

'DEBATING EUROPE' WORKSHOP 2014

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* This text summarizes the workshop's thread only as informal notes, and does not pretend to be a theoretic corpus.

* Sorry for my creolized english (if something is not understandable, please say it to me!)

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The essentials

You enter the profession, and the specialization on european affairs, at the moment when both are going to invent their new form, their new style, their new position into the changing world, or they will vanish.

Because the current journalism's crisis is the hardest I have ever seen, and I have seen a lot of crisis in a quarter of century. Newspapers are closing, televisions and radios are closing, the ones dont close, fire hundreds and thousands of journalists. The main journalists who get hired in this days have ridiculous wages. And the so called new media generate little jobs, not well paid or not paid at all, and mostly in a kind of functions that is not exactly, exactly for what freedom of press was invented once upon a time.

Journalism specialized on european matters lives an even worst crisis. The euroscepticism (maybe caused in part by the way in which european journalism has been done for the last two decades) makes that today there is little place for european affairs in the mainstream media, in the mainstream agenda.

So you are the generation that will be forced to change the european journalism, and so the european debate; Or you are going to decide to bury it definitively... Up to you.

This is a workshop and not a course. But some theoretical points are necessary before starting the practical work. I don't need you to agree with me, but I need to be sure you know from what point of

view I talk and I analyze european journalism. And, then, I will need to know your point of view.

There are two of this theoretic points which are relevant for our workshop. The first, is that for my trend and my school in journalism, a media is a political agent/actor. The second part is the existence of locks, inlocks, mostly working as taboos, which made the european debate more narrow than it could possibly be, than it has to be.

1

Each media is a political agent. Is the press a counter-power that controls and monitor the policy system in democracies (executive, legislative, judiciary)? Or, Is press, not a counter-power, but one more power, even the "fourth power"? I think that press is not a counter-power, and even less a "fourth power". I think that theories about a press which is a counter-power or a "fourth power" exaggerate the play, the part, newspapers, televisions, radios or websites can play. Worst enough, this theories place often the media outside the political system, as if they were universal gatekeepers that watch, survey, judge and punish the political agents or actors (for exemple governments, administrations or parties), and by this way they were an institutionalized power over the powers. Not for my trend.

Instead, i see that each newspaper or each one of the other media are political actors, political agents, involved in the system, its conflicts and struggles, as the european debate is. The notion of "actor" or "agent", in social sciences, is very simple: An individual or a group involved in a social action. For exemple, in our case, european political action. Medias are involved in the european political system.

So: what is different in a media, so a political actor, from the other political actors, for exemple lobbies or political parties? The specificity of media as political actors is that they --each one of they-- are at the same time:

- an organized bureaucracy;
- a collective speaker (sometimes near priest and chorus delivering ritual speeches, like in a church);
- and a bussiness.

They seek a double goal: They look for giving to their owner direct or indirect monetary profits if private (a balanced budget, if state owned or non profit organization), and they look for

influence (over the public opinion, and over deciders and elites).

If you look accurately this three parameters (bureaucratic organization, playing a part as a collective speaker, and acting in order to generate direct or indirect profits and influence), you can understand the theoretic frame in which I (and others journalists, specially coming from the professor Hector Borrat tradition, and the Missouri Group or the Glasgow Group tradition) work.

We are aware that we are inside a collective political actor/agent, bureaucratically organized, and playing a part inside the political system.

It is important because this mean that each personal gesture from you, as an individual european journalist, will have political consequences that doesn't belong to you. So even the most heroic, coward or egotistic action you can do as individual journalist, will be handled and managed by the collective political actor that media is, bureaucratically an piramydally organized.

Each media is a political agent/actor, involved in the political system, involved in that struggled named "politics" and "policies". Just as parties, political parties, governments or lobbies are.

But their specificity, their difference from governments or so, is that media dont seek for the power, or they dont want win seats in a election, or they dont battle for one specific goal, for the profit of one specific group in the society, or a particular interest.

They battle in other way. They battle to get influence over the public opinion, and over the deciders and elites. And, to do that, they use a public speach (often a polyphonic one). The speach is the visible part of their most powerful weapon, which is more global.

That is the hardcore of the issue (of course there are details --press can act as a lobby sometimes, for exemple when negociating public subsidies to the press, or you can say that i'm wrong saying that a media is a bureaucracy, because there is a powerful anarchist press --specially in France-- which is not organized as a bureacracy, or...or so...). But we will not enter this particular cases. We don't have the time and this is not important for our workshop.

