

## **‘The forgotten channel: Europa TV’**

Over the years, the European Union (EU) has supported many initiatives to create a European identity. One of these was Europa Television. Europa-TV was a pan-European broadcasting initiative of the public broadcasters ARD (Germany), NOS (the Netherlands), RAI (Italy), RTE (Ireland), RTP (Portugal) that aired from October 1st, 1985 until November 27th, 1986. It wished to provide sports, entertainment and news from a European perspective. The project was financed through contributions of the European Commission, the participating broadcasters, the Dutch government and through advertising revenue. The Dutch government was involved because Europa-TV was located in Hilversum and used NOS’ facilities. Europa-TV was originally only broadcasted in the Netherlands to a limited number of Dutch households. Later, the channel was aired via satellite yet failed to reach some European countries as their governments and national broadcasters refused to cooperate. Europa-TV was estimated to reach 4.5 million households in Europa on its highpoint. Eventually, severe financial troubles led to the demise of the project within 13 months.

Even though the Europa-TV project failed over thirty years ago, the idea of a European television channel is still very much alive for the European Union. Transnational initiatives have been used to strengthen European identity and the Union has expressed a desire to continue to support them in the future. In November 2017 the European Commission (EC) published the plan called ‘Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture’. Television plays a key role in this plan, specifically the Euronews channel. The Commission has expressed its desire to ‘Europeanize’ and enforce the channel through financial means to combat fake news and bring Europeans together.<sup>1</sup> Without being a shareholder, the EU funds 36% of the channel's budget. Currently the Union is concerned about the lack of diversity of

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture The European Commission’s Contribution to the Leaders’ Meeting in Gothenburg,” November 17, 2017, 12.

the channel and regrets the decreased involvement of public broadcasters and the high level of non-EU private broadcasters and investors involved in the channel. In order to support quality journalism, media freedom, pluralism and transparency the Union would like to reflect and decide on the future ambitions of the channel together with the European Parliament (EP). With the likelihood of a revival of a transnational channel this is a timely investigation into the little researched Europa-TV project. The aim of this research was to study the channel in the context of a European broadcasting history. It answers the question of how Europa Television's identity was shaped through negotiations between European public broadcasters, the European Economic Community and Europa Television staff. The study offers a view on the increasing transnational broadcasting industry in the 1980s.

### **From proposal to execution**

As mentioned above, I initially set out to use my grant to find other perspectives on Europa Television. With the materials I had access to at the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision, I was able to learn more about different ideas among the Europa Television employees, as well as the perspectives of employees of one of the participating broadcasters, the Dutch public broadcasters NOS.

I intended to travel the archives of the different bodies of the European Union to learn more about their commitment to the project. However, materials directly related to Europa TV are scarce. Fortunately, as they had been digitized, they were digitally sent to me. There are other non-digitized documents at the archive of the European Commission that are more related to 'Television without borders' policies that might mention the project. However, I decided that the materials I had sufficed to contrast claims other authors had made about the Europa TV project being a propaganda channel. I have written extensively on this subject in my thesis, which I have also sent to you.

What fascinated me most was the perspectives of the other participating broadcasters. Initially it was just the question of what had motivated them to participate in the project, but as my research progressed I learned that, except for the NOS, the partners rather half-heartedly participated in the project. This might possibly explain that when I set out to find other Europa Television materials at these broadcasters, I found nothing. No document and no footage. My research on Europa TV had taught me that the broadcasters had a difficult

time working together and through my attempts to contact broadcaster archive I got a firsthand experience of how frustrating that can be. As my search remained fruitless, Bas Agterberg kindly offered to contact the public broadcasters for me. We expected that his connections would surely bring my search to a swift ending. It did not. It was only after months that we were able to conclude that there were no materials on Europa Television. We received a report on Europa TV's predecessor Eurikon from RTE and RAI had two short Eurikon soundclips. Finally, I also made several attempts to contact the EBU. My emails went unanswered and my calls could not be forwarded. Even with the help of mr. Agterberg, I could not get any reply from the EBU. During my presentation in Venice, mr. Agterberg will share his experiences on contacting the broadcasters and the EBU.

I had anticipated on the possibility that there were no Europa Television materials at the other broadcasters. I knew that the ORF had participated in the Eurikon project, but had decided not to do so with the Europa TV project. I tried to unearth why that decision was made, but the ORF does not have any sources related to Eurikon or Europa TV in their archive. The British IBU had, like the ORF, participated in Eurikon and opted out of Europa TV. The Eurikon broadcasts are held by the British Film Institute and most of it are accessible to the public. I therefore decided to travel to London for five days to watch all of the available material. This not only helped me learn about the Eurikon project, but also gave me new insights into the Europa Television material. I will present some of these findings below.

### **Eurikon vs Europa TV: A comparison**

For my thesis I analyzed the channel's identity to learn more about the phenomenon. Identity can be explained as the result of construction and as a negotiation between competing narratives of different actors and factors. It is therefore not static, but dynamic. Europa-TV is studied with a specific interest on how the project tried to create a European identity. On the one hand its identity was examined through the help of the actual broadcasts which were considered as the product of these negotiations. On the other hand the actual negotiations were studied. These negotiations were on different levels and sometimes intertwined. For example there were discussions about the channel among the staff, but some staff members also worked for the participating broadcasters. Not only discussion behind closed doors were studied, so were those in the public sphere. For this Dutch newspapers were used. These

newspapers, combined with the private archive of Europa Television programme director Klaas Jan Hindriks unearthed conflicting opinions within the organization, supporting broadcasters, the Dutch media, the Dutch viewers and the Dutch government. Despite a wealth of sources, the picture of Europa TV I created was incomplete. I had a difficult time to describe and analyze the channel, because I had no other channel to compare it with. Europa TV supporters repeatedly prided themselves with the idea that it was an unprecedented, unique channel. The only project that came close to the channel was its predecessor Eurikon. Eurikon was a five-week experiment of the European Broadcasting Union that was executed in 1982. The project attempted to create pan-European television and was a collaboration of five public broadcasters, supported by the European Commission, namely RAI (Italy), ORF (Austria), NOS (the Netherlands), ARD (Germany) and IBA (UK). The broadcasts reached fifteen participating countries and was watched by a selected, invited audience with an intention to educate, entertain and inform from a European perspective.

### **The first European television experiment: Eurikon**

Before I come to my findings with regards to the content of the material, I have some remarks. I have not been able to view all the Eurikon materials, as not all of the material is accessible to the public. This material can be viewed for a fee. The material that is available for free are (parts of) the broadcasts of the first and the last day of a week.<sup>2</sup> Only the two British days (11 hours) are complete, of the other weeks between 4 and 10 hours are available. The broadcasts of the Dutch week 4 are of a lower quality. Sometimes broadcasts are available with the original soundtrack, sometimes with the English audiotrack and sometimes programmes have the original soundtrack and subtitles. This makes the material more difficult to access for researchers, as the broadcasts were in English, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish and French. I was only able to fully understand the English, German and Dutch contributions, and most of the Spanish and French. For the benefit of research on this topic, it would be useful to have

