who cannot find the opportunity is as high as the one for the participants from the EU & Non-Med. countries. Taken into consideration with the fact that 4 participants from Non-EU & Med. countries expressed high interest in EU-Med relations (Question 1), in the case of these countries this may be attributable to the relative absence of such opportunities in the Non-EU & Med. countries.

Question 4: “Are you in touch with journalists or media institutions from Mediterranean countries?”

“Regular professional contact”: 1 respondent (2 % of the total number of the respondents)

1 from EU & Non-Med. (5 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

0 country of origin not known (0 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Occasional contacts”: 9 respondents (18 % of the total number of the respondents)

4 from EU & Non-Med. (21 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

2 from EU & Med. (50 % of the EU & Med respondents),

1 from Non-EU & Med. (14 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“No particular contact”: 40 respondents (80 % of the total number of the respondents)

14 from EU & Non-Med. (74 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

2 from EU & Med. (50 % of the EU & Med respondents),

6 from Non-EU & Med. (86 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

2 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (67 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

16 country of origin not known (94 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

European journalists may have regular, close and institutionalised contact among themselves. However, such a contact does not exist with or among the journalists of Mediterranean countries.

Question 5: “In your institution, are you the person who continuously follows the Euro-Mediterranean events?”

“Always / Most often”: 1 respondent (2 % of the total number of the respondents)

1 from EU & Non-Med. (5 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

3 country of origin not known (18 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Depends”: 32 respondents (64 % of the total number of the respondents)

12 from EU & Non-Med. (63 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

3 from EU & Med. (75 % of the EU & Med respondents),

7 from Non-EU & Med. (100 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

3 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (100 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

13 country of origin not known (76 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Euro-Mediterranean relations is not my field”: 17 respondents (34 % of the total number of the respondents)

6 from EU & Non-Med. (32 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

Very few of the respondents seem to have specialised in Euro-Mediterranean relations; the answers accumulate on the ‘depends’ option. As we see, the institutions look like sending journalists on an ad hoc basis.

Question 6: “Do you find the Mediterranean policy of the EU successful?”

“Very much”: 2 respondents (4 % of the total number of the respondents)

1 from EU & Non-Med. (5 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Somehow”: 29 respondents (58 % of the total number of the respondents)

13 from EU & Non-Med. (68 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
3 from EU & Med. (75 % of the EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
3 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (100 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
10 country of origin not known (59 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Not at all”: 19 respondents (38 % of the total number of the respondents)

5 from EU & Non-Med. (56 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents),

7 from Non-EU & Med. (100 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

6 country of origin not known (35 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

Only 2 of the respondents (4 %) find the Mediterranean policy of the EU successful, whereas 29 respondents (68 %) think that this policy is partly successful. Majority of the EU & Med and all of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents opt for this answer (the latter probably being neutral personally). 7 of the Non-EU & Med participants say that they do not find this policy successful at all.

Question 7: “Do you think that you can cover Euro-Mediterranean relations completely free from the official ideology of your state and from the influence of the government?”

“Completely free”: 32 respondents (94 % of the total number of the respondents)

19 from EU & Non-Med. (100 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

4 from EU & Med. (100 % of the EU & Med respondents),

5 from Non-EU & Med. (71 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),

3 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (100 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),

16 country of origin not known (94 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“With some caution”: 2 respondents (4 % of the total number of the respondents)

0 from EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),

0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),
1 from Non-EU & Med. (14 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
1 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“With considerable caution”: 1 respondent (2 % of the total number of the respondents)

0 from EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
0 from EU & Med. (0 % of the EU & Med respondents),
1 from Non-EU & Med. (14 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
0 country of origin not known (6 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

Almost all the respondents indicate that they can cover Euro-Mediterranean relations completely free from the official ideology of their state and from the influence of their government. 1 respondent (14 %) from a Non-EU & Med. country and 1 respondent (6 %) who has not indicated any country expresses some caution. Only 1 respondent who is from a Non-EU & Med. country says that he/she has to cover the issue with considerable caution.

Question 8: “Do you think the coverage of Euro-Mediterranean relations by the media of your country is constructive for those relations?”

“Very much”: 10 respondents (20 % of the total number of the respondents)

4 from EU & Non-Med. (21 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents),

0 from Non-EU & Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
1 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (33 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
4 country of origin not known (24 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Somehow”: 24 respondents (48 % of the total number of the respondents)

8 from EU & Non-Med. (42 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
2 from EU & Med. (50 % of the EU & Med respondents),
2 from Non-EU & Med. (29 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
2 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (67 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
10 country of origin not known (59 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

“Not very constructive”: 16 respondents (32 % of the total number of the respondents)

7 from EU & Non-Med. (37 % of the EU & Non-Med. respondents),
1 from EU & Med. (25 % of the EU & Med respondents),
5 from Non-EU & Med. (71 % of the Non-EU & Med respondents),
0 from Non-EU & Non-Med. (0 % of the Non-EU & Non-Med respondents),
3 country of origin not known (18 % of the respondents origin of whom not known).

