

University of Hamburg – Hans Bredow Institut
Research Centre "European Media and Public Spheres" (EuroMaPS)
Lecture series "Talking about Europe"
December, 2nd – 6.00-8.00 pm
Allende Platz 1, 2nd floor, room 250.

Deploying Digital (Terrestrial) Television in Europe. Do we need public policy?

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Neoliberal values, confidence in market competition, deregulation and non-interventionist tendencies seem to undermine public policy in Europe. Contrary to this, the digitalisation of terrestrial broadcasting has shown that nation-states still play an important role in governing communications.

While the switch-over in satellite and cable platforms has been driven by means of commercial strategies due to the expected profitability, the case of the terrestrial network has turned out to be more complex because of economic and social obstacles. As a result, national administrations have actively taken part in this process. Indeed, their role has evolved from mere coordinators to enablers of DTT. They have done so by means of a wide range of public policy instruments: regulation, transition strategies, switch-off/over calendars, communication campaigns, etc. At supranational level, the European Union has also carried out several actions to ensure that the national character of this migration process does not result in a further fragmentation of the 'common' broadcasting market.

Such scenario raises several questions:

- To what extent do digitalisation strategies depend on the particularities of the political and communication systems of each state?
- How far do internationalisation and convergence of media systems imply a homogenisation of public policy addressing this issue?
- How do European institutions influence the national strategies?
- Which public policies have been effective?

In order to reflect on the answers to these queries, this presentation aims to share some research findings on the following issues:

- *Policy legitimacy*: What characteristics of DTT make public policy necessary and how it is justified.
- *Policy definition*: What kind of decision-making networks are established for designing policy strategies, how they proceed and in which way their composition determines their outcome.
- *Policy implementation*: What issues are tackled, what intervention instruments are used and how they are applied.

The EU policy framework for digital television and national DTT plans from Sweden and Spain will be introduced and discussed.