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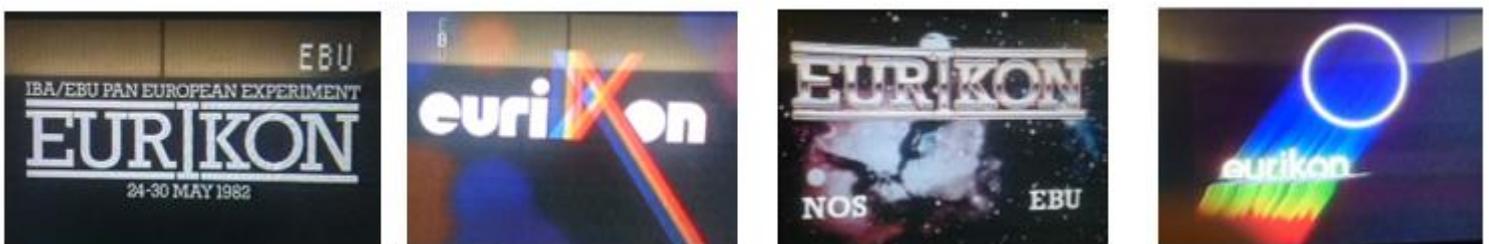
<sup>2</sup> British Film Institute Ref. 6423753, Eurikon Experiment Week 1 (24.5.1982 & 30.5.1982); Ref. 6423812, Eurikon Experiment Week 2 (19.7.1982 & 25.7.1982); Ref. 6423927, Eurikon Experiment Week 3 (27.9.1982 & 03.10.1982); Ref. 6424004, Eurikon Experiment Week 4 (25.10.1982 & 31.10.1982); Ref. 6424013, Eurikon Experiment Week 5 (22.11.1982 & 28.11.1982).

the material transcribed and translated. The same goes for the Europa TV material. Only then can this European enterprise truly be examined in full.

As for its content, I will give an impression of the channel through different themes: branding, representation of European Economic Community and representation of sameness and differences. I will then compare the channel to Europa TV, using these same themes.

**‘What you are about to see is a remarkable, historic television experiment’ - Eurikon’s branding**

As previously mentioned, each week aimed to educate, entertain and inform from a European perspective. This left each week looking different. Not just with regards to content, but also in its presentation. Some of its key presentation features like the logo, title card and presentation will be examined. Eurikon did not use a static logo on the top right corner of the screen, but instead showed an animated logo between broadcasts, to let viewers know what channel they were watching. Sometimes the letters EBU would be displayed in the right or left-hand corner, as can be seen in figure one. It is mentioned that Eurikon is a project by the European Broadcasting Union, but it is not explained what the EBU entails. The origin of the Eurikon’s name is not explained in any of the broadcasts watched. Contrary to what might be expected, there is not one logo for the project. Each week features a new design, sometimes even several designs. The contributes to idea though the project was a united effort, participants did (literally) color the channel to their liking, giving it a distinct flavor.



*Figure 1 Different Eurikon Logos [Week 1, Week 2, Week 4 and Week 5]*

It was not just the logos that changed every week. The format through which programmes were presented to the public changed every week, showing the experimental nature of the project. An important factor in the way the programmes were presented were the choices that the broadcasters had made for their hosts. Week one had a host on Friday, for a special live broadcast from Covent Garden. To celebrate the first week of broadcasting, IBA had

thrown a party to which it had invited artists, broadcasting executives and a group of people with different nationalities that lived in London. Two hosts, a man and a woman, took turns in introducing the party, announcing programmes, live performances and interviewing the people at the party. This was vastly different from the first day of broadcasting, where one programme was followed by another, without a continuity announcer introducing the programmes. The next week, hosted by RAI, featured two Italian presenters who served as continuity announcers as well as talk show hosts, interviewing their guests. Week three, hosted by ORF, also featured two hosts. An Austrian man, who mostly spoke German, was the main host. Every day he was joined by a female host from another country. The first day's hostess was English, the last day's Dutch. Both women worked in broadcasting, one radio and the other television, both spoke English. This resulted in programmes being announced first in German and then in English. Moreover, as the Austrian host interviewed his co-hosts, he would do so in German while getting answers back in English. The fourth week, hosted by the NOS, had no hosts. Programmes were announced through leaders, a title card or not at all. Week five, hosted by ARD, featured one host that was sometimes seen but mostly heard. He, unlike previous hosts, only acted a continuity announcer.

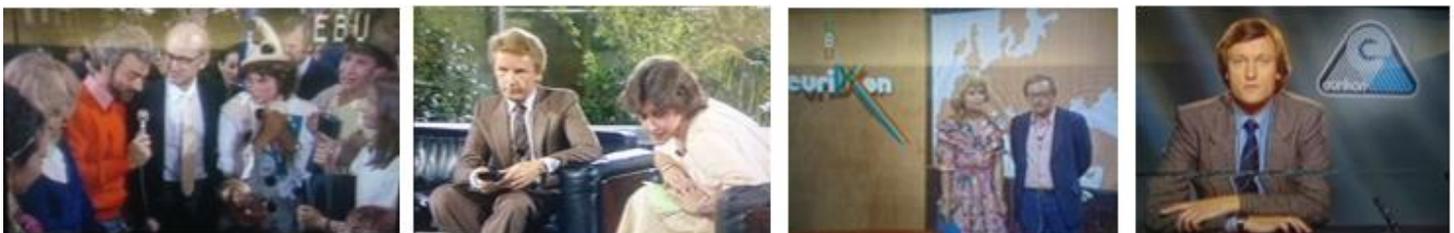


Figure 2 Stills from Eurikon hosts [Week 1, Week 3, Week 2, Week 5]

Each week the interaction with the viewers was very different. During week one the viewer was to be entertained as the host invited them to their party. Viewers were treated to live performance and see the guests at the party enjoy themselves, while the host hoped viewers would join them and 'also have something in their glass'. The second week had a more serious tone and the hosts took on a role as educators. Not only did they explain what programmes were coming up, they also wanted the viewer to learn about Italian culture. This was done in short monologues, where the host for example explained why hand gestures are important to the Italian language. The same educational tone continued in week three with the hosts for example wanting the viewer to learn about Austria. It had a slightly less serious and more trivial tone as this knowledge was imparted through quizzes. Whereas the Italian hosts acted

as experts on their culture, in week three the co-hosts were not Austrian. The non-Austrian viewer learns about Austria along with the host. The Dutch host Diewertje Blok for example had not visited Vienna before and shared her experiences in the Austrian capital, as well as asked question to the host about Austria. There was little engagement with the viewer in week four, seeing there was no host. The week had an impersonal approach as it was not made known to the viewer what kind of themes would be discussed, nor any context given about the programmes aired. Week five saw the return of a host, but his role was limited to that of a continuity announcer, giving the week a rather formal character. There were no commercials, though it remains unclear whether that was a deliberate choice. The head of the European Parliament, Piet Danker, stated in an aired interview that member states had very different laws regarding to commercial television. This could have made it difficult to air them.

Through each week had a different look, sound and feeling, there was also some continuity in the project. The execution might have differed, but all broadcasters worked with the same basic principle. Judging from what the hosts shared about the week schedule and the intentions behind it, all broadcasters wanted to make European television and wanted to educate and entertain their viewers. The project was presented as educational in itself, for broadcasters as well as the viewers. Hosts were open about challenges creators had faced during the week, and shared viewer ratings. This gave the viewer more of an insight into and understanding of the experimental nature of the project. This was also illustrated at the party that was broadcasted in week one. Neville Clark, one of the Eurikon executives, got the honor to cut a cake, while he explained the painstaking process of developing Eurikon. The cake was shaped like a turtle, because he explained he once said it was more likely for a turtle to fly than a European channel to see the light of day. Besides illustrating its experimental character, this also emphasized the uniqueness of the project. During the weeks of broadcasting the viewer was often reminded of this by the hosts and guests. Grand words were spoken about the project. 'A remarkable, historic television experiment', 'extraordinary', 'important', 'great success', 'exciting', 'interesting' are just a selection of the positive adjectives expressed about Eurikon. Eurikon was described as European television, but no clear manifest of the project was given. As the host of week 5 puts it: 'what is our recipe? We would not give it away, even if we knew it ourselves.' What can be said is that each week contained documentaries, drama, pop and classical music, opera, childrens' programmes and news.

