

# THE INVISIBLE IMPORTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



*The Influence of Television News Coverage of the  
European Union on the Legitimation of EU Politics*



## Master Thesis

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## Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Previous Research	6
1.2 Aim of the Research	7
1.2.1 Research Question	8
1.2.2 Sub-Questions	8
1.3 Research Design & Methodology	9
1.4 Justification and Significance of the Research	10
<b>2. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 The Concept of Legitimacy	11
2.1.1 The Meaning of Legitimacy in the European Union	12
2.1.2 The Legitimacy Deficit of the European Union	14
2.2 The Relevance of Mass Media for European Union Legitimacy	16
2.2.1 The Legitimation Function of Television News Media	17
2.2.2 Media Agenda-Setting Theory	18
2.2.3 Framing	19
2.3 Conclusion	20
<b>3. Methods of Enquiry</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research	22
3.2 Content Analysis	22
3.2.1 Units of Analysis	23
3.2.1.1 NOS & RTL	23
3.2.2 Period of Analysis	24
3.3 Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews	24
<b>4. Results: Content Analysis</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Introduction	26
4.2 Results NOS & RTL Main Evening News	26
4.2.1 The Provision of EU Information in Television News	28
4.2.2 The Comprehensibility of EU Information in Television News	29
4.3 Framing NOS & RTL	30
4.4 Conclusion	31

<b>5.</b>	<b>Results: Semi-Structured Interviews</b>	<b>33</b>
5.1	Introduction	33
5.2	The European Union in the Main Evening News	33
5.2.1	Problems with EU Coverage	34
5.2.2	News Value of EU Affairs	35
5.3	The Legitimizing Function of Television News	35
5.4	EU Basics and Television News Coverage	36
5.5	The ‘Invisible Importance’ of EU News	36
5.6	Framing and Agenda-Setting	37
5.7	Conclusion	38
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>40</b>
6.1	Results	40
6.2	Discussion	41
6.3	Limitations and Implications for Further Research	42
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>43</b>
	<b>Annexes</b>	<b>47</b>
I.	Questionnaire (in Dutch)	48
II.	Content Analysis	50

## **Preface**

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The importance of the European Union is growing and growing, but still, for the majority of its citizens, the European Union is far, far away. With regard to my master thesis, I am interested in the relationship between communication and politics. Especially the power of the media aroused my interest and therefore I have chosen to examine how television news media coverage of the European Union influences the legitimation of EU politics.

Before you start reading my master thesis, I would like to thank my supervisors – dr Rosema and dr Freise – for their interest in my research and the useful feedback they provided me with. Furthermore I would like to thank Gerard van den Broek of NOS News for his willingness to answer my questionnaire and Jantien Niemeijer of RTL news for inviting me to visit the RTL News office and for answering my interview questions. It was really interesting to hear ‘the story behind the news’ and to have a look at the RTL direction during a live news broadcast.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the students who participated in the monthly ‘master thesis-feedback’ meetings as well as my family and friends for their interest in the progression of my master thesis.

I hope you will enjoy reading it.

Doezum, February 2009

*Esmeralda Top*

## **1. Introduction**

The French and Dutch ‘no’ towards the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe in May and June 2005 and last year’s Irish ‘no’ towards the Reform Treaty have underlined the extent to which the European Union has become disconnected from its citizens. In literature, there are various debates about the democratic deficit of the European Union: the gap between the citizens and the EU institutions. Follesdal & Hix (2005) state that the European Union is too distant from its citizens and, consequently, its voters. This so-called democratic deficit is the most frequently discussed feature of legitimacy and is usually identified as a lack of popular consent. However, an aspect of legitimacy that is not discussed that often is the important role of mass media.

Mass media are in the position to increase citizens’ awareness of EU policies and activities. As a consequence, European Union legitimacy relies indirectly on the media to strengthen its legitimacy. Since the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, the question of legitimacy and identity of the European Union is on the agenda of public and scientific discussions. Legitimacy is a basic need for every state and every government. “Legitimacy is the right for these institutions to exist and to rule with the acceptance of their citizens” (Henshaw, 2007). As we all know, the European Union is a special case, it is neither a state nor just an ordinary international organization, it is ‘sui generis’. However, since the European Union exerts considerable regulatory power over the citizens of its Member States, it needs legitimacy as well. Moreover, “the EU has gained in stature” (Hodess, 1997) and expanded its political functions; as a result, the issue of the EU’s legitimacy has come to the fore.

As stated in various studies (eg. De Vreese 2003; De Vreese, Banducci, Semetko & Boomgaarden, 2006), democracy – an important feature of good governance – relies on communication between citizens and the power holders. Media, and in particular television, are key resources for citizens across Europe when learning about the European Union. Though, there is hardly academic research available about how the EU is represented in broadcast news. As De Vreese (2003:8) states, “clear information about the European Union’s main issues and procedures, access to and feedback into the decision-making process, and accountability to the public are prerequisites for public debate and in the end political legitimacy”. Hodess (1997) argues that “understanding media presentation of the European Union is an important aspect of understanding the nature of and reactions to the integration debate since media coverage of the EU has the ability to contribute to the image of the EU as a legitimate source of political power”. In sum, it could be stated that news media coverage of the European Union has the ability to influence the legitimation of European politics.

