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**POLICY BRIEF: Main Findings and Recommendations
for Effective Communication Strategies on Europe**

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POLICY BRIEF

Main Findings and Recommendations Regarding Media Communication in and on Europe and the EU

Deliverable (D20) EMEDIATE project

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The EMEDIATE research project has studied the development of a European public sphere in the post war period. We define the European public sphere as an arena of communication where political, cultural and economic actors and ideas are discussed and distributed, negated and negotiated – always in reference to and dependent on a market as well as mechanisms that political actors address and with which they must accommodate themselves.

We have approached the public sphere issue through an assessment of the role of media which constitute and develop the public sphere. The growth of mass media after the Second World War has led to a deepening integration of national public spheres. Newspapers, television and radio have given Europe a formidable selection of opinion building media. Furthermore, mass media are the primary means of access to a European public sphere and they are the main producers and reproducers of European issues, taking up debates on European subjects, such as immigration, BSE, or the inclusion of Turkey in the EU. Media are thus key factors of the European public sphere, reflecting and at the same time creating issues of European scope.

Our second field of investigation has been the role of editorial cultures in creating a European public sphere. We have investigated how national news-making traditions have become intertwined into a global news reporting culture. Newspapers, television channels, radio, and Internet today are constituted by a network of transnational companies and relations; the shift from publicly to privately run media has been decisive. We have thus sought to assess the role of news production processes in constituting a European public sphere.

Third, the project has created a visual archive on Europe. This archive contains a large number of images that symbolise Europe and/or the EU. These images are assembled in particular ways to create different narratives on Europe and in particular on European integration during the post war period. There are official narratives proposed by EU institutions but also unofficial or counter-narratives proposed by other actors and/or created and commented upon by the

EMEDIATE research team. The scope of this visual archive is to analyse the role of visual communication in the construction of the European public sphere.

In this policy paper, we shall present briefly the main findings from these four distinctive areas of research and we shall also produce some policy recommendations regarding the development of a European public sphere and in particular with regard to the promotion of a distinctive European ethics in public communication.

Media Analysis and Recommendations

Our media discourse analysis has concentrated on how Europe, as an ethically charged idea, has been negotiated during selected periods of crisis (defined as crisis eras) in (a) the national public spheres of selected countries and (b) in a transnational European public sphere. Thus, by presenting *a set of case-studies of media discourse on the key Crisis Events of the post-War European history*, we attempt to explain the difference between the two phenomena (national vs. transnational/European public sphere). We therefore investigate whether the media-negotiation of Crisis Events of post-war European history gave rise to the elaboration of different (European) values, to the construction of different conceptions of Europe (and of the related notions of Europeanness, European identity), and, whether and how discourses on Europe and values were linked in media discourses.

Our case-studies of media discourse have analysed the media coverage of the following crisis events in post war European history:

1. The revolution in Budapest and the subsequent intervention of the Soviet troops in Hungary in October and November 1956;
2. The definite separation of East- (i.e. Soviet-controlled) and West-Berlin through the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961;
3. The student and worker protests in Paris, France in May of 1968;
4. The political reform in Czechoslovakia and the following invasion of the country by the Soviet-controlled Warsaw-Pact forces in August 1968;
5. The imposition of the 'State of War' in Poland by the Soviet-puppet and military-controlled Polish government in December 1981;
6. The opening of the border between East- and West-Berlin and the following 'fall of the Berlin Wall' in November 1989;
7. The US and its allied forces' invasion of Iraq and the outbreak of the Second Gulf War in March 2003;
8. The debate on the Publishing of the Mohammed Cartoons in several European countries in February 2006.

These eight events situated in eight crisis periods form a thread running through contemporary European history (largely parallel to the 'history of the European integration processes) and represent some of the major political challenges faced by European countries since the Second World War.

Main Findings on the National Media Reporting on Europe and the EU

● Europe is not there, where it would be expected to dominate media discourses

→ Absence of references to Europe and European identity or values in the countries whose 'Europeanness' could be taken for granted like (Western) Germany, France, Italy and other Western-European countries such as Austria and Sweden. It appears that these countries take their Europeanness for granted either because they are among the founding members of the European Union or because they consider themselves historically as part of the 'core' of Europe.
→ Presence in countries which needed to redefine, or invent anew, their Europeanness, like Poland and Slovenia after 1989.