With no clear vision on what European television should entail, it raises the question why Eurikon's creators wanted to make European television. Judging from its material, these reasons can be categorized as technical, economic, cultural and political.

First of all, broadcasters wanted to test new techniques like airing live footage transnationally, teletext and sound channels. Eurikon used six sound channels to help Europeans understand the broadcasts brought to them. These translations were also experimental in nature. Hosts were simultaneously translated, but translators had a difficult time keeping up with them, or their volume was set to low, making it difficult to follow them. Pre-recorded translations and subtitles did work, but were scarce. Some programmes were not translated at all, with the host explaining what a programme was about and then leaving the viewer to figure it out for themselves.

Second of all, these technological advancements could help countries grow their audiences, which would allow them to gain more income. As Beni Amino Placido stated: 'we are aware of our handicap, our language does not have a wide market'. Technology allowed them to go 'beyond our language'. The ORF's Gerd Bacher offered a similar explanation for joining.

Third of all, broadcasters wanted to share their best programmes with a public beyond their borders. Moreover, they wanted to have them learn about their and other European countries because they believed it was entertaining and interesting.

Lastly, the Eurikon project as an attempt for the people of Europe to get more familiarized and eventually become more of a unity, in order to accelerate European integration. I will elaborate more on these last two points below.

### ***'Who are we talking to? Is there a European television audience?'***

Through Eurikon was European television, week two's host Beniamino Placido opened with the dilemma its makers had been facing: who was their audiences? And following on this, did Europeans with a common European culture exist? He called it 'the problem of European identity'.

'This continent on which so many people have shared the same things, but have nothing in common, only great works and extremes, are not in a position to exchange daily lives, their common destiny.'

In order for Europe to matter and stay together it would have to find something that would bring people together. Politics would not be sufficient, but satellite technology could be the answer. Because 'the more pictures we have, the more the idea of ourselves and hence our identity.' It would be Eurikon's goal to create a 'common European language'. The president of the European Parliament Piet Danker shared a similar hope for the channel. As European politics were nationalized in the sense that 'the Dutch get to hear out of Europe what is directly relevant for Dutch politics', he felt there was a need for European journalism. The vice president went as far as to say that 'without fear of exaggerating', European television could present a 'cultural revolution' that could give rise to 'the new European man'.

Eurikon had different speakers express their conflicting ideas about what Europe was. They did so through their host, but also through pre-recorded messages from politicians. To Franz Karasek, the Secretary General of the European Council, Europe was part of a common world-system of 21 pluralistic democracies. Whereas Austrian's foreign minister dr. Willibald Pahr argued that there are two Europes. He argues that today's Europe is not the European Economic Community, but an 'ideological community of states that recognize ideas of freedom, pluralistic democracy and human rights.' Moreover, he hoped for a future where Europe would stretch from the Atlantic to the Urals. The Austrian host agrees with his foreign minister wider understanding of Europe whereas his British co-host did not. Judging from its programming the ARD might have also agreed with Pahr, as they aired a half hour Russian language class. Yet it was not just the hosts, broadcasters and politicians who shared their ideas on Europe. Week three had a daily feature where Europeans explained what Europe meant for them. For example, a segment filmed at the Viennese International School where students from all over the world explained in their own language what Europe meant for them. Interestingly enough, despite Eurikon being European television the programmes were available to 'people of Europe and of the Mediterranean'. Yet this did not affect its programming as it is only about the different peoples of Europe. This meant that there was a difference between their possible viewers and their target audience.

### **European Economic Community Propaganda? Eurikon's representation of European Cooperation**

One of the few scholars that has written about Eurikon and Europa Televisin Richard Collins claimed that politicians and television executives from countries participating in EBU were

afraid a European channel would not be independent of the EEC, and become, as one Irish television executive put it in 1984, 'real propaganda'.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore interesting to see how Eurikon represented the EEC and European cooperation in general.

Different European leaders get Eurikon airtime. The experiment was opened by a string of politicians all wishing the channel the best of luck and expressing their high expectations for the channel. A good example is the vice president of the European Parliament's message stating that: 'the European community approves this initiative and warmly supports it and realizes this can be a great contribution to the construction of a European community.' Yet could this support be problematic? The Eurikon team had this entanglement addressed by Klaas Jan Hindriks during an interview with Piet Danker, President of the European Parliament in the second minute of their first ever broadcast. Danker stated that broadcasters should remain independent and that the EEC should only help European television by providing a legal framework in which it could operate.

Despite Danker's earlier mentioned expectation that European television would bring more European reporting, very little airtime was spend on the EEC. The news that was aired did not center around topics discussed at EEC meetings, but reported top national stories from different European countries, the United States and the Soviet Union. Cooperation between countries is seen as a good thing, something that can bring peace. This is expressed by hosts and echoed in the 'Ein bisschen Frieden - A Little Bit Of Peace' song that was aired multiple times. The song had won the European Song Contest '82, sang and was sung in English, German, French and Dutch. Its main message was that a little patience and understanding would bring peace for our tomorrow. It fits with the EEC narrative of it bringing peace to a continent ravaged by war, but it is not explicitly mentioned. The only programme about the EEC is rather negative. The programme was an Italian contribution and was about the uselessness of European summits. Summits like the one of the UK's contribution to the EEC only created confusion to the point that 'no one understood a thing and there were just so many bloody problems'. It was also deemed useless as the programme accused politicians of not following up on their promises.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Collins, *From Satellite to Single Market: New Communication Technology and European Public Service Television*. (Hoboken: Routledge, 1998), 111-112.

### **'Italians always use their hands' - Representation of sameness and differences on Eurikon**

Eurikon wanted to show the different cultures of Europe. It did so through its British, Italian, German and Austrian hosts through previously mentioned examples, but also through its programmes. In the Dutch programme 'on the road through Europe' viewers could see three typical phenomenons from three countries. For example cooking with Schmaltz in Bayern, mills in Schiedam, the Netherlands, and Alpine farmers from Austria. Differences were not only shown to showcase unique features of a culture, but also to serve as an example for other countries. In week five the programme 'Europa 2000' showed the different agricultural policies of four countries in order to determine what the best strategy was. A documentary called 'I am still in the prime of my life' on a German home for the elderly on a farm was selected by the Dutch to show an alternative to their current homes for the elderly. Then there were programmes that had themes that concerned all Europeans, such as the struggle for women equality and new technological developments. Another unifying factor was music. Different classical pieces and operas were aired, but also popular music programmes. Lastly because Eurikon offered different languages viewers could hear the different cultures of Europe, yet at the same time understand these people through translations. By being able to understand what they were saying, these people could become less foreign to them. As mentioned above the idea of what European identity entailed was continually questioned, but its existence not. Eurikon showed differences between Europeans, but also that they were connected beyond those differences.