### **1.1 Previous Research**

Although it is often assumed that media – and in particular television – shape public opinion about the European Union and that they are the key resources for the EU citizens when learning about the

European Union (Eurobarometer 68), research on media coverage of the European Union is rather scarce. Peter, Semetko & De Vreese (2003) have researched the way in which the European Union is portrayed on main evening news by means of content analyses in five EU countries over an 11-month period in the year 2000. Their main finding was that “there is an invisible importance to European Union news: although the share of the news devoted to EU affairs was low, when EU news did appear, it tended to be more prominent than other political news” (2003:305).

In another cross-national comparative content analysis of Peter & De Vreese (2004) on the coverage of European Union politics in British, Danish, Dutch, French and German television news it has been shown that EU politics and EU officials were only to a very limited extent represented in national television news. The coverage of EU affairs has shown to be more prominent during summits and European Parliament elections than during ‘routine periods’. With reference to the distinction between public and private broadcasting outlets, their research has shown that “the visibility of EU affairs was equally low in both public and commercial television, but public outlets attributed more importance to EU affairs than did commercial television” (2004:16). Semetko, De Vreese & Peter (2000) expound as well that there have been only a few studies on how European affairs are reported in various media in Europe. Most of the research available concerns the coverage of the European Union in newspaper articles (eg. Firmstone, 2003; Trenz, 2004).

De Vreese (2003:4) links the concepts of democracy and media and argues that “the European Union suffers from a democratic deficit which is accentuated by a striking communication deficit”. Moreover, he states that there is hardly any information available on how the EU is being represented in broadcast news. Nonetheless, journalists are often indicated as being the main provider of cynicism when EU affairs are concerned. In his research, De Vreese examined the communication by the European Union and comes to the conclusion that the EU’s communication strategy is mainly based on the principle of ‘no news is good news’. Besides that, EU communication has too much the aim to “make people love Europe, not to give citizens the information they need in order to be able to understand and tolerate it” (2003:6).

## **1.2 Aim of the Research**

From the aforementioned overview of previous research it becomes evident that research on the coverage of the European Union in television news bulletins as well as research on the relationship between the influence of mass media on public opinion and EU democratic legitimacy is considerably scarce. This is, however, an observation that provides me with an interesting point of entry for my research. Hence, it is my aim to investigate in this master thesis how television news media coverage of the European Union influences the legitimization of EU politics.

### **1.2.1 Research Question**

In order to concretize the aim of this master thesis, I intend to answer the following main research question: *How is the European Union being covered in Dutch television news? and how does that relate to the democratic legitimacy of EU politics?*

### **1.2.2 Sub-Questions**

The following sub-questions will enable me to answer the main research question and to address the television news media's legitimation of European Union politics:

1. What is the meaning of legitimacy in the European Union?
2. How does the coverage of European issues in television news media influences the legitimation of EU politics?
3. How is the European Union being covered in Dutch public and commercial television news?
4. How do Dutch television news media cover EU affairs?

## **1.3 Research Design & Methodology**

In order to explore the question of legitimacy in European Union politics; an examination of television news media's coverage of the EU is relevant. First of all, because of the media's own legitimation function in democracy – in order for people to convey the EU as legitimate they need to be informed properly – and secondly, because of the media's position in opinion-building and interest formation processes. This section provides you with a glance of the theories to be discussed in chapter two and of the methods that have been used in order to achieve the results or, to be more precise, a discussion of the quantitative and qualitative methods that enabled me to answer the main research question and sub-questions.

### **1.3.1 Theory**

The first sub-question has the aim to shed a light on the concept of legitimacy and to discover the meaning of legitimacy within the European Union. An appropriate way of doing that is by means of an in-depth scientific literature review; a method that has also been used to answer the second sub-question. Works of 'key scholars' like Beetham & Lord, Scharpf and Habermas are used to outline the concept of legitimacy and are interwoven with the legitimating function of television news media. In order to relate issues of democracy and legitimacy with media theories, media agenda-setting theory and framing are used. McCombs & Shaw (1972) were one of the first communication scholars to test and support their ideas of media influence within the realm of political news. They argue that "public opinion is shaped, in part, by media coverage, particularly with regard to political news". They conceived that the news media have an agenda. That is, "the news media present audiences with an 'agenda' for what events the public 'should' consider as important" (2005:198). The causal notion of agenda-setting is further developed through the concept of framing. News media's success in telling



viewers and readers ‘what to think about’ stems from the media’s ability to frame issues. Chapter two will provide you with a more in-depth examination of the former theories and concepts.

