

## **FINAL**

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**Keynote speech**

**Eurovision TV Summit**

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Dear Colleagues,  
Dear Friends,

Welcome to Switzerland, welcome to Lucerne, and welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Eurovision TV Summit. I am delighted to have this opportunity to open the Common Focus Day. A special, more intimate Common Focus Day than planned, but a still good one, I'm sure.

We come together to celebrate the best in European programming. Programmes that touch us, programmes that move us, programmes that inspire us for the future. Programmes whose creators are part of the EBU community, and who will share their experiences and their stories with us.

Well, let me begin with a flashback to the origins of the EBU. Exactly 60 years ago broadcast professionals from 23 countries met in Torquay, in the UK, to set up the EBU.

Why?

Well one of the reasons was that a new technology had just been born: television.

Like any new technology it brought new opportunities. But only the most adventurous could see beyond the challenges. For most people, television was a new medium with an uncertain future; costs were hard to estimate; few could imagine what kind of programmes to make; almost no-one owned a TV set.

However, by joining forces in the EBU, visionaries from different countries could face challenges, grow, and develop ideas, exploit opportunities and deliver great public radio and television programmes.

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Now let's fast-forward to the same EBU community today.

**What are the biggest strategic challenges facing us, Europe's public service media, right now?**

**and**

**What can the EBU do to help YOU overcome the challenges and exploit the opportunities?**

In answer to the first question, I will focus on three key challenges.

- 1. More viewer choice**
- 2. Funding and independence under threat**
- 3. How can public service media be distinctive?**

### **1. Viewer choice**

Back in the late 1940s and 1950s, television began to tell stories. The Americans led the way with a television programme that entertained, and got the audience involved with the contestants. It was the original *Star Academy*. Let's look at a clip of *Amateur Hour*. Watch out for all those familiar elements; sponsorship, voting and of course competition.

Astonishing to see that the ingredients are much the same as the talent formats we see today. But of course the **way** we tell stories today is very different from the storytelling back then. You know this better than I do.

From the outset watching TV has been a leisure activity. People watch TV because they like it. They are curious; they want to get to know the characters. They want to take part in a competition, finding winners and losers. People like to tell stories, and they like to listen to stories. That hasn't changed.

But the fundamental difference is that, starting with deregulation and commercial TV in the 1970s, viewers have **more** choice, and we have **more** competition for their attention. This is where our production values come in.

New technology lets viewers choose. People now watch **what** they want, **when** they want it and **where** they want it. Ultimately, technology puts more power and more choice in the hands of the audience.

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Technology influences every aspect of the relationship between producers and the people who consume the news, the shows, the documentaries, and the drama. You name it. Broadband culture has brought with it a radical shake-up in our perceptions of production, copyright, ownership, and control.

You are all talking about multiplatform, crossover production or convergence. The work of journalists and producers, your work, has become much more complex. And in addition, you are discussing the impact social networks will have on your job. Only a very few years ago, nobody really even knew what social networks were.

Let's look at some surprising numbers on the growth of media; the clip is of course taken from YouTube ....

The closing question: Does it affect YOU?

It does affect us of course.

Media are now everywhere and involve everyone. This means that some people ask the question ...

### **Do we still need public service media?**

My clear answer is, YES we do.

Audiences also seem to believe that they need us too.

Let's have a look at this chart: although over the past ten years the number of TV channels in Europe has more than tripled – up from 2,400 to 7,400 – public service media have on average lost only 5% of market share. We are serving our audience well.

Unfortunately the value we attach to PSM is not always shared. This brings me to the second challenge:

## **2. Funding and independence are under threat**

Despite, or maybe because of their success, public service media (PSM) are under pressure today.

The huge choice available to our audiences, plus a public debate often fuelled by commercial media interests, means that in many countries political and public support for PSM is decreasing.

Politicians love the media, especially if they can control it. So in many countries they take every opportunity to influence public service media. Appointing DGs, editors-in-chief and even challenging programme schedules has become the norm.