● Different 'Eastern' and 'Western' Media Approaches to European issues

Naturally the different socio-political context in Central Eastern and in Western Europe during the immediate post war decades and until 1989 characterises the media discourses on Europe:

→ In the 'West': 'Europe' appears in the media coverage of May 1968 events in Paris while references to the European Union rather than Europe become dominant since the late 1980s and increasingly so in the 1990s.

→ In the 'East': there are no references to Europe or the EU before 1989 but 'Europe' becomes an important framework in the 1990s during the geopolitical and symbolic re-organization of the continent. It is only in the first decade of the 21st century that references to the European Union gain significance in the Central Eastern European media discourses.

● 'Europe' Arrives Late

→ In Western Europe (West Germany, Britain, Italy, and the Netherlands, except France) there are hardly any media debates about European values or identity. It appears that Europe is taken for granted in these countries, hence it is not a matter or value dimension to be discussed during the crisis events coverage analysed.

→ In peripheral European countries (Spain and Greece in the south, Ireland in the West), the interest of the media in Europe starts only after internal political problems are solved (i.e. the transition to democracy in Greece and Spain in the mid-1970s, the end of deep economic recession and the gradual growth in Ireland since mid 1970s, the phased end of the Northern Irish conflict in Ulster since mid 1980s).

→ In the former Communist countries of Central Eastern Europe, debates on European values, identity or generally on Europe as a socio-political or historical entity were not possible before 1989.

● 'Europe' is Perceived through the National Filter

→ Generally the national media initiate debates on 'Europe' when it is useful for national (total/partial) interests and their legitimation in a broader, transnational perspective

→ Europe would not appear in the national public spheres if it would not serve the national-political aims the media-based debates

→ 'Europe has only existed as an invention of states' as Malmberg and Strath argued in 2002.

● **‘Europe’ is eclipsed by the ‘EU’ in recent times**

→ Most of the ‘Europe-related’ debates since the late 1980s were initiated in the wake of the European integration process or EU related issues/questions.

→ Reporting/discussions on the EU gradually conflated with previous general debates on ‘Europe’

→ There are temporal differences in the development of these debates in different countries. Generally Western European countries which are also the first member states started referring to the EU around the time of the Single European Act in the 1980s. Central Eastern European media wake up to the EU debate only as negotiations for membership of their countries to the EU take place in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s.

→ There are also important qualitative differences in the ways in which Europe and the EU are referred to in the different national media. In the Western countries references to the EU are clear – what Europe and the EU is appears a settled matter even if competing national interests are noted. In Central Eastern countries references to the EU are ambivalent – is European integration a good or a bad thing, what is Europe and what is the EU, these appear as contested issues in the Central Eastern European media.

● **Positive Representations of the European Union in the 1990s**

→ During the 1990s the EU is presented in the national media as a reason for general, philosophical, ethical and other discussions on Europe ‘as a whole.’ This relates to the geopolitical reconnection of the European continent after 1989.

→ There are reflections on the changing character of the EU from a single market to a political Union. The media during this period also question whether the EU is and/or can be the socio-political embodiment of European ‘Unity’

→ During the 1990s we may argue that a European Public Sphere develops dynamically. However it did not last for long.

● **Negative Representations of the European Union since the late 1990s**

→ The earlier ‘general’ debates on what Europe and the EU is or should be were gradually replaced by debates focused on the institutional aspects (i.e. the changing EU institutional structure, subsequent treaties, regulatory depth of the EU, etc.) becoming thus rather technical and less symbolic or identity-oriented.

→ In connection to this technical representation of Europe and the EU, we notice a revival of the ‘national filter’: representations of the national ‘we’ precede over references to a common European ‘we.’