### **1.3.2 Methodology**

In order to explore the question of democratic legitimacy in European Union politics, it is useful to explore the coverage of the European Union in television news media. The fact that information supply is an important aspect for achieving democratic legitimacy and the fact that daily television news is the most important source of EU information for the majority of the EU citizens justifies the content analysis as an appropriate method of research and helps us to answer the third sub-research question. Therefore this master thesis incorporates a content analysis of news media coverage of the main evening bulletins of two Dutch broadcast media, namely the public service broadcaster NOS (20:00 h) and the commercial news broadcaster RTL (19:30 h). About 190 evening bulletins of NOS (109) and RTL News (81) have been examined over a period of four months: April, May, June and July 2008. This period can be described as a ‘routine period’ in which no major European events such as elections to the European parliament took place, although, the Irish referendum on the Reform Treaty can be considered as an important EU event. Since previous studies have already mainly focused on key EU events such as the introduction of the Euro and EP elections – events of such an importance that it is obvious that a huge amount of attention is attributed to it – I have focused on a more routine period. In my opinion, an examination of a routine period provides us with more insights in the daily coverage of EU affairs, and besides that, the EU cannot base its democratic legitimacy only on the information provided by television news media during key EU events. As a matter of fact, I would argue that the coverage of EU affairs during routine periods provides us with a more honest image of how the European Union, its decisions and policies are being covered in the main evening news.

Within the content analysis, the appearance frequency of the “European Union” has been measured as well as the themes portrayed in EU coverage and the way in which EU issues are portrayed or, in other words, the way in which the European issues are framed. The results of this study are compared to previous research/content analyses of news media coverage on EU issues in other member states. Subsequently, the results of the content analysis are used to illustrate how EU politics are being covered by television news media as an addition to existing research and thereby forming the basis for the qualitative interviews. Semi-structured interviews are an adequate way to answer the fourth sub-research question, as they provide for underlying ideas on whether and how television news media cover the European Union and in order to find out what problems come across when covering the EU. In chapter three I will expand on the methods of enquiry by submitting it to a more detailed discussion.

#### 1.4 Justification and Significance of the Research

It is my aim to contribute with my master thesis to the already existing body of knowledge concerning the EU's political legitimacy, the legitimating function of news media and research concerning the coverage of the European Union in Dutch television news media. My main focus lies in finding out how television news coverage of the European Union influences the EU's political legitimacy. At present, there is not that much research available on this topic and therefore my research will give an overview of previous research and will – hopefully – add new views to it.

Since most of the research available on the representation of the European Union in the media focuses on printed media, my focus on public and private television news media has an added value, especially since national television news is the most important source of information about the European Union. As previous research<sup>1</sup> has shown, television has been repeatedly identified as the most important source of information about the European Union. Besides that, national television news reaches far larger audiences than any printed newspaper. Therefore I have chosen to focus on broadcast media coverage of European issues.

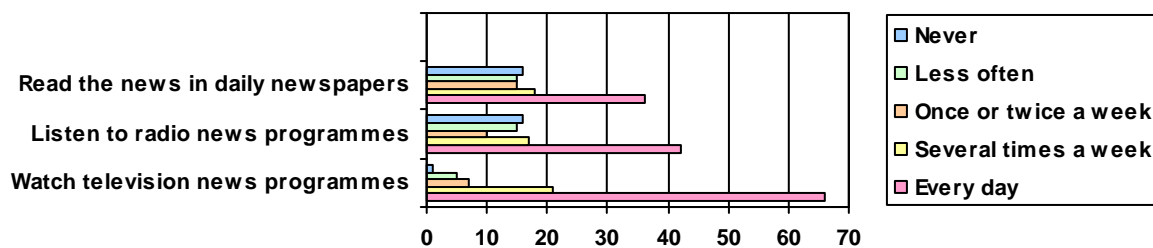


Figure 1 *Frequency of Watching, Listening and Reading Daily News (Eurobarometer 64)*

Furthermore, the available research on how the EU is represented in broadcast news is mainly quantitative, whereby the research focus lies on content analyses of the main evening news during certain periods of time and whereby the length of news stories concerning European issues has been measured as well as the placement of EU and political stories in news bulletins. The significance of this master thesis research is that it uses – next to the content analysis – a more qualitative approach in which I conduct interviews with the ones who “make the news”. From the research overview I came to the conclusion that most research on media coverage of the EU has been executed with a focus on key EU-events such as EP elections, the introduction of the Euro and summits of the heads of state and government. My focus on the everyday coverage of EU affairs in the national broadcast media – as discussed in paragraph 1.3 – and the comparison with existing research of other EU member states national broadcasters’ coverage of EU politics will therefore contribute to the significance of my research too.