## The first Europa television channel: Europa Television

After the Eurikon experiment, some EBU members formed a work-group to explore the possibilities of a permanent channel. The NOS was one of the driving forces behind the Eurikon project and had its representative Klaas Jan Hindriks start working on the development of a European channel under the working title 'European programme on satellite'. The NOS' passion for European television was shared by the Dutch government. The Dutch government agreed to support the project with 35 million guilders and granted it an available transponder (channel) on the European Communication Satellite (ECS-1).<sup>4</sup> This enabled the channel to start broadcasting before the launch of the Olympus satellite.<sup>5</sup> The European Space Agency was to release this a large broadcasting satellite in 1987 and had reserved a transponder for a European channel.<sup>6</sup> The channel aired three trial broadcasts before its first official broadcast on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1985.<sup>7</sup> Mid November the NOS ordered Europa Television to pay 7.3 million of

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<sup>4</sup> "Brinkman geeft de NOS miljoenen voor Europees satellietprogramma," *Trouw*, May 28, 1984, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCD:010819811>, "Europese tv NOS volgens 'Sky-Channel-formule' mét reclame en mogelijk samenwerking met commerciële maatschappijen," *Het Parool*, May 28, 1984, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCD:010832773>, 'Nos krijgt 35 miljoen om Europees satellietprogramma te maken', and Boogerman, 'NOS krijgt miljoenen steun voor Europees satelliet-tv-programma'.

42 million Dutch guilders in 1984 translates to roughly to 34 million euro in 2018. "Value of the Guilder / Euro," accessed May 23, 2018, <http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate2.php>.

<sup>5</sup> "NOS krijgt kanaal op Europese satelliet," *De Telegraaf*, January 12, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011206786>, "Europees tv-programma wellicht nog voor zomer," *NRC Handelsblad*, January 12, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNRC01:000028079>, "NOS neemt kanaal van Euro-tv over," *Trouw*, January 12, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCD:010821530>, "NOS huurt kanaal van Euro TV op ECS-satelliet," *De Volkskrant*, January 12, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCD:010879277>, "Olympus begint nog dit voorjaar met uitzenden," *Nieuwsblad van Het Noorden*, January 14, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011011215>, "Europees tv-program vóór zomer van start," *Nederlands Dayblad : Gereformeerd Gezinsblad / Hoofdred. P. Jongeling ... [et Al.]*, January 21, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010569850> and "Europese tv nog dit start voorjaar van," *Limburgsch Dayblad*, February 18, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010593479>.

<sup>6</sup> "Britse satellieten veroveren de ruimte," *Leeuwarder Courant : Hoofdblad van Friesland*, May 19, 1984, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010565430> and "Is Europa-tv publiekszender of commerciële organisatie?," *Leeuwarder Courant : Hoofdblad van Friesland*, February 17, 1986, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010565966>.

<sup>7</sup> Nico van der Maat, "Eerste uitzending Europese televisie," *Het Parool*, February 26, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCD:010831404>, "Testuitzending Olympus op 5 mei uitzending ook op Groninger CAI ondanks een overvol kabelnet," *Nieuwsblad van Het Noorden*, April 30, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011011318>, "Olympus-tv komt met proefuitzendingen," *Leeuwarder Courant : Hoofdblad van Friesland*, June 4, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010565748> and "Europa Television begint met aanloopprogramma," *Nieuwsblad van Het Noorden*, October 5, 1985, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011011453>.

the 11.5 million guilders standing debt it had with its facilities agency.<sup>8</sup> Unable to pay, the NOS stopped submitting Europa Television's programmes to its satellite on November 28th, thereby making it impossible for Europa Television to air.<sup>9</sup> Negotiations to solve this problem lasted until well into 1987 and despite an attempt to restart of the project, Europa Television never broadcasted another episode.<sup>10</sup>

The Europa-TV broadcasts are located at the Dutch Institute for Vision and Sound. The material had never been studied before. The collection consists of 350 VHS tapes of unknown content. Some were labelled by Europa Television staff, yet their system was inconsistent and the labels did not always correspond with the content of the tape. Sections that were not recordings of broadcasts, like director's tapes were excluded from the research. In total fifty tapes that did contain Europa Television broadcasts were researched, which is estimated to be about twenty percent of the available broadcasts and over 150 hours of broadcasts. In order to uncover more about the channel, I will look at the channel's branding, its representation of the European Economic Community, questions of belonging to Europe, and its representation of sameness and differences on Europa Television.

### **'Plenty for you to see tonight, we hope you stay with us' – Europa Television's branding**

Before the channel's content can be analysed, it is important to get an idea of the look and feel of the channel. Its logo, title cards and program structure were vital to the marketing of their brand. Europa Television did not use a static logo on the top right corner of the screen, but instead showed an animated logo between broadcasts, to let viewers know what channel they were watching. The viewers'



Figure 3: Logo Europa-TV

<sup>8</sup> "Europa-tv krijgt nog een week om schulden bij NOS aan te betalen," *NRC Handelsblad*, November 22, 1986, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNRC01:000028952>.

<sup>9</sup> "Europa Television stopt uitzendingen na ultimatum NOS," *NRC Handelsblad*, November 28, 1986, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNRC01:000028956>.

<sup>10</sup> "Advocaat start ontslagprocedure schuld Europa-TV ruim f 53 miljoen," *Het Vrije Volk : Democratisch-Socialistisch Dayblad*, January 14, 1987, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010962304>, "Consortium blijft bestaan NOS en ARD nemen afscheid van Europa-tv," *NRC Handelsblad*, February 5, 1987, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNRC01:000034842> and "Europa-TV keert terug in april, maar NOS en ARD staken deelname," *Leeuwarder Courant : Hoofdblad van Friesland*, February 6, 1987, Day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010566263>.

ears would be filled with electronic tones while an orange triangle slowly unfolded into a pyramid. The pyramid spun around and the Europa logo appeared front and centre. As the music swelled, a triumphant horn joined the electronic tones. A white dove emerged from the pyramid, flapping its wings and exiting the stage through the right corner of the screen. Why had Europa Television opted for this logo? In order to answer this question a closer look will be taken at the static logo (Figure 3).<sup>11</sup>

First, the channel's name stood out. Its spelling is interesting because it is the way Europe is spelled in a lot of languages. For example, in the languages of the four of the five consortium partners: Dutch, Italian, German, Portuguese, but also in Spanish, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, among others. In English, Europa refers to the mythological Greek princess the continent of Europe was named after. The other symbol in the logo, the triangle, was likely another reference to Greek mythology. The top of the triangle was gold, that same colour as the background to the text. The mountain shape, in combination with the caption of the image, were references to Mount Olympus: home of the twelve Greek gods. In referring to these two phenomena in Greek mythology, the channel was referencing to Europe's common past. The dove is a common symbol for peace. Peace was also important

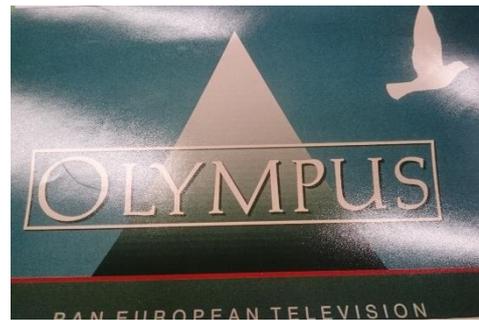


Figure 4: Logo Olympus-TV

in the narrative the European Economic Community, that saw itself as the bringer of peace and stability after the Second World War. Compared to standards of modern television, the slow unfolding of the logo and the futuristic sounding that music accompanied it, does not give the feel of a new and exciting channel. This statement also holds true when comparing this introduction to the channel's original intro and logo. This leader was featured in a NOS news reports on the first airing of Olympus-tv on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1985.<sup>12</sup> Here sweeping, upbeat music and trumpets accompanied the Olympus logo and a man's voice announced: 'This is Olympus Television.' It was more colourful, the animations moved quicker, and the music was livelier. Plus the announcer's deep voice gave it a sense of importance. Looking at the Olympus

<sup>11</sup> 'Venstermap met stickers en presentatie materiaal Europa', n.d., 1.16, Netherlands Institute for Vision and Sound Hindriks Archive.