More specifically, we note the following **negative aspects**:

→ **The representation of Europe becomes more limited, defined by the European integration process rather than the reverse:**

→ ‘European space’ ≈ ‘area of the EU’,

→ ‘Europeanness’ ≈ current/potential EU-membership,

→ ‘European values’ ≈ EU Values

→‘**Functional**’ concepts crucial for the EU such as democracy are re-defined. For instance, **democracy**: (the Swedish media reporting on the EU-14 Sanctions related to Haider against Austria) The sanctions are interpreted as ‘undemocratic’ and undermining the ‘democratic’ Austrian elections. This type of criticism postulates a comeback of ‘democracy’ to the national level where it is really taken care of and a questioning of the democratic credentials of the EU.

→There is a revival of the dialectic between ‘we’ the nation, and the ‘EU’ which is seen as part of the we but also as a distinct and foreign entity with whom the nation has to negotiate: ‘**EU-Constitution**’ is a key issue in the Polish weekly press in 2004-05. Thus there is a representation of the national in-group as part of the EU through the discussion of the ‘Polish preamble’ in the Constitution that became a hot topic in the press. At the same time, there is a discussion of the EU’s stance towards Poland with regard to the maintenance of the voting mechanism established in the Nice treaty for the EU Council which favored Poland.

Concluding Remarks

●The ‘Media-Public’ Dimension in the Early Debates of the 1980s

→For the Media it is clear ‘why’ a reform of the EU must take place (Enlargement(s), etc.) and hence the tone of the reporting is positive towards Europe and the EU

→In the same period, it is the positive perception of the ‘EU’ as a unifying force of ‘Europe’ after the end of the Cold War that matters most for public opinion

●The ‘Media-Public’ Dimension in the Recent Debates (late 1990s onwards)

→The debates on Europe in the media become more complex: ever more institutional aspects are reported but the ‘deepening’ of the EU cannot be properly explained to readers by sole reference to institutional mechanisms when earlier symbolic conceptions of Europe gradually lose their force

→The technical nature of the debates on Europe and the EU are also difficult to report and comprehend leading to negative representations of the EU in the media reporting.

What has gone wrong?

● **The object of media communication, i.e. the EU** loses its conceptual and ideational force necessary for its public legitimation at times of political and institutional reforms

→ There is no strong myth or symbol to replace the contested existences of a ‘European identity’,

→ At the same time the convergence and conflation between a wider political and symbolic idea of Europe and a concrete, delimited and economic reality of the European Union becomes problematic. The symbolic dynamics of Europe are not transferred to the EU which remains a ‘cold’ entity that cannot arouse feelings of belonging to its citizens nor can it effectively sustain the widening (continuing enlargements) and deepening (Constitutional Chart) process.

● **The subject of communication i.e. the media influence the type of reporting through their own codes and practices of newsmaking:**

→ **‘news reports must be simple and easy to digest’:** when the complexity of EU affairs is neglected, the only item to report that is simple are the ‘problems’

→ **‘negative events and crises are newsworthy events’:** the ‘problems’ and conflicts within the EU have a high news value, they attract the attention of the readers/audiences. The achievements of EU institutions and/or their contribution to socio-economic or political development are not particularly newsworthy because they are usually very specific and technical, they are not dramatic in character.

→ During the last decade, **the ‘national filter’** is revived in the national media: national understandings of the EU and national interests or conflicts between member states prevail over a value dimension of the EU (e.g. in relation to democracy or peace) that is denied or simply neglected.

Policy recommendations for effective communication on Europe

→ The EU must find its conceptual and ideational power to **legitimise its deepening and widening** – stop reheating the old concepts such as peace and identity, invent new meanings and symbols: reinvent **social solidarity in post-industrial societies**

→ EU institutions must further develop information and communication policies that **simplify their public image, explain in plain language their work and achievements.**

→ **Promote the European rather than the national meanings of Europe** and their relevance for the EU. **Invent common meanings of Europe** that resonate in all countries.

→ **The value dimension of the EU should** remain in place and **be emphasised**

→ The news value of events must be re-defined: **positive developments can be presented in dramatic and sensational ways to attract the public’s attention** (positive example: the launch of the Euro currency and its celebratory coverage in early 2002)

→ **Strengthen the role of transnational and European media** is crucial in creating a European public sphere

→ **Link up transnational and European media with national media corporations.** Use new interactive media technologies of cabled TV to involve the viewer in the construction of a European-national set of news. Also demonstrate that Europe united has an important responsibility and can be a positive actor in world politics with far more clout than any single Member State.