<sup>1</sup> For example Eurobarometer Standard Report 2002 of the European Opinion Research Group, EB 57.1.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

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### **2.1 The Concept of Legitimacy**

The concept of legitimacy is very complex and difficult to define in depth since different fields of study attribute different views and values to it. Henshaw (2007:72) states the following: “At the most abstract level, legitimacy is the notion that a person or group of people have the right to lead and make decisions on behalf of a group of persons within a geographic area. More specifically, it is the notion that leaders have the right to make binding decisions that all members of a society or state accept and which they feel they are obliged to follow”. Dobson & Weale (2003:157) add to the previous description that in order “to say that a governing system is legitimate is to say that it has the right to rule and make decisions”. This implies that the people who are subject to the rules of the governing system, must accept that the political institutions who make those rules have the rights to do so. However, in order for citizens to be able to understand and accept certain rules, citizens need to be informed and that is exactly where the important role of media – to be discussed in paragraph 2.2 – comes to the fore.

In their description of the concept of legitimacy, Arnall and Wincott (2002) make a distinction between two groups of legitimacy, namely formal and social legitimacy. The former is concerned with the fulfilment of legal requirements and the latter with the acceptance of the allocation and exercise of authority. According to Meyer (1999:619) the best one-sentence definition of the dual nature of legitimacy is that “governance can be considered as legitimate in so far as its subjects regard it as proper and deserving of support”. In my analysis of this definition, I would argue that it indirectly refers to the importance of information. Before ‘subjects’ can regard governance as ‘proper and deserving of support’ and consequently consider it as ‘legitimate’ they need to have the disposal of proper information. Further on in this chapter I will expand on information as an important aspect for democratic legitimacy.

Another distinction has been made by Scharpf (in: Meyer, 1999) between input-oriented and output-oriented democratic legitimacy. According to Scharpf, “democratic input is based on the notion that political legitimacy is derived from the free will of the people” (1999:619) and thereby he describes output legitimacy as the performance of governance. The input-dimension of legitimacy assumes that a political authority accounts for its way of politics to its citizens, the output-dimension on the other hand, presumes that a political system can be considered as legitimate when it achieves to execute ‘good governance’ in a way that is accepted and perceived by its citizens.

Both distinctions of legitimacy can be accommodated within the two major schools of thought concerning legitimacy: the legal-positivist approach of Weber and the democratic legitimacy approach

of Habermas. In the Weberian model, the rule of law is the prime source of legitimacy; Habermas' model of legitimacy on the other hand is "based on the notion that legitimate institutions act in compliance with the values constitutive for the identity of the society as they are expressed through popular consent" (Henshaw, 2007). In other words, for Habermas, legitimacy is derived from democratic popular consent and governmental effectiveness. Moreover, Habermas (2001:17) argues that there won't be any remedy to the legitimacy deficit of the Europe Union without a European-wide public sphere. Such a public sphere contains, in the wordings of Habermas, "a network that gives citizens of all member states an equal opportunity to take part in an encompassing process of focused political communication". Although the question about whether a European public sphere is desirable or not falls outside the scope of my master thesis, I want to point out that Habermas puts as well emphasis on the important role of mass media. He states that "democratic legitimation requires mutual contact between, on the one hand, institutionalized deliberation and decision-making within parliaments, courts and administrative bodies and, on the other hand, an inclusive process of informal mass communication" (Habermas, 2001:17).

Overall, the conceptualisation of legitimacy takes into account input and output dimensions as defined by Scharpf; direct and indirect models or type of political system, as well as Beetham & Lord's idea of defining conditions – legality, normative justifiability and legitimation – which refer to the criteria that a political system has to meet in order to be considered as a legitimate and rightful system. From the previously discussed readings on the concept of legitimacy it can be concluded – in the light of the overall topic of this master thesis – that popular consent, public support and accountability of a political authority to its citizens are forming the guiding principles for legitimacy. So, once again, 'information' appears on stage as a means through which legitimacy can be achieved. The following section examines the building blocks of the concept of legitimacy in the light of the European Union.

### **2.1.1 The Meaning of Legitimacy in the European Union**

The question of legitimacy of the European Union is on the agenda of public and scientific discussions since the implementation of the Treaty on European Union, also known as the Treaty of Maastricht, in 1993. By this Treaty, the European Union has been created as well as the pillar structure. Before 1992, the European Community was an intergovernmental organization whereby legitimacy was being mediated by its member states, but with the creation of the European Union it has turned into a multi-level governance system and it has partly become a supranational organization whereby the member states have transferred a part of their sovereignty to the European level. Hence, the question of legitimacy became more important since the European Union wasn't anymore just a co-operation at the elite level of the member states but brought about an impact on the life of EU citizens as well. So, the European Union broadened his scope from economic standards towards democratic standards. And, as the name already mentions, within a democracy the power ("kratos") lies with the people ("demos");

thus, in order to be able to exercise some of the ‘powers’ in a way that supports democratic legitimacy, the people need to be properly informed about the political system and need to be involved as well. This interlinkage between democratic legitimacy and information/communication will be discussed to a greater extent in paragraph 2.2.