The important thing is: You can see each european media as a bureaucracy, ruled as a business, who plays as a political agent amidst the political struggle just as the other actors do, and which main weapon, in his visible part, is a public polyphonic speech, which intends to get influence over the public european opinion, and over the deciders, if possible getting profits or keeping its budget balanced.

Polyphonic speech. For exemple, if you take a media as Le Monde, very important for the european debate, you can see that it has a website, and a printed newspaper, both beeing among the most important products of the 'Groupe Le Monde' Holding. There is already a polyphony between what the newspaper communicate, and what the website comunicate, even beeing both products published by the same newsroom. Their respective speeches are a polyphony. But even inside the single newspaper, for example, you have a polyphony. The same day, printed in the same material, you have for example one one hand the drawings of an artist, Plantu, who is very simplistic, even populist, even for children you can say; and on the other side, chronicles and analysis written by Mr. Arnaud Leparmentier, which are incredibly complex, sophisticated and bizantine, seeking for showing themselves as the thought of an european élite, la crème-de-la-crème, so not understandable by the commons, common reader who is invited to drink the magical potion hoping he will immediately converted into smart.

I have said that this 'polyphonic speech' is the visible part of the main weapon, the most important weapon, the media, political actor, has in the political struggle.

But you can ask: Why visible? Is there an invisible part? I will abstract the idea in a sentence: The invisible part is the work of the media is to keep in touch, to be part of the inside job, to co-manage the secret of the power, to find a playground level in which it can deal with the powers because it owns a part of the secrets.

Medias are always talking about transparency, freedom, no secrets, etc. But, they are among the most secret actors in the political system. They never reveal nothing on their way of working.

The first goal of media as political actors is to get as many access as possible to the more larger possible range of secrets, mostly of them linked to power, in order to co-manage the secret.

And then, what to do with this co-management of secret? Exactly

that: Be the master of the agenda-setting. It means: After getting full knowledge (if possible) of the agenda inside the decision-making process, even of the hidden agendas, or after getting as aware of possible of agendas, after knowing what the most powerful actors are going to do, be able to decide wether to publish or not, in his public speech.

That is the invisible part of the weapon of the media, the agenda setting power. That's why even the most powerful powers in the world (for example, in the economic field, Mr Nicholas Berggruen, or Mr. Richard Branson, or Mr Bill Gates or Mr Laksmy Mittal, or Mr. Spiro Latsis, and so on; or, in the political field, Mr Obama, or Ms Merkel) at the same time fears media, and need them. And they try to keep in touch with them, to be in good terms. Is some kind of "fakir-snake" type relation (They are the fakir, press is the snake).

2

So, let me define quickly what agenda setting is, the concept, the notion, so that we can get to the point, get to **the european debate**, and its existing locks. Because agenda setting is today the main bias in european debate, this debate you have to enter as junior journalists.

Agenda setting is often defined by theoreticians as "the **determination of the terms in which public discussion takes place by concealing items of public interest, by failing to provide complete information**". [The Dictionary of Media Studies, Ed. Penguin Books, written by professors Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst].

So, the whole thing is in the concept. You can see that it doesn't enter the debate on whether medias can shape or not the mind of people, it doesn't makes complex the problem starting a debate on if media shape, if media are as an hypnosis of masses, etc. Not. Just one point: The master who decides about what are you going to talk, to think, and within which universe you can talk, has won. Has already won. In this struggle that politics and policy is, that european debate is.

Don't worry about if power can muld opinion and belief. It's simple: the media set the agenda and hence ensure that particular issues do not emerge at all and audiences do not consider them.

Just an example. Today, in Spain, even the less educated citizen

knows perfectly ideas as 'emission of treasury mid-term bonds', spread of sovereign debt bonds, and all this kind of technical data on debt, better than a man of middle class well educated knows in France. The 'middle Spaniard' is completely unable to explain what financial markets are, or exactly who is authorized to buy new titles of spanish sovereign debt. Unable to explain with what, with what kind of currency, the "who" who are authorize to buy sovereign titles of the public spaniard budget, pay to Spain. And the middle spaniard is unable to explain who gives the currency to pay the sovereign titles, and at which price, and who keeps in his pocket the difference between interests rates.

But this same middle spaniard knows perfectly --and he feels very proud of it-- the spread between the german and the spanish bond. And with this knowledge, he is sure to be perfectly informed.

That is because the spanish media have set the agenda (a very monothematic one). On sovereign debt issues, only one point emerges: the spread. Only one possible interpretation: the spread reduces, it's good for everybody. It increases, it is bad. Debt crisis is read as a very simple thing, and binary one, in Spain, because media have set the agenda in this way, so some issues emerge and others not, and audiences consider only issues that emerge.