The Role of National Editorial Cultures in Reporting on Europe and the EU

European-centred studies form a relatively small portion of the existing knowledge base on news and editorial cultures in the eleven EU countries studied (France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the U.K.) In essence, the academic research literature generally reflects the wider situation whereby **European and EU related news and current affairs topics tend to play a relatively minor and sporadic role in the overall content of the mass media.** This trend is not necessarily the consequence of any anti-European/EU bias (although it may be so in some cases). Rather, to a great extent, it merely **reflects the operations of more general selection processes and shifts in news values and journalistic practices, including:**

- The long-established pattern whereby national news and current affairs topics have always had a privileged status relative to the seemingly ‘foreign’ ;
- The declining role of ‘hard’ news in favour of softer and more celebrity-focused news;
- The related shift towards more entertainment, sports and lifestyle orientated media content;
- A consequent squeeze on ‘foreign’ news and current affairs reports (other than sports, travel and tourism issues)

The majority of the relevant studies also tend to clearly emphasise that EU issues are still largely treated and viewed via a specifically national media culture or set of news-making values.

But here, we may also note that the British case poses some interesting questions or ironies as to the meaning of such ‘national’ news values, frames or prisms in the early 21st century. Two of the British newspapers that are most likely to invoke ‘national’ cultural values and traditions in their avidly anti-European discourses happen to be effectively owned and controlled by a powerful multi-national (multi-) media mogul who traded his Australian citizenship for US citizenship in recent years.

Newsmaking Cultures and Reporting on Europe

The EMEDIATE research teams in different countries have conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 90 journalists in the countries covered. The major findings largely concur with those indicated by the survey of the research literature. The interviews with media practitioners underline the **newsmaking factors** which serve to limit the extent of coverage of EU and European news topics, their treatment through a specific ‘national prism’ and the essentially national dimension of news cultures.

The findings suggest that **it is to all intents and purposes impossible to create a common informational or editorial product across national/cultural boundaries in the short or medium-term horizons.** The intrinsic ethnocentrism of journalism cultures means that there is a possibility for a ‘European’ editorial product in each culture only if that product’s own style and content is consonant with those of the culture in which its anticipated consumers live.

Our study predominantly targeted **relatively senior editors and correspondents with an established track-record of experience** relevant to the research questions. These senior and well-established journalists are less likely to experience such working/contractual pressures or pressures from economic/political players.

The Hungarian study found that there was a decrease in the number of journalists who stated that they enjoyed remarkable freedom in their choice of topics compared to the findings of prior studies conducted in 1992 and 1997. At the same time, the Hungarian interviewees noted a considerable increase in the number of those journalists who reported attempts by economic actors to influence their writings.

Overall, many of our interviewees in the different countries acknowledged that they know that there were **attempts coming from economic and political players to influence the work of individual journalists** in media institutions other than their own. Overall it seems that they would not openly talk about political/economic pressure in an interview where they could be easily identified. At the same time, it is worth noting that media professionals working in executive positions have very different status, roles and tasks compared to journalists doing the actual fieldwork and reporting.

Where journalists from alternative or dissident (non-mainstream) media are interviewed, as in the Italian study, they often present a more optimistic view of trends with respect to investigative journalism.

In all countries covered, there is a striking convergence of findings concerning **the absence of any shared ‘European’ dimension to journalistic cultures**. In this regard, the French case is typical of the findings for most countries:

‘there is no European journalism as such but journalists addressing European issues from different media, different socio-political and cultural backgrounds, using different languages Most interviewees point out that a European journalistic culture is a mere utopia. There cannot be common references as professional practices are marked by national traditions or systems of interpretation’ (quote from French study).