As introduced on the previous page, Beetham & Lord (1998:3) came up with the idea of so-called defining conditions; three conditions that can be used to measure the degree of legitimacy. According to Beetham & Lord a political authority is legitimate to the extent that:

1. *it is acquired and exercised according to established rules (legality)*
  2. *the rules are justifiable according to socially accepted beliefs about the rightful source of authority, and the proper ends and standards of government (normative justifiability)*
  3. *positions of authority are confirmed by the express consent or affirmation of appropriate subordinates, and by recognition from other legitimate authorities (legitimation)*
- (Beetham & Lord, 1998:3)*

The above mentioned conditions can as well be applied to the European Union as a political authority. Especially the third defining condition is of importance with regard to the main aim of this master thesis, namely ‘to discover how television news media coverage of the European Union influences the legitimation of EU politics’. When parsing this sentence; “confirmed by the express consent or affirmation of appropriate subordinates” it can again be related to ‘information’. In case of the European Union, the ‘appropriate subordinates’ are the EU citizens, of which we can argue that they obviously need clear information on which they can base their popular consent on.

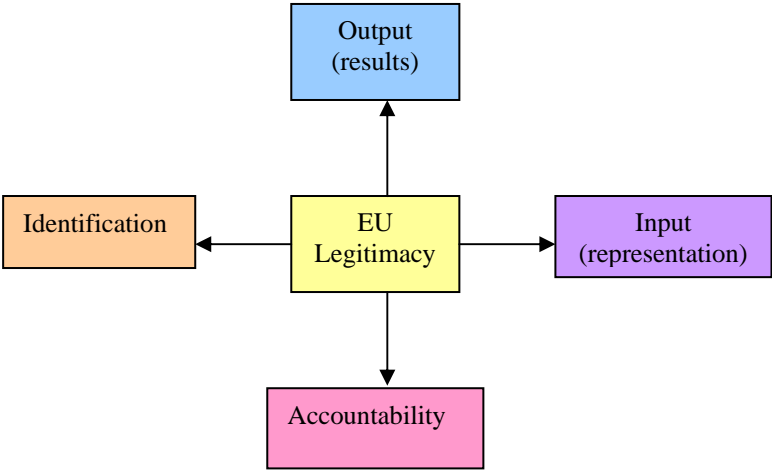
Beetham & Lord’s dimensions, models and conditions of the concept of legitimacy are clearly outlined in relation to the European Union by Baetens & Bursens (2005) in their research “*Mass Media Coverage and the Reduction of the Legitimacy Deficit in the EU, the Belgian Case*” and are therefore very useful for my research. As we all know, the European Union is a political system based on multi-level governance which implies that all the various levels ask for a specific application of the legitimacy concept as well. According to Baetens & Bursens and based on Scharpf’s notion of legitimacy “the European Union needs to be legitimised both directly by the European citizens and indirectly by the Member States” (2005:9). One can speak of direct legitimation when European Union citizens “accept the political processes and policy outputs of the European Union” (2005:9). Indirect legitimation can be examined when Member States ratify European treaties or when the ministers of the Member States are participating in the Council of Ministers or European Council. European referendums and EP elections are an example of “direct formal approval mechanisms” (2005:9) that can be used in order to achieve direct legitimacy and indirect legitimacy, on the other hand, “stems from the transfer of competences to the EU-level” (2005:9). One can speak of direct

normative justifiability when the citizens of the European Union “recognise the EU as a rightful source of authority in the domains the EU delivers output” (2005:9) and indirect normative justifiability points to the idea that Member State governments have the feeling that they can achieve more and better outputs in certain policy fields when they co-operate with all the other Member State governments as one collective actor, than it would be the case when they were all separate actors and had to come to a certain level of output on their own.

In sum, we could answer the first sub-research question is by stating that the meaning of legitimacy in the European Union has come to the fore after it became more influential due to the broadening of its scope towards democratic standards by the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. The meaning of legitimacy in the European Union refers to the fact that it is subordinated to the consent of its citizens and their support for the EU exercising its supranational powers and thereby providing the European Union with the right to rule and make decisions.

**2.1.2 The Legitimacy Deficit of the European Union**

The following schematic rendering outlines the four sources of legitimacy that can be examined in order to evaluate the acceptability of the European Union as a political system.



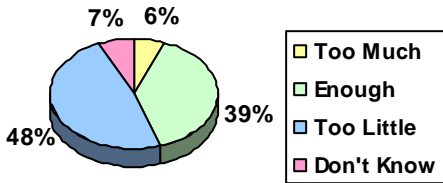
**Figure 2 Sources of Legitimacy in the European Union**

These sources of legitimacy enable us to outline the legitimacy deficit of the European Union. First of all, a deficit in the results dimension (output legitimacy) can for example point to EU policy not serving relevant goals or not achieving its goals. Deficits in the representation dimension (input legitimacy) can come to the fore when the wishes of the people are not being reflected in political decisions; hereby the democratic process is being hindered. There can be deficits in the third dimension of legitimacy when a political system lacks adequate accountability mechanisms and when there is hardly information provided that enables a well-founded assessment of the policy to be formed (WWR, 2007:44). And last but not least, deficits in the identification dimension can point to a failed

appearance of a feeling of connection with the EU and between EU citizens, resulting in not accepting the decisions that are taken within the European Community.

