

## The European Union: Policy Challenges in a New Media Era

*Beatrice Covassi, Visiting EU Fellow*

### Instructor

**Ms. Beatrice Covassi** is Leader of the Digital Broadcasting Sector in the Directorate-General for Information Society and Media of the European Commission, Brussels. She is the Visiting EU Fellow at George Mason University for the Fall Semester 2008.

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### Scope and objectives

New digital technologies are profoundly changing today's media landscape in Europe and throughout the world. Convergence between e-communications and broadcasting is blurring the boundaries between network and content regulation. Mobile TV, TV 2.0, Internet TV, and digital interactive television, all characterized by mobility and interactivity, also offer new ways to create, deliver and consume digital content, making the sector key not only for telecom operators and broadcasters, but also for content and culture producers, including the cinema industry. This course identifies the main challenges for policy-making with regard to the new digital media landscape, including technology, spectrum and content. The course will help students to understand how a rapidly-evolving, visionary policy domain is unfolding in the EU and compare policy approaches on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ms. Covassi is a practitioner of EU policy-making in the Information Society field. Students will have a unique opportunity to get a first-hand view on EU affairs and current policy debates. This course has a strong emphasis on participation and personal initiative of the students. It is structured in an interactive way, encouraging debate and critical approaches. The course foresees participation of industry and public sector representatives as guests in key sessions, subject to availability.

### Student Requirements

Students will be evaluated on the following:

- **Class participation** (20% of your final grade)
- **Weekly assignments** (40% of your final grade) Each student will be asked to prepare at least three times throughout the term a **policy briefing** on the main topics of a specific session.
- The students will have to present a **research paper** on a topic of their choice. This paper should address core questions related to the changing ICT and

media landscape, identify case studies and propose innovative or alternative policy approaches. (40% of your final grade). *New Voices in Public Policy*: I will consider nominating the very best papers in this course for publication in *New Voices in Public Policy*. *New Voices* is a student- and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP's finest student work with the rest of the world.

## **Policies**

Reminder to students in this course: You must be prepared to dedicate about 5-8 hours per week outside of class to meet the normal workload, all of which is writing, research and analysis. Please remember that 20% of your final grade will be based on class participation.

**Statement on special needs of students:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

The course follows the **SPP Policy on Plagiarism**, as follows:

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

**Late Submission of Research Papers:** All papers should be submitted on time. Any paper submitted after the deadline will be penalized.

**Mobile Phones:** Please be courteous to your colleagues and instructor by turning off your mobile phone before entering the classroom.

## Schedule of classes

### Week 1 - Introduction

This session will explore the content and objectives of the course. In this session we will also start looking at **policy-making in the EU**: the institutional game and the representation of interests, with concrete examples from the Information Society & Media field. We will look not only at the check and balances in the institutional framework of the Union but also at the practice of the policy-making process.

*Reading & background material:*

Elizabeth Bomberg, Alexander Stubb (Editor), *The European Union: How Does it Work?*, Oxford University Press, USA; 2nd edition (2008)

John Pinder, Simon Usherwood, *The European Union: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, USA; 2nd edition (2008)

Treaty of Lisbon (*selected parts*): [http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm)

### Week 2 - EU policy-making and the "Information Society"

During this week we will deepen the analysis of EU policy making and look more specifically at policy-making in the field of the "**Information Society**". We will look at this policy area in the EU context and analyse what are the main concepts and policy objectives behind, the main actors and their interplay. This area is characterised by strong interactions between the EU level, the national level and industry players, which makes it a very good case-study for EU policy-making. The session will also include a short historical excursus on role of the State in market development (market-led vs. dirigisme, mixed model) and market data comparison for ICT in US/EU.

*Reading & background material:*

In addition to reading for Week 1:

EU thematic portal on the Information Society:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/index_en.htm)

EU i2010 initiative:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm)

### Week 3 – From Telecoms to Communications 2.0: the path of change

A couple of decades ago the European Commission issued a "*Green Paper on the convergence of the telecommunications, media and information technology sectors and the implications for regulation*". It is however only in recent times that we have started seeing convergent technologies and services become available on the market. This session will sketch in an historic perspective the change path of communications from the telecom-centric world to Communications 2.0. We will introduce and examine the key concept of convergence which is central to the whole course.

*Reading & background material:*

Joseph W. Goodman (2006), *Telecommunications Policy-making in the European Union*. (selected parts)

European Commission, Convergence Green Paper:  
<http://icttoolkit.infodev.org/en/Publication.1500.html>

#### **Week 4 – The "Telecom" World**

*Guest speaker: AT&T (tbc)*

The focus of this session will be the evolution of telecommunications from "public utilities" to gradual liberalisation. We will look at how telecom liberalisation has unfolded in the EU and the US. We will examine the main characteristics of regulation and markets.