The importance of the ‘national prism’ in the selection and packaging of any EU/Europe related news items was confirmed by the interviewees in the Netherlands, who claimed this was the condition for making news about Europe newsworthy and for tailoring the news to their audiences. As in other countries, several interviewees also emphasised the need to translate or link European issues to the question of how decision-making in Brussels affects ordinary citizens in their daily lives – hinting at economic or quality of life influences, consumer-oriented interests attributed to audiences.

In comparing French and British accredited correspondents in Brussels, two very different journalistic approaches are observed: European issues are dealt with in a political way by British journalists while French correspondents favour a more technical and expert point of view.

Changing Roles for Public Service Broadcasting

The prominent role of **public service broadcasting (PSB)** has been one of the most distinctive features of the media landscapes found in almost all European countries since the mid-twentieth century. PSB is frequently characterised as being framed around a specific editorial culture and attendant journalistic ethos ('to educate, inform and entertain' as the BBC's first director-general defined it) combined with a commitment to a diversity of both programming content and universal service with respect to the national audience.

The precise definitions and formats deemed to express the specific editorial culture of PSB have evolved and changed significantly in recent decades in line with changing socio-cultural norms, policy shifts as well as the competitive and inter-textual relations prevailing between PSB and the increasing range of commercial broadcast services. The result has been that the relative roles of PSB services have declined significantly in most EU countries compared to the situation some 10-20 years ago.

One major source for such developments have been policy changes at both the national and EU levels. At the same time, **the increasing role and power of commercial broadcasting services**, allied to public policies favouring such competition, has led to a certain convergence in the programming content, schedules and formats of PSB services and their competitors.

In some countries, as the British national report indicates, the public service broadcaster is deemed (by governmental appointed inquiries) to have **a special responsibility for the provision of 'European' news and current affairs coverage** – including the 'education' of the public with respect to such affairs. Such policy strategies may be highly limited in their impacts or even counter productive. Given the overall policy pressures and increasing economic pressures framing the operations of PSB services, their potential role in this regard is highly limited. Indeed, the research considered here suggests that **such policy strategies may even be counter-productive**.

Clearly, the issues surrounding PSB should be looked at also in the perspective of audience. In some countries PSB viewing has declined to a tiny fraction of the total audience, especially those where there has been a distinct failure to ensure institutional insulation of PSB from direct government influence, like Greece. In other countries, such as Britain and Ireland, PSB shares of broadcasting audiences have remained relatively high. There is a need for some fundamental research in this area to examine **the scope and potential of maintaining a future role for PSB as a distinct feature and domain of journalistic culture in European countries**.

Paradoxically, it may well be that **PSB**, although formerly criticised for its uniformity and even, in certain cultures, an unwillingness to explore controversial issues because of apprehension about the role of governments and regulators, **may now offer one of the best**, and in some countries perhaps the only, **locale of media diversity in a world in which all commercial media are increasingly serving up the same product**.

EU-related Information and Media Practices

Our study identified significant difficulties in dealing with EU information. The French report notes that this ‘is a real concern’ and indicates how the relevant research helps to reveal ‘how difficult it is for journalists to depart from their “national” editorial culture’ (France, WP3: 15). There is a lack of opening to a common European journalistic culture. The reasons for this are manifold:

One is the **growing competition in a context of declining standards in media practices**. In order to attract and keep their audience, journalists and media executives tend to adjust to people’s everyday centres of interest. EU policy must be related to people’s practical experience and in terms of consequences in their everyday life’ and, indeed, the national prism or framework, with its array of culturally-embedded references, indicates a way to mediate European issues.

Even though the **advertising industry** stepped long ago into the European area, most of its **markets are still national or regional**. This remains true of many countries such as France, where regional dailies or even private TV channels target specific audiences.

As members of a national/regional community and culture, journalists share and echo the general concerns of ordinary citizens as well as their government policies.

One key source of the problem lies in **the shift from an information-based editorial culture towards a more entertainment-oriented culture**, i.e. what is often called *infotainment*. In that particular context, some of the European issues would be difficult to explain to viewers, listeners and readers.