The majority of the respondents think that the coverage of Euro-Mediterranean relations by the media of their country is somehow constructive or not very constructive for those relations. Especially the respondents from Non-EU & Med. countries (71 %) think that the coverage of the media is not very constructive.

A general evaluation of the survey can be the following:

- 1) Journalists who are following the Euro-Mediterranean events have a busy agenda. They are preoccupied with many other things. This point was also expressed by the respondents in their e-mails accompanying their reply to the questionnaire. Probably due to this workload -or maybe because of lack of interest- tens of questionnaire forms were returned with the automated message “your message was deleted by the recipient without being read”. A considerable portion of the respondents say that Euro-Mediterranean relations is not their field of specialisation. Media institutions might be trying to function cost-effectively, and for them, hiring a person specifically for Euro-Mediterranean relations might be a luxury.
- 2) Parallel to the previous point, a substantial portion of the journalists have no or little interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations, do not -or cannot- follow the news about the field, and do not -or cannot- attend related seminars or workshops.
- 3) Not many journalists (Europeans and Mediterranean alike) have close and systematic contact with their Mediterranean colleagues. This can be regarded as a failure to take the advantage of a beneficial synergic relationship.
- 4) As a positive sign, almost all of the respondents say that they are able to cover Euro-Mediterranean relations completely freely.
- 5) In some responses, there appears a manifest difference between the answers of the journalists from the European & Non-Mediterranean countries and of those from the Non-European & Mediterranean countries. The latter are more interested in but have less opportunity to follow Euro-Mediterranean relations or to equip themselves with related information. All of the Non-European & Mediterranean journalists are of the opinion that the Mediterranean policy of the Union is not successful, and a considerable portion of

them say that the coverage of Euro-Mediterranean relations in their media is not constructive for those relations.

Conclusion

The European Union attributes high importance to its relations with its Mediterranean neighbours. Elaborate programs and activities with budgets of million Euros are in practice. The Union ascribes an important place to media in this project. Saying that the success of the Mediterranean policy of the Union is and will be heavily influenced by the performance of the media in this field would not be an exaggeration. The expectation is that the media will 'set the agenda' of the European and Mediterranean peoples in such a way as to inform them about the European Union and Euro-Mediterranean relations, to create a constructive atmosphere and foster a positive attitude in this context, to bring the different cultures together.

Compared to NATO and BSEC, the machinery that the EU has constructed to tap the potential of the mass media is much more ambitious, sophisticated and costly. Different from NATO which is involved in mass media activities 'in person', the Union assumes a regulatory and supportive role for the mass media. Different also from BSEC which is contented with a mere call, the Union allocates an important financial source and concrete programmes.

However, the staff who are expected to operate this machinery, namely the journalists, do not seem completely ready for such a duty. They seem reluctant and unprepared.

Much of the remedy for this plight lies in the hands of the employers of the mass media sector. They should consider the fact that journalists pursue a type of work that leans on intellect, and are different from purveyors simply providing goods; they should be given time and opportunity. Journalists, on the other hand, should be aware of the possibilities presented to them by the Union in the context of various programmes; Euro-Mediterranean relations is a rich and promising field for them to specialize in. The Union and the partner governments of the Euro-Mediterranean relations on

their part should follow up the existing programmes in the field and try to close the gap between the desired outcome and the reality.

Bibliography

BSEC (2000) Recommendation 47/2000 on the Role of the Mass Media in Promoting Co-operation in the Black Sea Region, Doc. GA16/CC15/REC47/00, Istanbul: Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation.

(2004) <http://www.bsec.gov.tr>, accessed on 26 August.

CIRCOM (2001) CIRCOM Regional News monthly April 2001, No: 17

Cohen, Bernard (1963), *The Press and the Foreign Policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Collins, S. (2003) *Mind Games*, available on <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/art4.html>, accessed on 15 July 2004.

Council of the European Union (1997) Council Directive [89/552/EEC](#) of 3 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities [Official Journal L 298 of 17.10.1989]. Amended by Directive [97/36/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997 [Official Journal L 202 of 30.07.1997].

European Commission (1997), *Green Paper on the Convergence of the Telecommunications, Media and Information Technology Sectors and the Implications for Regulation Towards an Information Society Approach*, COM (97) 623.

(2002), *Euromed Report*, Issue No: 45, 29 April.

(2004a), *Eurobarometer Spring 2004: Joint Full Report of Eurobarometer 61 and CC Eurobarometer 2004.1 Report*, July.

(2004b) http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/intro/intro_en.htm
accessed on 1 October.