For exemple, in France, a country in which statistics show that there is a much higher level of general education than in Spain, however almost nobody is able to explain how the spread is moving from one day to another. They are able to explain other things on economics. But not this one.

I'm just describing the landscape in which media work. It would be easy to stay in the symbolic sphere, dont enter hard politics. But this power of setting the agenda has hard consequences in the reality. This is important: We dont know if media shape the minds, just that they set the agenda. But what we already know is that, by setting the agenda, they shape politics, so they co-build the history.

For exemple [again taken from the Dictionary of the Media], we leave the current financial crisis, and we go back to the 1970s in Europe, so almost forty years ago. What crisis was at this moment? Difficult to remember, eh? Well, oil prices soared at the moment when all Western countries have transformed their economies in oil economics (plastics, transportation of all goods and services,

power...), so every and all prices rised dramatically. People asked for salaries able to face this new prices. There was the moment of 'sliding scale of wages' (so real wages did not fall because inflation).

"In a detailed content analysis of television coverage of **high rates of inflation** during the 1970s, the Group [Glasgow University Media Group] concluded that statements **saying that rising wages** were the main cause of inflation outnumbered by eight to one those reports that contradicted that view. The agenda was constructed so that some views were especially prominent." And because media and press as political actors, built the agenda, set the agenda, on this way, there were heavy political consequences. Some of you remember what is the political decision, historical one, milestone one in the european history, was taken following what was called the oil crisis?

So, we have forgot what happened in the 1970's, and the play of medias, but that shaped the european history.

What on current european financial crisis? We are not going to discuss whether the audience, the citizens, are dominated. Just, we can agree that when the mainstream decides that some issues and some points of view are inside the debate. And then, the one, the individual citizen who comes away, well, he is outside, so he is an outsider. That's all.

How many capital issues had been set down by this mean in the last two decades? Can you figure out? I mean, this is an open question this is the only question, if you can admit that, if you can afford that.

Let me now just outline a little a new evolution, a new trend in european journalism, and european debate, that, for me, is a real concerning one, a dangerous one.

In the Twentieth Century, until the eighties or the first nineties, there was a strong deontology in the european journalistic guild. By different ways, political journalists were the top of the profession, and the profession, press, was first of all a profession, a trade, a guild. Journalists depended on rotary workers, graphic workers, lynotype workers, and they saw themselves as members of this world. Only few guys, at the top of the top of the newspapers or radios, could hope for a job in the ministers cabinets, etc. The result was, in this daily work which is setting

the agenda, that there were real journalists, aware of their mission of public interest, and strongly protected by their profession and their fellows, who lead the battle for what was inside the agenda, and what out.

Today the profession is jeopardized. There is a real depression. Wages decreases, and job reduces. The "Esprit de Corps" has desapeared. Every journalist fear to loose his job, looks at his self as someone competing with the others. And there are a lot of 'revolving doors', at all the levels, from the top to the bottom, between press and power. Too much. A very well paid journalist can expect to become speaker or head of communication at the commission or a DG, or a minister, if he has a problem. A junior journalist who doesn't find a job stable, can try at a press office.

That's a real problem because, as every journalist fears that one day he can need a minister or commission job, he stays inside the boundaries. He doesn't like to piss off the power. The setting agenda has become more conformist. Journalism is mistaken with communication and public relations.

A second problem is added now to the first one: Currently, big media, with a huge power in terms of agenda setting, doesn't hear small critical media. Anymore, apart from some very exceptional moments, they don't hear anymore, they don't enter a debate on fact-finding and fact-checking with small media. One more weight in the balance in favour to conformism.

Both weights on the agenda setting make the agenda conformist. Dangerously conformist, i think.

3

Can we say that press is completely free in the european public espace? I mean: Can we say that it is up to the journalists to make any question, to define any roadmap, to generate any controversy, to put over the table any subject they want ? Of course, we presuppose that journalists whom we are talking about, are the well documented ones, working on solid/substantial basis. We rule out in advance the problem of journalists incapable of dealing with european matters. But journalists specialized in european matters, are we really free to generate any debate in the european matters we want?

This is for me a very important question, beause I have experienced that **there are locks that set a mental reservation, a restriction,**

in the scope and the extend of the possible european debate. I think we have 3 different ways to look at this problem of restrictions to the real freedom on european debate.

A) You can look the problem of european press freedom as a too much deeply rooted one: We live inside a regime.

For exemple you can say, whit hard-marxists intelectuals, that Mr.Barroso, Mr. Almunia, Olli Rehn, and the others are no more than superstructure producing the ideology (it means mostly, the lies) that capitalistic domination requires. So, you can say that press is not free because press and journalists are only just another brick in the wall, linked with concrete to Mr. Barroso.