<sup>12</sup> Digital Archive The Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision, 476744.

logo (Figure 4), it is obvious that Europa Television's logo closely followed the original design.<sup>13</sup> With the name Olympus, the mountain logo made much more sense. The font for the lettering stayed the same, yet the channel's tagline was changed from 'Pan European Television' to the more vague 'Television for the Olympus Satellite'. Why did Olympus become Europa Television and why did the channel change its outlook? The channel itself did not explain this change in the examined broadcasts. For this we have to turn to its policies, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Europa Television began and ended the day with an overview of the upcoming programmes. It did so through showing an overview of the day stating the time, the title of the program and the title of an episode in English. By looking at these programme announcements, it becomes clear that Europa Television was experimenting with its broadcasts. In its oldest remaining broadcast, from December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1985, its programme was displayed while electronic music played in the background. However, on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1986, Europa Television logo played and after it a continuity announcer read the programme displayed onscreen. In October of the same year, the music was gone. Closedowns were dealt with in a similar fashion, the programme for the next day appeared on screen with or without it being read out loud in English or Dutch. The continuity announcers lacked consistency as well, alternating between men and women, speaking either English or Dutch, each with different presenting styles. The Dutch announcer Ilse Wessel announced the programs by giving some background information and sometimes wishing the viewer a 'good night', whereas the Brit Simon Barret had a more playful approach. For example, as he announced the programmes for the next day he said: 'After handball, we present a documentary. Precisely what it is about we'll find out tomorrow as it is called 'the best kept secret''.<sup>14</sup> Another example was him saying 'that is our programme [for today] I hope you can join us for at least *some* of its time'.<sup>15</sup> As this emphasis on the word *some* comes across as a little reproachful, this might have been a reference to bad ratings. Only near the end of Europa Television's broadcasts, October 1986, consistency was implemented. The announcements were straightforward and

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<sup>13</sup> 'Venstermap met stickers en presentatie materiaal Europa'.

<sup>14</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape untitled, broadcasts dated from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 601.

read in Dutch, without music playing in the background. The weather was no longer read by the announcer but accompanied by music.

Europa Television used much of its airtime to promote itself, giving an insight into how they presented themselves. On screen the static Europa-TV logo appeared, its correspondence address below and a message was played. In February, the channel presented itself as 'an initiative of the European Broadcasting Union to bring programmes to your living room, via satellite', asking viewers to write them if they wished more information or had suggestions.<sup>16</sup> In March the channel used the same description and added: 'From Europe to Europe.'<sup>17</sup> The channel also ran a longer promotional piece that did not paint a flattering image of the channel. It announced itself to be in the 'pre-operational phase' stating that program schedules frequently had to be altered at the last minute, 'usually due to technical reasons'.

*The growth of a television organization takes time, but we hope that in the foreseeable future Europa television will become an interesting addition to the existing national television stations.*<sup>18</sup>

Judging from the tapes watched, these last minute changes would have been very noticeable to the loyal Europa Television viewer. Often, announcements made the night before did not correspond with the actual programme of the next day.<sup>19</sup> The same could be said for the frequent technical problems. For example, the channel often used the movie Dawn Flight when there was a problem with the schedule. After ten minutes of airing the movie, 'the next programme will begin at 22:00' was flashed on the screen. After fifteen minutes the movie was cut off, a commercial break started, and a scheduled programme began.<sup>20</sup> Live broadcasts got cut off or the original audio track ran in sync with the dubbed track, making it difficult to hear either one, and sometimes broadcasts had not sound at all.<sup>21</sup> These problems continued after the preoperational phase. For example, the basketball match Leverkusen - Nashua Den

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<sup>16</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 444.

<sup>17</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 671.

<sup>18</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 685.

<sup>19</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 669, broadcast from March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1986.

<sup>20</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 699, broadcast from March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1986.

<sup>21</sup> There are many examples of this happening, the following is a selection of tapes. Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tapes 675, 680, 645.

Bosch was aired for a few minutes without visuals.<sup>22</sup> Not all problems were technical. An example of such a problem was border customs. On October 14th, 1986 Europa Television had to disappoint soccer fans because problems with the Spanish customs had delayed the footage of the match between FC Barcelona and Espanol.<sup>23</sup> The channel asked for patience and expressed hope that Europa-TV 'will become an interesting addition to the existing national television station' in the 'foreseeable future', implicitly stating that the current programming was neither interesting nor an addition to existing national broadcasting, thus displaying a lack of confidence by its creators. The observation that programming was not consistent throughout the channel's broadcasting life, refutes Collins claim that Europa-TV's schedule was settled by June, 1986.<sup>24</sup> Though Collins was right that some elements of the programming, such as the news, were fixed in the schedule by June, the programming still lacked consistency.

Judging from their promotional videos, the channel had (re)gained confidence in October 1986. A year after the official launch, the channel presented a new schedule that was filled with the 'thousands of hours of interesting and captivating programmes' the channel had at its disposal due to its 'unique European cooperation'.<sup>25</sup> Broadcasting would now be horizontal, which meant that the same programmes would air at the same time on the same day dividing the hours into specific sections for music and sports.<sup>26</sup> These promos often were aired instead of a commercial break for the number of advertisers had drastically dropped in October. Commercial breaks went from five or six commercials to one, maybe two. Only Wang and Nissan commercials sometimes aired after regular programming. The next chapter will go into detail as to why Europa-TV experienced this dramatic drop in advertisers.

New programmes, produced exclusively for Europa Television were aired, such as 'Film Premiere', a magazine on films, and 'Look', a lifestyle programme. 'Look' aired once a week, lasted half an hour and was distinctly different from anything Europa Television had aired before. The episode aired on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1986 showed various products and how they should be used.<sup>27</sup> For example, running shoes with a microcomputer, male beauty products and desensitization pods. The item on men's beauty products was like an aggressive sales

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<sup>22</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2027.

<sup>24</sup> Collins, *From Satellite to Single Market*, 141.

<sup>25</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2016 - 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2025.

pitch. For example, its' opening line was: 'in 1986 a head covered in wrinkles really cannot be expected to charm or be considered attractive.' This item made it clear that men should start using tonics, gels, pre and after shave cream, mascara and eyeliner in order to be desirable. Another section showed a man and a woman at a casino. In their underwear. They walk around provocatively. Some electronic music played in the background, but nothing was being said. After a minute the tagline 'Bodygood, it may all be seen' was shown on screen. The couple kept walking around in the casino in see through, lace, cotton with polka dots and other types of underwear while the camera zoomed in on their private parts. In total, the item lasted for four minutes. The last item showed a man packing his suitcase for a business cruise. He and his colleagues were shown having a swell time walking, talking and drinking, in various outfits accompanied by background music. In the end, Jacques van Gils men's fashion logo appeared on the screen. Again, the viewer was to be enticed to buy these products. As the last three examples have made obvious, this lifestyle magazine can be considered one long commercial break disguised as a programme filled with sponsored content. This was very different from the 'hours of captivating television' from its public broadcasting partners. Which leaves the question, why did Europa Television commission such a programme? And why did it want to show this to their European audience?