*Reading & background material:*

- The EU regulatory framework for electronic communications  
[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/ecomm/current/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/ecomm/current/index_en.htm)

- US regulatory framework  
Telecommunications Act of 1996 : <http://www.fcc.gov/telecom.html>

Philip M. Napoli, *The Unique Nature of Communications Regulation: Evidence and Implications for Communications Policy Analysis*, in: *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, Vol. 43, 1999.

#### **Week 5 – The Broadcasting World**

In this session we look at broadcasting and its specificities. We will identify the objectives of broadcasting regulation with particular reference to cultural policy and diversity in the EU. In particular we will examine the EU approach as set out in the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive. We will also look at the broadcasting, content industry and its evolution.

*Reading & background material:*

- EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive  
[http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/avms/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/avms/index_en.htm)

Mira Burri-Nenova, *The New Audiovisual Media Services Directive: Television without frontiers, television without cultural diversity*, CMLR, 2007, 44: 1689-1725

Eli M. Noam: "Why TV regulation will become telecom regulation", in: *Communications - The next decade: A collection of essays prepared for the UK Office of Communications*  
<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/commsdecade/comms10full.pdf>

The public and broadcasting, FCC summary paper on broadcasting regulation, July 2008:  
[http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public\\_and\\_broadcasting.pdf](http://www.fcc.gov/mb/audio/decdoc/public_and_broadcasting.pdf)

## **Week 6 – The Internet**

*Guest speaker: GOOGLE (tbc)*

This session will focus on the Internet world, its main characteristics and evolution. We will address some of the most important issues on the agenda today, such as Internet governance, privacy v. security and net freedoms. We will ask whether the Internet could/should be regulated and if yes to what extent and how.

*Reading & background material:*

EU Internet governance:

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/policy/internet\\_gov/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/internet_gov/index_en.htm)

## **Week 7 – The New ICT Ecosystem**

In this session we will ask whether it is possible to talk about a new ICT ecosystem. What are the main characteristics of new media? We will explore more closely the reality behind concepts such as **digitization, convergence, interactivity and networks and networking**.

*Reading & background material:*

Martin Fransman, *The New ICT Ecosystem. Implications for Europe*, Kokoro (2007)

Terry Flew, *New Media. An Introduction* (3rd edition), Oxford University Press (2003)

## **Week 8 – Current trends (1): mobility**

*Guest speaker: Qualcomm (tbc)*

What do ubiquitous communications mean? What does communicating while on the move imply? The session will explore the increasingly important role of mobile & wireless communications. Communicating "anywhere anytime" has become one important trend and in some European countries mobile telephony has taken over fixed lines. We will also examine important new trends, such as Mobile TV, and draw EU and US markets comparisons. In terms of policy-making, we will address mobile communications regulation and the main challenges related to mobility both in terms of ensuring seamless communications (roaming, interoperability, connectivity) and in terms of content (multi-territorial rights).

*Reading & background material:*

EU Mobile & Wireless Communications

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/tl/industry/comms/mobile/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/tl/industry/comms/mobile/index_en.htm)

EU Roaming thematic portal

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/roaming/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/roaming/index_en.htm)

### **Week 9 – Current trends (2): interactivity and a user-centric world**

Interactivity is a very powerful drive in today's communications. The expression "2.0", taken from the Internet world has become today a common way to indicate that a platform has interactive features (e.g., TV 2.0). What does interactivity mean and what are its implications? In this session will also take a closer look at the increasing shift of power towards users: e.g., P2P, Wikipedia, Open Source, UGC. We will also look at social networks and web communities such as Facebook and Second Life. We will ask ourselves if and to what extent these phenomena are affecting the fundamental structure of the ICT ecosystem. We will look at new ways of content creation and consumption and address some of the critical issues for policy-making.

*Reading & background material:*

Vincent Bonneau & Michel Gensollen (editors), *Web 2.0 – The Internet as a Digital Common*, Communications & Strategies, No. 65 (2007), IDATE

[http://www.forbes.com/2007/06/04/television-new-look-oped-cx\\_eh\\_0605tvnewlook.html](http://www.forbes.com/2007/06/04/television-new-look-oped-cx_eh_0605tvnewlook.html)

<http://www.videojug.com/interview/stephen-fry-web-20>

### **Week 10 – Which policy for the new media landscape?**

*Roundtable with industry, consultants and FCC representatives (tbc)*

This session will address the key forward looking policy questions and will draw conclusions from the analysis carried out during the course. Are current policy and regulatory approaches adequate? What are the main challenges for policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic? Do we have any specific recommendations we would address to policy makers?

*Reading & background material:*

John Naughton: "Our changing media ecosystem" in: Communications - The next decade

A collection of essays prepared for the UK Office of Communications,

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/commsdecade/comms10full.pdf>

Leonard Waverman: "The challenges of a digital world and the need for a new regulatory paradigm", in: Communications - The next decade A collection of essays prepared for the UK Office of Communications,

<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/commsdecade/comms10full.pdf>

### **Weeks 11- 14: Discussion of research papers**