Or, let me be satiric. With the ultra right wing, you can say that there is no freedom, because the whole Brussels Bubble is the creation of a conspirative group working through decades and decades and probably from centuries ago (we become funny, with the conspiranoïcs ultra-right: The Brussels Bubble's goal is to destroy the purity of the breed of Volk, or the purity of the Great French Revolutionary Nation, or to destroy the Union Jack and our Glorious Empire and the Queen!!)

Of course, we live in a regime, and this regime is a capitalisticliberal-globalized-hyperfinancial one. The philosopher Alain Badiou has defined it as the "capitalo-parliamentary regime", because he analyzes that there is a hardware capitalistic core, unmodifiable one, and then it is wrapped inside a rain flood of parlamentarian production of so-called discussions, arguments, expertises, surveys, reports, monitoring groups... A whole production which can last long and forever, and which can occupy your whole life. But which can not touch the hardware core of the regime: the capitalistic property of value and the capitalistic property of work.

So, we don't have to discuss that, the existance of a regime. Just, we have to be aware that regime exists. So, we have to assume that it is normal that, if you feed the regime with stories the regime likes, you have more chances to be rich, to be famous, Mr. Barroso will maybe invite you to go to the yatch of Mr. Spiro Latsis, to become the new wonderful speaker on Euronews, etc, etc.

And, in the opposite, if you are the one who write stories on the disasters and deaths caused by the capitalo-parliamentary rule, you are going to get peanuts in terms of wage, although --i think--

probably you will get more interesting friends and lovers, and an exciting life.

But we get out of this dimension of the problem. Just, you have to be aware. That is a fact: We live into a regime, and the regime is a power, which enforces his rule. So, it means that he regime has a lot of ways to award the servants, and has a lot of ways to strike and punish his adversaries. And pay attention ! At the extreme, even a democracy can jail! For exemple, if you create a revolutionary website calling to the insurrection against the Commission, and if there is a real insurrection in the streets, you will be jailed charged on "disruption to the public order", or "apologize violence".

In a more quiet way, don't try to work as an european journalist, for exemple, interrupting a press conference of the Commission, making a global question on the 'four freedoms' (as "Please Mr Barroso: Do you think the 'four freedoms are bad for the commons?"), or criticizing globally the single market, or throwing doubts over the NATO-EU link ("Please, Highness Ashton, why don't we break the treaties with the USA, and create a military alliance with progressive Republics as Ecuador, Bolivia and Venezuela?").

You have the right of thinking what you want as a citizen, ont this global issues. But, as a professional european journalist feeding the european debate, for you this are just landmarks, milestones, of the regime. This are the legitimate locks to the european debate in the press.

It's normal. You can not, as a individual european journalist, open alone this kind of debates over the regime. When political parties, philosophers, universities, mass demonstrations, or/and experts will --for example-- launch a debate on the EU-NATO link (we can imagine: proposing, for example, an alternative based on an alliance with the bolivarian republics, and progresive african countries), then it will be an european journalistic debate. And so, you can put it over the table. But not before the parties, philosophers, universities, mass demonstrations etc... open the debate.

B) The problem is that there are too illegitimate limits to the european debate that have been imposed to the journalists. Let me go to the second level of a analysis on freedom of the press in the european espace, a level which is fully operational for the profession you are entering, and for your personal future. We can

describe this level of analysis as follows:

There are boundaries, limits, to the European debate today, that are restrictions on free press that are not normal in a so called democracy, and into an alliance of States --the European Union-- which claims the Rule of Law, and in a political space which has established a Charter of Fundamental Rights.

This is a level of analysis on relations between European bodies, European powers, and press. It is fully relevant.

I think we have to look at these limits, these boundaries, very carefully, because reality, political situation, is not static, is not permanent, but moving, and moving as a result of a struggle. The best definition of this struggle which involves press and powers, is the baseline of a French magazine, *Le Canard Enchaîné*: "Freedom of Press only wears away if you don't use it" (*'wears away', in the meaning of 'metal fatigue' in planes, aircrafts*). So, the sentence means: If we leave the field of freedom to be more and more reduced, because we don't dare to approach the boundaries, the limits, with our inquiries and questions, we will move all of us, as a profession, to a situation of non-free press regime.

[Insist: I'm not talking on 'regimes' -a- point. I'm talking about issues that normally might be discussed, issues at the borderline, and they are not discussed. I'm talking about accountabilities leaders normally have to respond for, and they often don't have to]

Let me enter this problem of illegitimate boundaries on free press with an example. This is a real one, a high level one, and technically perfect for us.