### **European Economic Community Propaganda? Europa-TV's representation of European Cooperation**

As mentioned before, Richard Collins claimed that politicians and television executives from countries participating in EBU were afraid a European channel would not be independent of the EEC. Therefore Europa Television's material about the EEC and European cooperation was also analysed.. Of this material, the only programmes aired about European Cooperation were commissioned by the channel itself. Europa Report aired infrequently, at varying times and was produced by a Belgian company. Topics included the Danish referendum on the Treaty of Rome, pollution in the river Rhine and the Airbus project. The episode on the Danish referendum on the Treaty of Rome explained the arguments for and against signing the Treaty.<sup>28</sup> The arguments were not presented in such a way that signing the treaty was the only

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<sup>28</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 645.

reasonable option, which could have been expected from a pro-EEC channel, especially one that would be employed for spreading propaganda.

The Airbus episode was narrated by a voice-over and supported by the infographic, images of for example the Airbus flying and of its plants.<sup>29</sup> It lasted thirty minutes and also used material from an interview they had with the Senior Vice-president of Airbus Industry, Jürgen Thomas. Airbus Industries was the result of an aviation cooperation project from the 1970s. The programme discussed the origin of the project, the partners involved and the share of each partner in the project. It took the viewer on a tour of the different production halls in Europe and discussed its future.

The project was presented as a success story. The programmes stance was perfectly summarized in the opening statement:

*For some 12 years, the products of European cooperation have been flying through the world's airspace. [...] The Airbus has proven that high level, pan-European cooperation can both function and do so with success.*

The narrative is one of perseverance against all odds. Despite stiff competition in the form of the American company Boeing, the underdog Airbus has stood her ground. The cooperation was presented as a solid relationship and the best way to use 'the partners' resources and possibilities', without many 'restrictions on activities'. It had not all been 'plain sailing', with passenger stasis and a decrease in the number of planes. The hardships were presented as something that brought the partners closer together. The fierce competition had convinced the partners that cooperation in the future was 'inevitable'.

The 'Europeanness' of the project was emphasized several times, for example in the narration: 'in this way, a real form of European cooperation is being attained'. Visually it was also emphasized. When moving from one production hall to the other, the program first showed a map of Europe to show where the places were located and then cut to footage of a factory. Interestingly enough, Airbus admitted that it was 'not of course entirely European. An important set of [electronic] parts came from another continent, the United States of

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<sup>29</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 672.

America.' Eager to uphold the European illusion, the narration went on: 'however, in essence, the project remains a European one as the last year's non-European experience shows.' This referred to failed negotiations with an Indonesian airline to join the venture, meaning that the stakeholders of the company remained solely European. In the episode there was room for some criticism by its American competitor Boeing on Airbus Industry. The company had accused Airbus that it was 'too subject to covered government interventions and subsidies'. This argument was immediately countered by Airbus' statement that Boeing received covered pre-financing from the US government. The Airbus official also explained why the loans they received were perfectly legal while further discrediting Boeing. So while there was some criticism, it was countered and put away as 'harsh business tactics' from Boeing, a company that felt threatened by Airbus. The episode, therefore, contributes to the idea of the importance and success of European cooperation.

The episode about the pollution in the Rhine shined a dimmer light on European cooperation.<sup>30</sup> The Rhine had become 'the sewer of Europe' and Germany, France and the Netherlands had completely failed to solve this problem despite years of negotiations, a treaty and a committee overseeing the execution of that treaty. While the EEC had ordered polluters to pay for their pollution, governments provided funds to potassium mines to solve their spoliation, which caused forty percent of the Rhine's pollution. This arrangement was unlawful yet the EEC had not acted against it. A Dutch professor of law and president of the Rhine foundation, dr. d'Oliveira was interviewed to explain how he was determined to solve a problem European diplomacy had failed to. Already, he had successfully sued the mines for polluting the drinking water of twenty million people and got Dutch market gardeners, who used Rhine water to grow their vegetables and fruits, financial compensation. No high praise for European cooperation or the EEC in this episode, with the exception of the note that dr. d'Oliviera was only able to win his case due to existing European laws.

### **Who belongs to Europe? Representation at Europa Television**

Another way to get more of an insight into how Europa Television represented Europe, is to see whom it considered European. Therefore, it is interesting to see how the channel dealt with a country whose belonging to Europe was quite ambiguous: the Soviet Union. For this,

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<sup>30</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 665.

an episode of the documentary 'Profiles on Russia' is used as a case study. The fifty-minute episode 'Siberia' was aired on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1986.<sup>31</sup> The episode had an English soundtrack and a Dutch voiceover that both ran at the same time. The end credits were cut off by the start of another Europa Television programme. Therefore, no information about the creators and producers of this documentary is available, making it more difficult to determine with what intention this documentary was produced. Nevertheless, whatever the intentions of its unknown creators were, all programmes that aired were reviewed by Europa Television staff beforehand. Therefore, it can be assumed that its message fits the channel's attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Before coming to an analysis of this episode, a brief overview of its content will be given. The information in the episode was given by a narrator and through the recorded images. Though many people were featured in the episode, none of them were interviewed. The episode began with some facts about Siberia like its enormous size, sweltering summers and freezing winters while showing images of the landscape. The documentary then cut to life in its capital Irkutsk, explaining the history of the city as a wealthy trade hub and then cut to the city's cathedral to show part of a service. It went on to show people walking on the streets of Irkutsk, while the narrator explained the city has 500.000 inhabitants, most of whom were below thirty, and an energy research centre as well as a university making it equally important in modern day Siberia. After mentioning that the that the city used to be the last stop for people that were banished to Siberia by the Tsar, making it the home of criminals, murders and intellectuals, the episode showed a merry wedding party to show that 'nowadays Irkutsk is a lively, wealthy totally different city.' Again, switching to the city's history, the narrator explained that the completion of the Trans Siberia railway changed the character of the city, turning it into an industrial powerhouse 'in just a few decades.' After examples of the industry, images of the coal mining city Novosibirsk were shown. The final city that was highlighted in the episode was the university city Akademgorodok. Built in 1957, specifically for scientists, the narrator describes it as a 'futuristic city' while images show the strappings of daily life.

The narrative of the episode is very positive. Life in Siberia was portrayed as 'vibrant, diverse and young', its people 'anything but rigid and gloomy', and the area 'hospitable' and 'open to future change'. Its riches were called 'too long to list them all' and Akademgorodok

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<sup>31</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 669.

was described as 'the biggest think tank in the world', that has the best equipment in the world and a 'pleasant, relaxed atmosphere'. The only thing negative mentioned about this Soviet paradise was the climate. Clearly this calls for critical assessment, first by analysing what was being said and shown and then by identifying what was left out.

The documentary series was called 'Profiles on Russia' and not 'Profiles on the Soviet Union'. This is interesting because according to a TV guide of the time, there is also an episode on Lithuania. Historically, Lithuania was not part of Russia and just the title of the series alone brushed over the fact that it was forced to be part of the Soviet Union.

The narration made several attempts to compare and equate Siberia with Europe, or the Western World. First, by putting historic events side by side, such as the conquest of Siberia by the Kozaks and the 'entering' of the Spaniards to the Inca empire. Second, by comparing a scene from daily life to 'any other city', which equipped with the 'equivalent of a French flee market' where everyone went to bargain hunt. Lastly, the industrial city of Novosibirsk was compared to the American industrial city of Chicago. On the other hand, the documentary did use the term 'European Russians' when describing part of the population of Siberia, therefore, explicitly making a distinction between those people and the other peoples of Siberia.

It is also important to see if what was said corresponded with what was being shown. Returning to the example of the 'French flee market' that made Irkutsk like any other city, a long line of people waiting in front of a building was shown. When knowledgeable about Russia's economic situation in the second half of 1980, one might rightly ask the following question: were these people really bargain hunters? Consumers waiting in line for products is very much in accordance with the imagery of the final years of the Soviet Union. While other parts of the documentary first showed the outside of a building and then moved on to the inside, for example the scenes of the cathedral, Irkutsk museum and the wedding, the 'flee market' was only shown from the outside. It might be possible that the market did not show happy consumers spending their money freely on good deals.