(2004c)
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/euromed/bd.htm

(2004d) Making citizenship Work: fostering European culture and diversity through programmes for Youth, Culture, Audiovisual and Civic Participation, COM(2004) 154 final

Lippmann, W. (1977) "The world outside and the pictures in our heads" in W. Schramm and D. F. Roberts (eds.) *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 265-286.

McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). "The agenda-setting function of mass media" in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-87.

NATO (2004)
<http://www.afsouth.nato.int/nhqs/mediaAnalysis/mediaAnalisisIndex.htm>, accessed on 15 June 2004.

Peter, J. (2003) "Country characteristics as contingent conditions of agenda setting: The moderating influence of polarized elite opinion" in *Communication Research*, 30(6), pp.683-712.

Price, M. E. (2000) "Bosnia-Herzegovina" in M. E. Price (ed.) *Restructuring the Media in Post-Conflict Societies: Four Perspectives - The Experience of Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations*, pp. 5-18 available on http://www.cardozo.yu.edu/cojcr/final_site/articles_notes/vol2_an/price_OV.pdf, accessed on 30 September 2001.

Semetko, Holli A.; de Vreese, Claes H.; and Jochen, Peter (2000) "Europeanised politics - Europeanised media? European integration and political communication" in *West European Politics*, 23 (4), pp.121-141.

Sullivan, S. (2000) "Kosovo" M. E. Price (ed.) *Restructuring the Media in Post-Conflict Societies: Four Perspectives - The Experience of Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organizations*, pp.26-40 available on:

http://www.cardozo.yu.edu/cojcr/final_site/articles_notes/vol2_an/price_OV.pdf, accessed on 30 September 2001.

Turner, Mark (1998) "Price of a free press" in *European Voice*, Vol.4, No.2, 15 January, p.4

Vopel, Ronald (2004) "Media guilty of stirring nationalism" in *European Voice*, Vol.10, No.22, 17 June, p.6.

Walgrave, S.; Nuytemans M.; and De Vinter L. (2004) "Specifying the media's agenda-setting power: Media, civil society, parliament and government in a small consociational democracy (Belgium, 1991-2000)" available on:

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/uppsala/ws15/Walgrave.pdf>, accessed on 21 August 2004.

Yuschenko, A. G. (2001) *Intellectual Modelling of Information Management of Political Mentality Dynamics of Social Ukrainian Strata Towards NATO*, available on <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/00-02/yushchenko.pdf>, accessed on 1 October 2004.

Yuksel, Erkan (2001) *Medyanin Gundem Belirleme Gucu (Agenda-Setting Power of the Media)*, Istanbul: Cizgi Bookhouse.

Annex: The Questionnaire Form³⁶

30 April 2004

Dear Sir/Madam,

Within the framework of an academic study, we would like to learn your opinion about the Euro-Mediterranean relations. We would be glad if you could kindly fill out the short questionnaire below.

The study is funded by the European Commission, and the data collected herein will not be used for any other purpose. Your name or your institution are not required in the questionnaire. If you want to make any additional comment, you may write it under the relevant question or below the page.

With my best regards,

Assist. Prof. Dr. Armagan Emre Cakir
European Community Institute
Marmara University, Istanbul – TURKEY

For questions and comments: acakir@marmara.edu.tr

³⁶ This questionnaire was presented to the subjects in printed form and also forwarded them via e-mail. A reminder was also sent a month later.

Editor's Note: For clarification, this letter was prepared by the author on his own responsibility and the Euro Mediterranean Project's involvement is limited to publishing this paper.

For the option of your choice please bring the cursor between the blue brackets and put an “x” like (x)

- YOUR FIELD (Choose one of the options below):

Public TV/Radio () News Agency () Private TV/Radio ()
Freelance () Other () (Please Specify):

- YOUR COUNTRY:

QUESTIONS:

Do you have a special interest in Euro-Mediterranean relations?

Very much () Some () No particular interest ()

Do you regularly follow the news about the Euro-Mediterranean relations?

Regularly () Sometimes () Cannot find the opportunity ()

Do you find the opportunity to attend media seminars/workshops or to read in the context of Euro-Mediterranean relations to develop your accumulation?

Mostly () Sometimes () Cannot find the opportunity ()

Are you in touch with journalists or media institutions from Mediterranean countries?

Regular professional contact () Occasional contacts () No particular contact ()

In your institution, are you the person who continuously follows the Euro-Mediterranean events?

Always / Most often () Depends () Euro-Mediterranean relations is not my field ()

Do you find the Mediterranean policy of the EU successful?

Very much () Somehow () Not at all ()

Do you think that you can cover the Euro-Mediterranean relations completely free from the official ideology of your state and from the influence of the government?

Completely free () With some caution () With considerable caution ()

Do you think the coverage of the Euro-Mediterranean relations by the media of your country is constructive for those relations?

Very much () Somehow () Not very constructive ()