In January 2011, I got an exclusive interview with Ms Martine Aubry, in order to talk on employment, sovereign debt crisis, and monetary policies in France and Europe.

Martine Aubry, somebody knows? Can somebody say a few words on her? She is not only the Jacques Delors daughter, but probably one key European politician today, because she is into the German-French cross road industrial networks, and she rules as mayor the city of Lille, as chairman the French urban community of Great Lille, and she chairs too the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, which is one of the most important conurbations today --in terms of European integration--. And she is, today (for today), the most probable next French prime minister.

When I arranged the agreements for this interview in Lille, she was

preparing herself to become the next president of the french republic, at the PS intern poll, and then against Nicolas Sarkozy at the elections of april and may 2012.

In this context, on january 2011, because she was not in the gouvernement but in the opposition to Nicolas Sarkozy, and because she needed to use a stronger vocabulary than the one used by Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn (Mr. Hollande was considered not important, at this moment), Miss Aubry was criticizing strongly all the decisions taken by the European Council amidst the financial crisis. Even on the euro currency, specially on the euro currency, she criticized. Decisions which were allways supported by the IMF, directed by Mr. Strauss-Kahn.

So, Because of her position criticizing the decisions on sovereign debt, currency and banking, I decided to interview her in order to understand what in her public statements was true, and what was just statements you made in order to obtain votes.

I repeat: For me, the important was not to let the politician talk and fill the time of the interview. The important, in terms of european debate, and for journalism as a public service, was to find out what was real in the critical position of Ms Aubry, so that it can let us figure out the policy she was going to lead once in the power in France.

At this moment, there was a real doubt on her real thinking: Aubry, though having a long-standing carrier of euro-ortodox politician, was supported at this moment by the young Guillaume Bachelay and his godfather Laurent Fabius, who had 'crossed the red line' on european matters, in 2005.

I got the interview, which was planned for 30 minuts with the staff of Miss Aubry. That is what happened. Of course, it is in french. We need a translation here, so this is the opportunity to enhance the value of your language skills ...

[French speaking students translation]

What do you think? I mean: This is an open discussion here. You can assess, value, what happened.

For me, what happened here is that I reached one of the most important boundaries --this is a real taboo-- which is the current status of European Central Bank, and the rules on currency emission, monetary creation, and intervention on sovereign debt

markets.

At this period, Ms Aubry was criticizing the rules of the ECB and the situation of the Sovereign debt. But, the problem for a journalist was to know if her statements were just a scene, as a show, a showside, with poll goals. The way in which I conducted the interview (coming from industrial and employment policies to the conditions on financing it in the future, and then to the situation on the sovereign french debt, linked to the rules of the ECB which makes impossible this kind of financing) placed Ms Aubry, in this interview, in a position which forced her to explain clearly this point: Was she going, or was she not, to push her way into the European Council, in order to modify ECB rules on the sovereign debt, in order to make possible the funding of such an ambitious program of employment and industry?

Of course, she was not. And she understood that, given the context of the interview, if she acknowledged that she was not going to modify the financial and monetary rules in the EU, she was going to shooting herself a bullet in the head/foot in the interview, because the whole stuff she was selling (on industrial and employment issues, prior to go to polls) will become unlikely.

That's why she preferred to break the interview, in a very impolite manner, I think. First: She introduced the idea that the only alternative to the current financial system was, not a reformed euro, but the comeback to the national currency. Then, when i noticed to her that this (the end of euro currency, and the return of national currencies) was not in my question, and that this is just the position of the ultra-right Le Pen, and that I was not ready to play the game of beeing assimilated to a supporter of Le Pen, she put an end to the interview.

This example is for me is revealing of a major taboo, and a major restriction today on european debate. The current generation of political rulers in the EU (I mean the national ones participating in Europe, and the leaders of european bodies) have been educated, as Ms. Aubry, inside the idea that the euro currency as it is, and European Central Bank as it is, can not be reformed. This is their Bible, their totem. They only accept one idea: That the unique alternative to the current status of the European Central Bank is a come-back to the national past currencies, so probably a come-back to a situation of weak nations, probably to the chaos, probably to the war of currencies, even simply to the war.

This binary situation (euro as it is = agreement, peace; not euro as it is, = aggressive nations, weak currencies, war) is very comfortable for them.

Why? First: because voters will always choose a bad currency and a bad central bank, as it is, if the only alternative to it is chaos and war. Secondly: Because this generation of political rulers, responsible of the making of the current euro, has so far escaped to any accountability for the mistakes in the structure of the financial and currency problem in the EU. So they hope they can stay in this same situation: no-accountability. And Third: Because the current financial euro-system stem from a pact between France and Germany, an underlying and tacit understanding [A pact that, according to some political wings, has already been broken by Berlin], a pact wich is --for this generation of political leaders, that is what they think-- as the nuclear trigger of the EU. If you press, you trigger off the blow-out of the European Union, they think.