Very often in the run-up to elections the funding, size and scope of PSM is the subject of campaigning by political parties. Sometimes the public service broadcaster's ability to remain independent and deliver quality programming is seriously hampered by budget cuts that are only politically motivated.

So, in this crowded business political environment and difficult financial situation our third challenge is:

### **3. How can public service media be distinctive?**

#### **How can we be the “super brand” that stands out from the crowd?**

We have to deliver programming that is distinctive, programming that is different.

Let's consider **what's different about PSM**.

Let's think of public service media as a public space.

This public space should be accessible and open to everybody all the time. A place where everyone is equal: that is important.

This public space should mirror society. It should foster dialogue, be part of a conversation with the public, so that we understand what they expect, want and need.

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As we have seen in the clip earlier, the internet is radically changing the way our audiences are finding and sharing information. Although social networks are used to socialize, there is a risk that new platforms and social media will fragment the public space. There is a tendency for people to cluster in small groups of like-minded individuals. This is a risk for the future of our society and TV has just become another screen.

That's why public service media have an important role to play in the future. We have to help ensure social cohesion. We can do this with distinctive, relevant and quality programming. We have to ensure that we stay connected with the younger audiences too, which is particularly difficult.

For example, in 2008 Channel 4 UK wanted to reach more young people with relevant programming. It launched an interactive cross-platform project *Battlefront* inviting teenagers to develop their own campaigns, campaigns to **change the world**. It was designed to encourage young people to voice their opinion on issues they cared about. (Topics they chose included education, the environment, Islam). It was a resounding success and later moved on from being an online offer to having its own TV slot.

Another example: *Serious Request* first aired in Holland.

In a world where our audiences have more choice than ever before, we have to help ensure shared values across society.

We have to ensure that the audience chooses to come to the public space that is public media. Otherwise there is a real risk for society and there is a risk that we will lose our relevance and cease to exist.

Therefore we need to understand

### **Why would our audiences choose *public service media*?**

I believe that TRUST should be our unique selling point. Trust is about emotion too.

We need to understand how to earn and keep **trust**?

We are still a part of people's lives. The daily soaps aired by you are the subject of conversation in offices and schools in your country. The sports events you show bring nations together. Citizens turn to you for coverage of major national political events. They TRUST you.

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But we need to do more to retain, and build on their TRUST, in order to secure our future.

We need to:

- Invest in quality
  - Innovate
- AND
- Develop the dialogue with the audience

Let's look at

### **1. Investing in quality**

Public service media have to make a difference. We must invest in quality. We need ethical and highly skilled journalists. We need journalists who can put information in context and help the audience understand the world. We need to foster true debate on our channels.

A recent good example of this was the EBU co-production

*Public Enemy No 1: Carbon*. The documentary, aired in 14 countries last year, gave the public the latest facts, figures and analysis and fuelled the debate on one of the biggest issues facing our society.

*Die Deutschen*, an excellent documentary from ZDF looked at the history of Germany and the people who shaped it. It took a cross platform approach to bring in the audience, and grow the appeal of a serious subject across the generations. Audiences loved the programme.

The unique documentary from France Télévisions, *Apocalypse: World War II*, that you will see later today is another great investment in quality programming. *(confirm that this will still be screened)*

Through programmes like these, through current affairs and daily news programmes, public service media contribute to democracy, because they help ensure an informed citizenship. Such programming will encourage people to be involved, and to be part of their society.

Such programmes will build the trust and confidence the public have in public service media.

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We need to

## 2. Innovate

As we know the choice of TV channels and other audiovisual media is growing daily. Even in 2009, a year of crisis, 245 new TV channels were launched. At the end of 2009 the European Audiovisual Observatory reported that there were more than 7,700 TV channels in Europe.

The battle for attention is becoming more intense.

There has been significant growth in the commissioning of existing international entertainment formats and reproducing them for local markets. *Who wants to be a millionaire* is aired in more than one hundred countries. In the last four years the formats business has grown by 49%, with European formats accounting for over 64% of all sales and production. Broadcasters across the globe are moving to less risky schedules, favouring tried and tested programming.