The picture of the academic utopia Akademgorodok might also not be as pretty as was suggested in the documentary. The city's glory days were in the past. In the 1970s Brezhnev had reduced science to 'the servant of the economy and military'.<sup>32</sup> A clue to this attitude can

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<sup>32</sup> Oliver Wainwright, "Step into Silicon Forest, Putin's Secret Weapon in the Global Tech Race," the Guardian, January 5, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jan/05/silicon-forest-putin-secret-weapon-global-tech-race-siberia-russia>.

be seen in the documentary when it showed a group of teenagers in a lab in Akademgorodok. The narrator stated that: 'students can use the newest equipment, on the condition that their research, like all research, contributes to the life of the ordinary citizen.' Brezhnev had also severely restricted the freedom of scientists, yet this remained unmentioned in the documentary.

When looking at what is not being said, the restrictions of the Soviet regime, or the actual communist system in general, were big absentees from the documentary. Whereas Tsarist labour camps were mentioned, Stalin's gulags were not. When the history of the region is told, no mention was made of the Russian Revolution. There was no indication in the narrative that viewers were watching a documentary about a communist state, except for the obvious giveaway mention of the five-year plans.

It is striking how differently the Soviet Union was portrayed in a Sony commercial that also aired on Europa Television. From the start of the channel until March 1986, almost every commercial break included a Sony commercial.

Depicting various scenes such as one of an astronaut flying through space, enjoying the wonders of a Sony camera, and one of an aerobics class enthusiastically bopping around. Regardless of the effort put in those commercials, one truly stood out. In a room that immolates the look of the UN General Assembly the speaker behind the marble podium prepared himself to give an important speech and as applause rises from the people sitting in the semi-circle, he said: 'Today is a historic occasion'.<sup>33</sup> As the television viewer was on the edge of its seat he went on to say 'the announcement of the revolutionary Sony video

Figure5: Stills of Sony Commercial



Source: *kijkreclame4u*, Reclame - Sony (Video 8), accessed 12 July 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkotLZsPciY>.

<sup>33</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 433. The same commercial aired on Dutch television with Dutch subtitles and can be viewed through this link *kijkreclame4u*, Reclame - Sony (Video 8), accessed 12 July 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkotLZsPciY>.

8 system.' As viewers sunk back into their seats after realising they were watching a commercial, the speaker went on to explain the ingenuity of the system. He showed off a small cassette, videorecorder and video camera. A cutaway from the speaker revealed the Soviet delegation holding up gigantic video cameras and its representative screaming outraged in broken English: "Russian video big, no small." The speaker disregarded his action, turned to the room and said as he leaned down on the podium and took off his glasses: "Will Sony Video 8 become THE international system? Your votes please". His statement was met with cheers from an elated audience of men in formal wear from all over the world jumping up and down, clapping and screaming 'yes, yes, yes!'. The USSR representative rose and banged his headphones against his desk shouting 'NJET NJET!', while his assistants hid behind their gigantic video cameras. While other representatives could be seen laughing at the USSR's performance, the speaker said, 'I hereby declare Sony Video 8, the world standard'. After an image of the Sony products was shown, the USSR representative could be seen leaning the room and saying: 'let's go home, Sony wins.', while a caption on the screen said, 'Compare and Sony wins.'<sup>34</sup> The USSR's technology, and with it the country itself, was regarded as outdated and inferior. The speaker's references to 'the international system' and 'the world standard', were a play at the USSR's communist system and the liberal market economies that Sony targeted for their products. The USSR representative was portrayed as a rude, aggressive child that stands idly by as Sony proved its superiority.

Another approach to the Soviet Union can be found in Europa Television's news. The Soviet Union was not in the news every day and only rarely addressed its foreign policy. In broadcasts from 12 – 16th of October 1986 its withdrawal from Afghanistan was mentioned, as well as its participation in the Reykjavík summit.<sup>35</sup> Reporting on events was matter-of-fact in character. The troops would leave 9 years after the invasion and the Reykjavík summit results were presented and not commented on. When comparing the time spent in the news on the USSR, a country that geographically might be considered part of Europe, to the time spend on the United States, a country that was geographically not part of Europe, it is singular that the USSR gets a lot less airtime. Like with the USSR, the US' foreign policy was reported upon, only much more frequently. Of course, they were mentioned in relation to the Reykjavík

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<sup>34</sup> Despite Sony's video 8 system becoming 'the new world standard', Europa Television's archived broadcasts are not recorded on VCR tapes, but on VHS tapes from Sony's competitor JVC. Regardless of this failure, in this commercial, the USSR was the losing competitor.

<sup>35</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS 2021 – 2029.

summit but when their Energy Secretary visited the Middle East to promote nuclear energy (March 7th '86), its Minister of Defence had talks with the prime minister of New Zealand and India (October 14<sup>th</sup>, '86) it was covered as well.<sup>36</sup> Domestic affairs were also reported, for example on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1985 it was mentioned that Porto Rico, a US territory, became connected to a network that allowed its inhabitants to make calls abroad.<sup>37</sup>

### **European culture vs. local customs – Representation of sameness and differences on Europa Television**

Come rain or shine, Europa Television always aired a weather report. In the first few months, they used an image of a weather satellite on which the shape of Europe was outlined. It followed the geographical notion of Europe, including a part of the USSR. The weather was read by the continuity announcer that first discussed the weather in Europe and then the weather in the country where it was broadcasted, the

Figure 6: Weather map of Western Germany



Source: Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS 2021

Netherlands. In October 1986 Europa-TV employed different images. The weather was not read out anymore, but a map of Europa was shown with numbers and symbols indicating the weather and music playing in the background. After that, cut-outs of that map were shown with weather specification. For example, Portugal and Spain's weather was shown, France and Italy's weather, Scandinavia's, United Kingdom and Ireland, and Western Germany and Austria's weather. Except for Norway, Sweden and Finland, all these countries belonged to the EEC. As can be seen in Figure 6, the weather in East Germany was not predicted, and the country was even cut off the specification map. This choice makes it clear that weather-wise, communist countries were not considered Europe.

'World Watch' was another programme continued to be aired despite constant programming changes. Commissioned by the channel and created and presented by Dan Damon, this current events program brought five minutes of 'news that can be predicted about tomorrow', with 'items of the world agenda and the times of when decisions are being

<sup>36</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS 665 and 2027.