This interview was carried on on january 2011, and Ms Aubry is not yet prime minister. There is a gap, you can say, between january 2011 and today. For example, the European Mechanism of Stability has been set in between.

So, to be sure that the politicians have set an illegitimate lock to the european debate on this issue now again, last 25 november (I was already preparing this workshop) i get an opportunity to test again this limit, this boundary, this taboo on the currency and sovereign debt rules.

Unfortunately, it was an off-the-record meeting with the first or second most important François Hollande's adviser on european financial matters, Mr Philippe Legos-Coste.

I tested again: I asked on what will be the rules of the market for the future eurobonds system, and I pointed out the problem of primary and secondary markets, and rates interests. As you know, President Hollande is trying to say that his project of eurobonds is the solution to the whole european project, but without explaining how and why it solves the problem of predatory sovereign debt markets.

In front of my question end november, again, Mr. Legos-Coste became as upset and angry as Mss. Aubry was almost three years ago. He did not answered to this point of the question (financial markets and

sovereign debt), and tried to be sadistic with me. He did not put an end to the interview, because this was an off-the-record meeting with other six journalists. It would be traumatic to say: "get out of this room, Mr. Perez". But he put an end to my question directly, and gave the micro to another journalist. I preferred not to insist.

Both situations (of course specially Ms. Aubry one, because she is an elective official and futur governor, and not an high official civil servant, as Mr. Legos-Coste) are, for me, the best example of an illegitimate limit on the european debate, if we are in an european democracy, which is born from an alliance of States in the Rule of Law, with a Chart of Fundamental Rights.

Journalists of a free press have the right to throw light on the link between current rules on monetary issues, sovereign debt, public budgets and possible industrial and employment policies, and elected politicians and high officers civil servants have the duty of accept the questions, and answer.

Specially on public budgets questions, and financing questions. This are the key issues today. They explain why european middle and low class are continuously impoverishing. They explain why today is impossible today, in rich societies, to finance as many schools, hospitals, social welfare, and infrastructures, as it was possible to finance in the 1950', just after the II World War, in a destroyed Europe.

And a generation of political rulers doesn't have the right to lock the debate, forbid the debate. They don't have the right, because they are only one generation of politicians, among others generations, and they are only a part of their own generation (belonging to few political wings); the others members of their generation are not in rule, nor in the majority. But they exist.

If this little part of a little generation of politicians, between so many others younger generations, and elder generations, between so many others political wings, if they can kidnap the debate on european issues, if they can lock up key issues wrapping them with false debates, just because they are in power..., Well, this is no more a free press inside a democracy generated by an alliance of States respecting the Rule of Law. We are no more in a regime of democracy.

And we, european journalists, we can not allow this. It is our duty

to prevent this from happening.

I let you figure out, explore, what other fields of the european debate, what others issues, had been locked up by this same way. I mean: by creating a false debate, in the place of a true one. And by threatening and blacklisting, journalists who try to put true issues over the table, journalists whom they try to handle as if they were whipping boys.

But, of course: stay just inside this face of the problem. Just limitations created by a tacit understanding inside a particular euro-elite too much sophisticated and strongly clinged on the power, limitations that are illegitimate into a democracy, a State of the Rule of Law.

Of course, I point out, I underline, that this illegitimate limitsstem from a tacit decision made by parties which are ruling or coruling the european bodies (conservatives, liberal-democrats and socialists), by high officers appointed via intergovernmental agreements linked to the European Council or the COREPER system, reinforced by the informal socialization of high civil servants inside the European Commission.

By this way, they have succeed in enforcing an Agenda Setting specially narrowed down, tight.

Exactly at the moment in which the duty of media was exactly the opposite: Because EU was enlarged to new countries, and because the new treaties gave large powers to the Commission and other european bodies, it was the moment to enlarge the Setting Agenda. Mainstream Medias didn't do it.

It's up to you, to your generation as journalist, to make this amazing job done. You have a large land fallow in front of you. Beautiful world. But you will have to break a lot of conventions, hierarchies and Godfathers, inside the newsrooms, the newspapers, the information websites, the broadcasts, the media, if you want make your way in the european medias !

C) Because there is an abnormal limit too, illegitimate boundary too, coming from the press and media themselves, from the top of the Pyramid.