It is also instructive to consider the implications arising from EU-level policies, impacting on the media and cultural industries sectors. **Recent EU and national media policies have operated to support or amplify the increasing competition and commercial pressures operating on editorial cultures**. This is perhaps, most clearly manifest in the case of television – still the ‘dominant medium’, not only with respect to audience time-use, but also in terms of the main source of citizens’ news and current affairs information. One notable aspect of EU-level policies is the tendency to define and treat television as a service industry, a business that is now subject to the same economic calculus as any other. In effect, if not necessarily in intent, such policies operate to amplify the commercial and competitive pressures operating on journalistic practices and editorial cultures ~ pressures which discourage the serious and sustained treatment of foreign news, including that related to European affairs.

Final Comments and Policy Recommendations

Our study clearly points to **the relative absence of a ‘European’ dimension in contemporary news cultures**. This is no real surprise in light of the specialist research literature related to the international communication and journalism studies field.

Whilst we find many references to **a crisis in EU communications** – the so-called democratic deficit – our research shows that there may also be **a crisis in journalism**, not least of a kind indicated in the report on the British editorial culture. Ironically, this seems to be happening at a time when, according to many accounts, that same Anglo-Saxon model of journalism is becoming the dominant model internationally.

There appears to be **a distinct absence of joined-up policy for the communication sector at the EU level**. On the one hand, the major contours of public policy for all communication sub-sectors, have been determined at the EU-level to an increasing extent over the past 20 years. On the other hand, the cumulative effects of these policies at the level of media ‘content’ services – including news and current affairs – has been pushing towards a distinct privileging of commercially orientated and economic logics leading to ‘lite-news’ and entertainment orientated (or infotainment) news forms and formats. **These policy trends and resultant media developments do not really favour or support the treatment of novel and complex news events related EU or ‘European’ events and developments.**

These same EU-level policy trends and resultant media developments also result in the erosion of the role and status of public service orientated media (eg. PSB), which have traditionally sought to ‘inform’ and ‘educate’ as well as merely ‘entertain’ their audiences and publics.

Indeed, we may further note that when it comes to the media content services sub-sector, **USA-based media firms and industry have been the major beneficiaries of the expanding array of communication networks and infrastructures in the EU area** (despite successive EU media policy statements proclaiming a contrary mission and expectation).

Thus, **an urgent and fundamental revision of this lack of joined-up policy for the communication sector at the EU level seems to be required on two grounds:**

- **if the EU mission is to seriously engage and mobilise support from major portions of the citizenry of its member states, and**
- **if the EU is to develop a coherent strategy for the role of communication to advance its geo-political aims.**

The Visual Archive on Europe

Results and Recommendations

The construction of the Archive of Visual Europe including the concomitant research involved in and motivated by its production within the framework of the EMEDIATE project have produced a number of results that lead to the formulation of recommendations for effective communication strategies upon a European level.

Insofar as it created a **collection of photographs** (some of which are considered iconic) depicting key events in the six crisis eras defined as European it offers an **alternative basis from which the notion of a European public sphere can be discussed**. This is the case because much of the criticism of the conjectured the existence of a conventionally conceived European public sphere and European journalism has centred on the problematic of linguistic pluralism of Europe. This was indeed confirmed in the literally based Editorial Cultures segment of EMEDIATE's research as mentioned in the above. Although photographs were understood differently even diametrically as opposed to literal texts **photographs do not require literal translation to be comprehensible to masses of individuals** no matter which languages they speak and the often divergent interpretations of these photos have merged since their inception. In addition the linking of them the Archive tells a new European history and offers a new platform for its dissemination.

A paradigmatic example of the importance and neglect of **photographs within the framework of our research as belonging to shared public sphere and discourse** can be seen in the discussions that followed the publication of the images of Willy Brandt genuflecting before the monument to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising on 7 November 1970. Brandt travelled to Warsaw to sign the "Treaty of Warsaw" committing West Germany and Poland to non-violence and existing borders. The signing was almost immediately eclipsed by the knee-fall which took place on a diplomatic side trip because photographs of the act were widely published. **These photos made the event, in a profound sense they were the event, and preserve it in a public sphere through the present**. This is not to say that photographs are independent from the literal and exist without text, but that they can stamp and construct intensely.