As former Director-General of a rather small public broadcaster I fully understand this development. If you have less money, you try to avoid risk. But public service media need to innovate and be distinctive too. If not we will lose our *raison d'être*.

In our daily work we should always aim to be big on ideas, big in ambition and big in impact. We should look for new ways to tell stories and get the audience involved and aim at producing for the international market.

I am proud that Schweizer Fernsehen had the courage to think big and broadcast *La Traviata*, on its first general interest channel, live from the main train station in Zurich. The live programme was helped along with plot updates as well as documentary interludes for variety and human interest. Audience share for the live TV broadcast was an amazing 34%. But most importantly it was a unique cultural event delivered by a public broadcaster, bringing opera to the streets, and the screens, broadening its appeal among a new audience.

Huw Wheldon, who ran BBC TV in the 1970s, was quite right when he said that “the *aim of our work is not to avoid failure, but to attempt success*”.

Together let's encourage each other, as the EBU pioneers did 60 years ago, to be ambitious, produce quality programmes and achieve success through innovation.

With innovative and ambitious programmes we will build **trust** with our audience.

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Lastly we need to

### **3. Develop a dialogue with the audience**

Obviously, if we don't talk to our audience, if we don't listen to them, if we don't have a good dialogue, they won't trust us. So we need to develop a good dialogue with the audience. We need to understand the needs and expectations of the audience, so that we will have an audience in the future.

We should remember that journalists are not the only people who observe and write about the world. Audiences now communicate among themselves and judge the quality of our reporting, as well as the relevance of our news. One of the biggest mistakes in journalism is to underestimate the audience. We as public broadcasters should never be guilty of doing this.

Let's also try not to overestimate *our own understanding of what our audiences really wants.*

Talk, develop a dialogue, and check that your perceptions are correct. And use the social networks to better understand what is going on out there.

Social networks are the first port of call for over 40% of users when going online. Let's make sure that we are there, and are part of the conversation online. If we as broadcasters communicate on social networks we communicate with 'friends', a more 'personal' level of **trust** is established. We need to use the right language, and start a real and authentic dialogue, instead of a PR pitch; this will build trust with our audience.

We must harness the power of social networks to analyse discussions, to learn more about our audiences, to understand their needs better.

We have to use all the tools available to ensure a good dialogue and build trust.

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So far so good. We've seen the challenges, we have some ideas for facing them but

### **What role can the EBU play in this...?**

The task is difficult

- to innovate and invest while under political and financial pressure
- to have an open dialogue with audiences

This requires courage, knowledge **and** experience.

I believe that sharing know-how and best practice in a non-competitive environment is essential. The EBU provides this platform.

The success of public service media today depends on creating communities of individuals, bringing the best ideas together, and having the courage and vision to explore new territory. The EBU can deliver this to you.

When funding becomes more difficult, exchanging programmes and pooling resources can help ease the situation. The Erfurt Exchange is the world's biggest cooperation in the field of preschool children's TV programmes.

The EBU's daily news exchanges and new operations help ensure high-quality trustworthy international news for all our Members.

The EBU delivers on average 40% of the programming for the culture radio channels through its exchanges of music programmes: over 3,000 concerts and festivals every year. The EBU coproduces almost 1,800 hours of programmes.

These are just some of the many projects which we share.

Huw Weldon said in 1975 that TV should:

**"... make the good popular and the popular good!"**

Let's work together to do this.

I am committed to ensuring that we support you, so you can achieve this goal. I am confident that by working together we can:

***"make the good popular and the popular good"***

If we work together we will be able to

- **Invest in quality**
- **Innovate**

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- **Have a dialogue with the audience**

**We will build TRUST**

As the EBU pioneers 60 years ago were stronger working together, we will be too. We will be more able to tackle the changes and challenges of the industry today, and in the future.

We will have the TRUST of the audience and we will live and thrive another 60 years and beyond.

Thank you.