Because european debate, european information, today is tied to and by a journalistic elite, which is in place from 20 years ago, and

which has shaped it into what it has become. They have climbed up positions, the best positions in big media, just because they drove the european debate as it has been driven.

So we enter the third kind of locks in the european debate. Remember: there was (A) a legitimate boundary, the boundary of the regime. You can fight this first only being a revolutionary, or a politician, or a think tanker yourself. Being just a professional journalist, dont. As journalist professional, you can fight, and you have to, the (B) second one (illegitimate), a boundary put in by a particular european political elite. We have already examined it. And now we enter the third (ilegitimate) boundary. A boundary imposed by the current elite of media (C).

Personally --but this is my personal position-- i think the european debate has become boring, autistic to the realities, with no substance, too much close to the powers (the executive, the legislative, the intergovernmental european bodies), this same powers that, in a normal situation (the nation state, for example) are the powers monitored by the press.

The european debate has become superficial, Brusselsbubblecentered, and / or dominated by only two kinds of journalistic genres: on one side, for the elite, the diplomatic chronicle (and made from the top, to the bottom), paternalistic and simulating to be pedagogic; on the other side, advertorials, often stupid. [*advertorials are this old kind of materials in newspapers and magazines that attempt to persuade readers to buy a product but which is written to look like the non-advertisement material in the rest of publication // In french, *publi-reportage*]

And why? How and why european media have transformed an amazing issue, the european debate, a political process which is with no doubt the most important political process which shapes your life, how and why european media have transformed this in some superficial advertisement sentences, or boring speeches, boring stories.

In fact, we can map easily the streams that constitutes the current 'media system', as described, so putting in illegitimate boundaries in european matters.

We need here a concept which is the concept of Mainstreaming. It is defined, by the dictionary of Media Studies, as what it is accepted as "the core or conventional culture in a society".[George

Gerbner, Annenberg School of Communication in Philadelphia]

Mainstreaming is the process by which you set the mainstream. And medias, with the scholar system, and the informal sociabilization (informal education), are the three principal ways of mainstreaming.

Often, the diplomatic paternalistic chronicles brussels-bubblecentered contain all of of the errors and the ways that make you fail your exam if you are in your first year college of journalism, absolutely all, are inside chronicles written by the most higher diplomatic correspondents working for mainstreaming media and having access to the core of the european power, so co-managing the agenda.

Confused terms, misty explanations of what happen, false climax during the summits, pathos. And, above all: they accept as reality, with real effects, what in fact are only annoucements of future possible policies and possible fundings, made at the end of the european summits.

It's a real interesting situation: The higher european chronicists repeat and repeat stories that contains all the mistakes that normally drive you to fail your first exam in a Journalism College. The more they do, the more they climb in the Big Media Pyramid.

The journalistic elite who rules the media from twenty years ago is a very pyramidal one, a big hierarchy, in media mainstreaming europe, with a lot of interests involved.

They hold the positions since the starting point of the Economic and Monetary Union, so before the beggining of the 1990. They have been very pleasant with all the decisions made in Europe by the european powers and the governments.

Well: Europe today is a geographic and economic region in which poverty doesn't reduce, in which finance is critical (even if we are no more in a peak), and in which people doesn't believe anymore, people become euroskeptical, precisely because of their kind of journalism.

Now, the journalistic elite which hold the best positions, is forced to turn a blind eye on what is really happening in Europe.

They are bound, for example to forbid extensive fact finding and fact checking, on the field, on what Brussels announce.

At the top of the continental journalism, in all the "prestige" media italian, french, spanish, you get exactly the same framing: High placed journalist that controls the educated, cultured, versions of european debate and information, in order to create the first class version of the mainstream.

They try to forbid alternative versions, real fact finding and fact checking.

However, public european public interest, european debate, need today another journalism. A journalism that always approach the boundaries of the debate, with sharp questions.

A knowledge based journalism, extremely demanding in the fact-finding and fact checking in the four corners of Europe. More interested on realities than in the press releases wires. An outside journalism, which will enter the press conferences rooms only to give questions nourished with fresh knowledge collected far away from capital cities and sophisticated gentrified neighborhoods.

A journalism that would be able to invent new forms of narrative, adapted to today's youth, which is the most educated, creolized and European our continent has never had in its human history (so from 780.000 years, according to the current scientific consensus about the Homo Antecessor).

4

Finding new ways to feed the EU debate

a)

Recently, we agreed with Jean Lemaitre that the hour for the turning point in the european journalism has arrived: European bodies have to be monitored by journalists, just as it happens in the state-members level. The decisions taken by the european bodies

have to be verified, from a political perspective, and from a citizens perspective. A real pluralism is necessary, and more distance between euro-journalist and euro-politicians has to be introduced .