The initial reception in this case although universally strong, was not universally positive. The knee-fall was referred to in West Germany as a "Canossagang", a trope known as an act of submission that is unjust, unwilling or coerced. In the Western world the photographs contributed significantly to heightened respect for Germany. **It would later be widely recognized as one significant act promoting the re-entry of Germany into European politics**. Brandt became *Time Magazine's* "Man of the Year" in December of 1970 almost immediately following the event and the bestowal of the Nobel Peace Prize upon Brandt 1971 was certainly and acknowledgement of this photographic event as well as concurrent Ostpolitik.

Although historical sociological contexts are central to understanding the event, much of **its power is related to the way it was visually mediated** in the form of photographs appearing in the press and then and then in innumerable books, exhibitions and on line. These, the roles of

the visual and the photographs of the act, are an aspect not addressed in most analyses of Brandt's knee fall. There **the event itself is overwhelmingly narrated literally**.

Ironically the introductory paragraph to the contemporary confrontation with the photo in the leading West German magazine *Der Spiegel* reads, "Almost every newspaper in West Germany printed the image ... (b)ut almost no newspaper printed a commentary..." The phrase was **not intended to emphasise the visual importance of the photograph but criticise the lack of published opinions** about an event that it claimed few individual citizens did not voice opinions.

The **act's power to change Germany's perception in the world and maintain relevance through the present would not have been possible without the photographs** of the event, and little would have been written about it since. The photograph is an important element in the **connection of political history with the real immediate experience** and an instrument in politics. In fact it is plausible that **the event would have had little or no meaning had it not been photographed**, or if the photos were not reproduced in the international media. Although both the contexts and the photographs stamp many of us through the present, **the most potent experiences of the event, those marking and imparting meaning upon it are visual**. Therein lies an important message both for those attempting to deepen the integration of and communication in the European Union as well as those analysing the process.

The archive, in a wider sense, is an **exploration of the at times ambiguous, contradictory and banal imaginary discourses in and of Europe** that transcend exclusive oppositional discourses and point towards a number of pluralities and contradictions that have been indicated in much of contemporary research on Europe. Most recently the concept "Europhrenia" was proposed to describe this situation.* In the wake of these oppositional discourses **history has been devalued**, while the memory industry which is not limited to literal expression, has prospered and the imprecise concept of **memory has been elevated to a primary cultural and political value**.

In cultural studies, the exclusive oppositional discourses that contributed to Eurphrenia, are what Barbara Maria Stafford calls a "vacancy of our current disciplinary and social landscape, voided of anything standing tangibly between oppositional choices and glutted by innumerable competing esoteric differences." If this is the contemporary fare, then analogy, specifically visual analogy, not extended beyond hermeneutical excess, provides an additional element of aesthetics and offers a broadening alternative. That is to say, beyond **merely employing visual images as sources to political history, they also are used as an expression of research of political history in the visual archive**. Photographs as material representations and analogies, translators and communicators of the past offer part of a solution insofar as **photographs have the capacity to provide a tool that imparts credibility though their capacity for verisimilitude** in the preservation and reproduction of detail.

Additionally, just as Susan Sontag claimed that photography changed the way we see, transformed the very language and grammar of seeing and that almost everything imaginable

* Strath Triandafyllidou "New Europe at a Crossroads" in EURONAT Chap 1.

has been photographed in the human thirst to capture, **contemporary computer information technology has had a profound effect upon the way we communicate and has arguably begun to change the way we think.** It forms new communities and multiplies the qualities and quantities of information forms of expression as well as the range of tools currently at the disposal of over a billion individuals worldwide. As humans once used photographic technology computer technology has been used to accrue almost everything that imagination has invented both literally as well as in narration. Beyond this, the Visual Archive orders and creates relationships of knowledge in a manner that surpasses the ordering capacity and possibility of photography. The **Archive of Visual Europe provides a collection of images in which a plural iconography of Europe is available and accessible to media professionals, journalists, governments and users with particular applications in the pedagogic sphere.** It categorises and links these images along a set of semantic connotations of European values/ethics utopian and dystopian, making them retrievable and combinable in narrative forms revealing a visual aspect of the European Public Sphere that has long been ignored.