<sup>37</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS 433.

taken'<sup>38</sup> For example, foreign leaders visiting each other, ministers of finance visiting the Middle East to sell their goods, EEC summits and event inside European countries, such as strikes or elections. Moreover, some episodes contain information that has no obvious connection to the EEC one of its member states or another country located in Europe, like the aforementioned Porto Ricans being able to telephone abroad or the IMF being discontent with the behaviour of the president of Zaire or the decision of the United States to promote natural gas domestically.<sup>39</sup> News on countries was accompanied by a map, accentuating diversity. Overall World Watch reported on supranational conferences and filled the rest of its airtime with national stories. Interestingly, the EEC was little reported on, except for announcements on commencements of meetings and noting was shared about their conclusions. Just as little was reported on the European Parliament and the European court, with the exception of the EEC taking Western Germany to court to break its *Reinheitsgebot* on beer.<sup>40</sup>

In Dan Damon's other programme on current events Agenda, European issues were discussed. These were issues that had to be solved in a European context or issues that took place in an EEC member country and directly affected the EEC. The setup of the programme was simple. Damon picked a topic and invited two guests that had conflicting opinions on the matter. He took turns asking them questions and, in the end, he led his guest to discuss with each other. For example, he had a Spanish journalist and a former NATO general discuss whether Spain should leave NATO on the eve of the Spanish referendum and an executive from the Portuguese TAP airline discussed flight safety with the British head of Airline Users Committee.<sup>41</sup> This way the viewer was exposed to different opinions within Europe and could make up his own mind on the issue. The programme formula changed when the channel rebranded itself in October 1986. The programme still dealt with current events, but no longer discussed them or showcasing speakers with conflicting opinions. Three different issues were dealt with through mini-reports. Damon was no longer present on screen but served as a narrator. The events were also more loosely related to Europe. For example, on October 13<sup>th</sup>,

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<sup>38</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 685 and 433. 433 translated from Dutch: 'Dit is World Watch een programma van Europa Television met agendapunten en tijdstippen waarop besluiten worden genomen in de wereld.'

<sup>39</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 685 and 433.

<sup>40</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 633.

<sup>41</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 669 and 699.

1986, the programme dealt with the consequences of sanctions against South Africa for black Africans, the violent attack on Rajiv Gandhi and the role of lobbying in the English press.

Europa Television programmes also highlighted the differences between European countries, through airing programmes that showed local events or local culture. For example, an Irish amateur triathlon with a local presenter who commented on the people participating in a very familiar fashion. 'Don't forget your banana Dan' to a man he introduced as a 'businessman from Limerick'.<sup>42</sup> In the end, the winner of the triathlon was shown being hugged by his grandmother. No context was given for the non-Irish viewer, leaving those viewers a possibly little clueless as to what they had watched. Another amateur event was the Dutch sport *kaatsen*.<sup>43</sup> Here the commentator was very aware of the viewers needing context. Moreover, he connected this local Dutch tradition to a broader, European past. *Kaatsen* was introduced as a 'very ancient game'. Originally played by the Greeks and later spread to countries in Western Europe, where it was called 'pelotta' or 'jeu de poume'. It was introduced as the forerunner of tennis and points out its similar scoring system. The sport had become 'extinct', except in West Friesland a province in the north of the Netherlands. In Friesland *kaatsen* was 'part and parcel', like their cattle. During the broadcast the rules of the game were explained. This episode was not only used to explain the sport, but also to explain Frisian culture. It very cleverly played with differences and similarities, by showing European wide history of the sport, but by also highlighting what it meant to a specific culture at that time.

Like in the episode on *kaatsen* and Europa-TV's logo, ancient Greek culture was referenced to emphasize a common European past. Young children were also introduced to ancient Greek myths through the animation '*Götter und Helden Der Antike*'.<sup>44</sup> Ancient Greek culture was not the only culture that is seen as shared. The different live broadcasts from the Holland Festival highlighted cultural performances from all over Europe and presented it as something European.<sup>45</sup> Many music documentaries were also approached as part of a common culture, such as *Musik aus dem Kloster*, where Mozart was performed at an Austrian monastery.<sup>46</sup> In *Almenac* European culture was presented in a manner akin to national culture,

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<sup>42</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 699.

<sup>43</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 'ZL-REG 20-11-85 deel 1'.

<sup>44</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 433.

<sup>45</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 668.

<sup>46</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 645.

highlighting in five-minutes a person, piece of art or a cultural movement. These short profiles gave information on the phenomenon and explained why it was so important for European culture. These included French actor and singer Yves Montagne, writer Charlotte Bronte, philosopher Francis Bacon and Leopold Sedor Segur.<sup>47</sup> A common culture was not only sought out through arts but also through modern pop music. The programme Countdown was aimed at a European audience who wanted to see their pop heroes live on stage or watch the latest videoclips. Minor differences between the countries were acknowledged by airing a top-3 from a specific European country daily. Some of those songs would be popular in more European countries, but other songs' success would be limited to their country of origin. This way Europeans were introduced to new sounds.<sup>48</sup> Lastly, Europa-TV used Christianity as a common demeanour. It celebrated '450 years of Reformation' through the broadcast of a service in Geneva, aired 'U-Turn', a gospel music programme, and 'More To It', three minutes of religious reflection.<sup>49</sup> Through Christianity, Russians could be considered Europeans, but non-Christian excluded. Moreover by seeing it a unifier, people ignored the divide it brought to Europe.

### **Comparison between Eurikon and Europa Television**

Eurikon and Europa-TV did not have a consistent look and feel during the time the projects aired, though this was due to very different reasons. Europa-TV's changes were mostly involuntary and hurtful to its brand. Through both portrayed themselves as experimental channels, it was more important for Europa TV to look great and consistent because they had to gain viewers and attract advertisers in order to survive. Europa Television started out with an off screen continuity announcer, which Eurikon had not experimented with, and later cut the announcer entirely and replaced by announcement screens. This was most likely due to the fact that it was much cheaper for the financially troubled channel and not due to previous possible positive experiences of Eurikon week four.

Like Eurikon, Europa Television reported little on the EEC. However, what it did report was more positive compared to the negative report on summits. Interestingly enough, the

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<sup>47</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tapes 2022, 2025, 2027, 2029.

<sup>48</sup> Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tapes (a selection) 645, 601, 2016, 2018.

<sup>49</sup> '450 Jaar reformatie', *Nieuwsblad van Het Noorden*, 17 May 1986, day edition, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:011011625> and Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, Europa Television collection, VHS tape 2021, 2022.

Eurikon project had spend much airtime showing support from EEC figures, whereas Europa Television had no such endorsements aired.

Whereas Eurikon openly questioned what Europe was, Europa Television's choice in programmes hint towards the fact that staff was struggling with the question. Eurikon did provide boundaries for the discussion by the one map they used. It only showed the outlines of geographical Europe, including Russia. With this map they avoided the west/east divide that Europa TV did not. Their relationship towards Russia was more conflicted. Sometimes the USSR was presented as being similar to Europe and is included in the weather maps, other times the USSR and other communist countries were not represented at all.

Europa Television portrayed the countries that belonged to the EEC as countries with their own culture, but with shared roots, by highlighting differences while at the same time emphasizing similarities. However, compared to Eurikon, Europa Television placed much more emphasis on sameness, especially through a shared history going back to ancient times. Whereas Eurikon's power to unite is emphasized in its broadcasts, they mostly spend time on showing diversity, whereas Europa Television does the opposite.

Eurikon asks questions, without giving answer, allowing the viewer to make up their own mind. Europa TV asks the same questions, but no longer on screen. What Europe is and what European identity entailed was no longer a televised discussion, but a closed, private discussion in a studio in Hilversum. With its commercialization towards the end of its life, it became clear that the discussion on what European culture entailed, shifted to 'how can we reach as much viewers as possible?' With the question of European culture out of way, the commercial side of the European television dream surfaced. A side that had been embedded in the original experiment. The problems Eurikon faced, had not been solved by the time Europa Television started broadcasting. With much of my thesis centered around the question whether or not it could have been a success and understanding why the project had failed, this is an important conclusion. Problems Europa Television came across were not new, but surfaced two years before. Europa Television faced many problems due a stalemate on a European level on television policy as well as indecision amongst national public broadcasters.

With that being said, this was only an example of what analysis can be made of this rich material. In order for both project to be analyzed participating broadcasters need to work

together and possibly try to create a joined collection. Like the Eurikon and Europa Television project this would be difficult, but an interesting learning experience.