You will have to work on european sources with different type of sources: reluctant, open, spontaneous, eager (thirsty, greedy), pressing. You will start a fakir/snake play. Your goal: reach the 100% of your hypothesis. Your goal too is to be able to detect if you are 100% wrong, and that there is another reality, exactly the opposite you thought whe starting your investigation. Example teams: Frontex, Lampedusa, Banking.

Use the sources in a whirl, the virtuous whirl of new knowledge.

You will report on reality, not speeches. Speeches, programs, announcements, summits are only a small part of reality. So, you will put them at the end of your story, in the background. Just behind the verified facts. You are the one who generates new debate, not the one who repeats and repeat the old ones, the speeches, the announcements.

b)

But exactly for this reason, because you are going to produce new knowledge on reality, precisely because you are going to change the european debate, you have to be aware of one thing. In each field you work, in each issue, there is already a knowledge produced, a history, and a contextual background. You have to know it very well.

You have to know perfectly the terms of the historical debate on the issue your are going to work. Your goal is to find facts, check them and produce a story which will feed the european debate with new knowledge. But, in order to do so, you have to know perfectly the existing debate, the previous.

Of course: first of all, your field. But, beyond the field of your story, as a futur professional journalist specialized on european affaires, you have too to be fully aware of the terms of the debate on some general key issues. Here are some of this kind of issues. Up to you to analyzing them in order to self-checking your knowledge, and decide to update it if necessary.

See the topic, and ask yourself: Could I pitch it? Could I give in 2 minutes the fundamental terms of the current existing debate?

- 1- **Institutional topics** - A new treaty? How much intergovernmental negotiations, for the election of the European Commission president, after the 2014 elections?
- 2- **Why is widely said that the EU has become "ultraliberal" and "economically orthodox" and "austeritarian"?**
- 3- **Why, at the opposite, it is said (specially from the british euroskeptical positions) that the Brussels Power is a Soviet fashioned one?**
- 4- **Brakes on european social rights. Is there an European Social Security?**
- 5- **The dream of an EU Superpower** .- When was it planned that the EU will have a real army? Why it never happen?
- 6- **Migratory policies and external borders** - Europe, a fortress or a strainer?
- 7- **Internal freedom of movement** - More and more restrictions, specially for people in severe poverty.
- 8- **Climate against fracking** - 40%, Too much or not enough? / Authorized fracking means more oil...
- 9- **Rising Centrifugal trends** - Separatist tensions inside state members as a possible european problem / The possibility of States leaving the eurozone / A context which changes the way of thinking enlargements.

C)

As you probably remember, in our last session on thursday 30 january, we worked with my friend and El País editor in chief Guillermo Altares. I think this was a very useful session for you, and I know that he was quite impressed by the subjects you are going to work.

He told me: "I'm jealous of what you are doing".

Why did he say that? Of what is he jealous?

He is jealous of freedom in investigating european issues, and freedom to invent.

Freedom in opening the debate to all legitimate sources, a very wide and large spectrum, really fanning out all the possible positions.

He is jealous of the possibility of reporting in the way of knowledge based journalism. Of creating new media.

And that is what you are going to do. I'm jealous too.

If a journalist with more than 20 years of experience say that he is not jealous, and even he try to say to you, haughty, that you have to try to imitate him (and that you will possibly fail...), that means that he is not a real journalist.

Great media, traditional media can not open the necessary ways to a real european debate. Because --as we saw in our first session-- they are tied and paralyzed by three phenomena:

-They are political agents too much involved in high politics, and high business / They can not upset their masters, and today their masters have interests in all, absolutely all the key european issues; ancient press entrepreneurship has been destroyed. You are the new political agent. You are starting, so be the new which is going to create a new model of press political agent, less tied to interests.

- They are inside, deep inside, the illegitimate boundaries on european debate set by a political elite, by the current political elite. But we saw that this is only a small part of a generation of politicians, between a lot of other generations. So traditional media stay quietly inside this narrow debate, an old fashioned one. You can, and you have to enlarge and modernize the european debate on key issues.

- Finally, they are prisoners of their pyramid, the journalistic one: They are prisoners of the fact that they are a bureaucracy that has grown too much. It has become too fat, a fat bureaucracy. Even young journalists in traditional media are crushed by the hierarchical line they have over them. So, facing an european reality which moves very fast, society, economics, sciences, a changing reality, a changing world, you have all the cards in your play: Be surprising, and contemporary, and daring.

That's what you are doing.

The topics you have selected can become stories, journalistic stories that strike and fuel the debate. I mean: Really, you have got fields to work in which you can pave your way, and create your name, your signature.