Related to these four dimensions of legitimacy, Beetham & Lord (1998) have identified three liberal-democratic criteria of legitimacy: performance, democracy and identity. As possible legitimacy deficits in the field of performance they point to ideological disagreement and institutional ineffectiveness. The so-called democratic deficit is the most frequently discussed feature of legitimacy and is usually identified as a lack of popular consent. Furthermore, the European Union lacks a sense of European identity. Although EU integration is mainly based on the idea of an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe, citizens do not identify themselves with the EU institutions and its procedures.

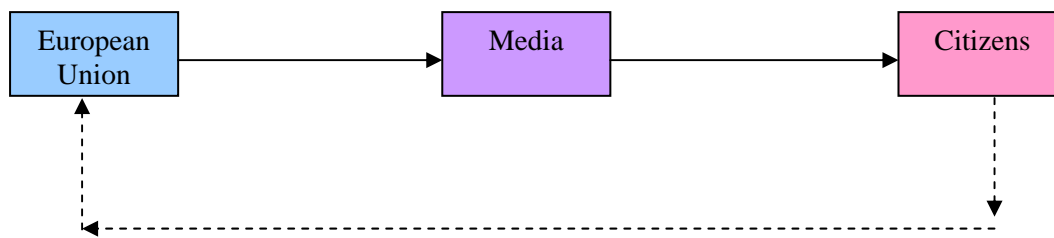
The results of the European Union’s Euro-Barometer 68 study (see: figure 3) have shown as well that ‘information’ is a very important aspect for building the European Union. It is therefore essential that the EU citizens are informed properly, especially since more knowledge about the functioning of the European Union and its policies are preconditions for the adjudication of legitimacy.



**Figure 3 National Views of the Amount of EU Coverage on Television (EB 68)**

Baetens & Bursens (2005:15) point to three deficits underlying to the European Union’s legitimacy deficit, namely a motivation; knowledge and comprehension deficit. Due to the complexity of the European integration process it is of great importance to attract citizens and motivate them to become more involved and aware of the European Union. Thus, information supply is very important. Since the European Union is for many people far, far away and in order to gain some knowledge about the European integration process, the important role of mass media comes to the fore since citizens are dependent on mass media to attain some information. When people have some knowledge about the European Union, its institutional design and its importance, they become more motivated and are better able to form their own opinion and show that opinion in for example the elections of the European Parliament. In its turn, this contributes to the democratic legitimacy of the European Union as well. However, the information provided has to be comprehensible, otherwise it will have the contrary effect whereby it demotivates people to become informed about the European Union. As Baetens & Bursens (2005) state it: “low knowledge and comprehension of the European integration process causes low public acceptance of the European Union”. In the next paragraph, I am going to discuss whether and how mass media can contribute to EU legitimacy.

## 2.2 The Relevance of Mass Media for European Union Legitimacy



**Figure 4** *The Intermediary Function of News Media*

Within the European Union, as well as in every democratic political system, the news media function as intermediaries between the political order and its citizens. Since the European Union is for many people so far away, they don't feel a direct connection to it and because of this distance between citizens and the European Union direct communication is not feasible; therefore citizens are dependent on news media in order to become informed about the European Union.

De Vreese, Banducci, Semetko & Boomgaarden (2006:478) state that “the importance of the media in alleviating or contributing to the democratic deficit lies in the media’s ability to contribute to a shared framework of reference and a European identity”. The significant power of the media is that they “provide for information and communication as the key ingredients for a democratic process of political debate and opinion formation” (Meyer, 1999). Meyer, too, argues that “the media are becoming more and more a political actor in their own right and the political system is increasingly forced to adapt to the growing importance of mediated – and in particular televised – communication”. Koopmans & Pfetsch (2000) underline as well that the media are acknowledged as actors in the public sphere that legitimately contribute to the political discourse by adding their own voice. So, we could indeed state that the media have a dual function in domestic politics as well as in European politics. On the one hand, media have a role as mediators of information, in this function “they shape information flows that are of most crucial importance as the basis of processes of democratic legitimation, responsiveness, accountability and participation” (Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2000, p. 10). On the other hand, like Meyer already argued, media have a role as actors in their own right in which they can contribute to the opinion formation about for example the European Union and as a means to comment on European issues.

With respect to Beetham & Lord’s dimensions – legality, normative justifiability and legitimation – we can conclude from the research of Baetens & Bursens (2005) that mass media is not equally relevant for all conditions, dimensions and models of legitimacy. The role of mass media and, with the aim of this research in mind; the role of television news media is mainly relevant when it concerns output legitimacy. In section 2.1, output-legitimacy has been defined by stating that a political system



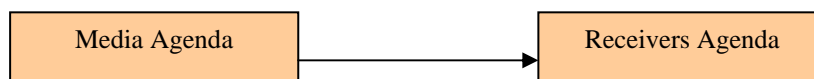
can be considered as legitimate when it achieves to execute ‘good governance’ in a way that is accepted and perceived by its citizens. So, here the relevance of mass media is being emphasised once again. In order for citizens to accept and perceive a political authority – such as the European Union – as legitimate, they obviously need to be informed first. Though, the information about the European Union as provided by the mass media can contribute to input legitimacy as well; for example by stimulating citizens to become more involved in European Union decision-making by means of participating in elections and referendums. According to Baetens & Bursens (2005) mass media are especially relevant for the achievement of normative justifiability and legitimation. “The dissemination of information through mass media can generate more knowledge of the EU governance level as a rightful source of authority and potentially also more acceptance of its policies” (2005:12).

### **2.2.1 The Legitimation Function of Television News Media**

Within political systems and democracies, television news media have various functions. Next to their informative, entertainment and watchdog function, television news media have as well an important legitimation function. As Hoddess (1997:2) argues, “the media’s own legitimate status allow them to confer authority upon issues, institutions and individuals. News media have the ability to legitimate political systems and processes by constructing the image of authority and accountability that structures of governance require to retain support of their publics”. Moreover, television news media have as well societal functions. An example is the media’s agenda-setting function which points to the media’s role in the exemplification of certain issues – like the European Union – in the news. When the media puts emphasis on certain issues and when the quantity of those issues in the news increases, the level of attention towards such issues increases as well. One could say that the more media pay attention to the European Union, the more people think and talk about it, and the more the people conceive those topics as important. So, the media have the ability to put issues higher on both the personal as well as the political agenda. In the subsequent paragraph I will expand on the media’s agenda-setting function. However, every coin has a backside too; the former statements about the media emphasizing certain topics or aspects of topics resulting in people attributing more importance to those topics can as well be applied the other way around. It is therefore questionable whether an increased level of quantity of news coverage and consequently of attention to the European Union in television news media automatically leads to more support for the EU and subsequently to an increase of EU legitimacy. And how can this be applied to the coverage of the EU on Dutch television news? The content analysis in chapter 4 and the interviews in chapter 5 will help us to provide an answer to this question, but first, let us turn to a more profound discussion of the media agenda-setting theory and framing.

### 2.2.2 Media Agenda-Setting Theory

In 1963, Cohen investigated the power of the press to influence public opinion about foreign affairs and with this research of Cohen the basic of agenda-setting has been formulated. In 1973, McCombs and Shaw have elaborated on the agenda-setting hypothesis and provided for empirical evidence that “the visibility of an issue in the news influences the perceived importance of an issue by the public” (Semetko, De Vreese & Peter, 2000). We can distinguish between first-level agenda-setting and second-level agenda-setting. In the media’s role as first-level agenda-setter, they have the possibility to select issues from external sources and present them as topics for public deliberation. There are two basic assumptions that underlie most of the research on media agenda-setting. Firstly, “the press and media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it” and secondly, “media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues” (Wikipedia/University of Twente, TCW). In the news media’s function as agenda-setters they don’t tell people “what to think, but what to think about” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972:198). This means that the media don’t impose their opinion to the people, but they supply them with the necessary information in order to let them form their own opinion. News media have to choose a select number of topics out of a whole bunch of topics. How news media decide which topics are interesting enough for their news bulletins is of course an interesting question, and will therefore come back in my interviews. By means of preferring certain topics above other topics the news media have actually a very powerful tool in hands to influence people’s personal ‘agenda’. Since news media are the main source for gathering information about the European Union, they play as well an important role in the creation of perceptions of and attitudes towards the European Union.



**Figure 5 Causal Relationship between Media Agenda and Receivers Agenda**

Previous research has shown that it is presumable that there is a causal relationship between the topics that are emphasised in news bulletins, the so-called news media’s agenda and the topics that the receivers think of as important: the receivers agenda.

Since agenda-setting theory is restricted to visibility, we can interpret McCombs & Shaw’s assumption – from the perspective of this master thesis – as follows: the visibility of EU affairs in the news influences the perceived importance of the European Union by the public. The empirical part of this research (chapter 4 and 5) has therefore, among others, the aim to shed a light on the visibility of the European Union in the news, by measuring the appearance frequency of EU affairs. Although agenda-setting theory provides us with insights in the visibility of the EU in the news in relation to the perceived importance of the European Union, it does not provide for enough information that enables us to relate it to the concept of legitimacy, seeing that visibility and perceived importance don’t say anything about the influence on public support for the EU. For example, a high level of visibility of

the EU can cause people to perceive the EU as an important topic, but it doesn't say anything about the content of the information. When EU affairs are very visible, though assessed from a negative perspective, the EU can be seen as an important topic but it can result in public opinion being negative and thereby declining in support for the EU. So, we could argue that news media do not per definition contribute to a decrease of the EU's legitimacy deficit. This statement, and an examination of how news media put emphasis on certain topics brings me to second-level agenda-setting – better known as framing – a topic on which I will expand in the next paragraph.

### 2.2.3 Framing

As defined by Koopmans & Pfetsch (2000:11), “framing refers to the contextualisation of issues, namely the construction of a framework of interpretative meaning around an issue, which then is taken as a basis of collective opinion formation”. Whereas agenda-setting theory assumes that media present their audiences with an agenda for what issues and topics the public should consider as important, the concept of framing goes a bit further by stating that the media's success in telling audiences what to think about is a consequence of the media's ability to frame issues. Framing refers to the spin given to an issue in the news; the way in which an issue is portrayed and emphasized. Framing of issues is also an expedient for journalists to make the information more interesting and better understandable for their audiences. The “news itself has little value, though, when embedded in a framework which structures and organises it, it obtains certain value” (De Vreese, 2000:20). As De Vreese (2003b:33) clearly outlines in his book, “frames in the news can be examined and identified by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotypes images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts and judgments”.

Although news can be framed in different ways, scholars have agreed on the fact that about five recurrent frames exist. For the outline of the most recurrent frames I make use of the definitions as provided by De Vreese (2003a, pp. 21-22) of the five generic news frames.

First of all, the **conflict frame** which emphasises conflict between individuals, groups, institutions or countries. Research has observed that political debate between elites is often reduced to conflict in the news.

Secondly, the **human interest frame** which brings a human face, an individual's story or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue or problem. This frame personalises and emotionalises news.

Thirdly, the **responsibility frame** presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving the issue to either the government or to an individual or group.

Fourthly, the **morality frame**; this frame interprets an event or issue in the context of religious tenets or moral prescriptions. For example, such stories may contain moral messages, judgments and offer social prescriptions about majority behaviour.

Finally, the **economic consequences frame** presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country. (De Vreese, 2003a, pp. 21-22).

Since these five news frames are most frequently used, they are also being applied in the content analysis of the NOS and RTL news. The former can be described as an inductive approach whereby I am going to “analyse news stories with a priori defined news frames in mind” (De Vreese, 2005:53).

In order to integrate framing theory more strongly in this master thesis, I will now discuss how news framing and legitimacy can be related. The five news frames that have been discussed on the previous page can be seen as a means to illustrate in which ways legitimacy is being affected. The economic consequences frame, for instance, can be linked with output legitimacy since it addresses the results of an issue in terms of the economic consequences. For example, new EU regulation or the enlargement of the European Union can be discussed in terms of its economic consequences for the EU itself or for its citizens. The conflict frame can be linked to input legitimacy when, for example, debates between EU member states or MEPs on certain issues in the decision-making process are being covered. The human interest frame can contribute to identification as a source of legitimacy due to its approach of personalising and emotionalising news items and consequently creating a feeling of connection with the EU. The tone of a news items – positive or negative framing – can as well contribute to the amount of support for the European Union and thus to its legitimacy. This can be best explained by means of the responsibility frame which has the ability to either blame the EU for something or to credit the EU for something, resulting in influencing public opinion about the European project in a positive or negative way. So, we could state that television news media play a very powerful role in European politics as regards to their ability to decide how EU news is being covered. The linkages between framing and legitimacy are further being discussed in paragraph 4.3.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The previous paragraphs have provided us with an answer to the second sub-research question. The coverage of European issues in television news media has the ability to influence the legitimation of EU politics as a consequence of citizens’ dependency on television news media to become informed about the European Union. Television news media’s power to decide what people should think about (agenda-setting power) and their ability to decide how EU news is being covered (framing) provides them with an influential role with regard to the legitimation of EU politics. It is the television news media that decides which European issues are being portrayed and emphasized and in what way (positive or negative) resulting in steering of public opinion and consequently influencing popular consent.

In conclusion we could be argued that news media *could* indeed contribute to a decrease of the EU’s legitimacy deficit, seeing that they are for the majority of the EU citizens the most important source of information about the European Union and seeing that they have the ability to influence the knowledge and opinions of the people and thereby increasing public support for the EU. However, it is

questionable whether news media *should* be willing to do that. Previous research has shown that the latter depends on whether it is preferred that the news media are being controlled from above, whether they are completely free in their functioning or whether they have a certain responsibility towards citizens. Now I can of course describe what the pro's and con's are per before mentioned possibility; it would be more interesting to hear from the news media themselves how they see their role in the reduction of the EU's democratic legitimacy deficit. In chapter 5 I will come back to this in the interviews. But before we arrive there, we will discuss the content analysis first in which we are going to discover how the European Union is being covered in Dutch news media.

### 3. Methods of Enquiry

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#### 3.1 Quantitative and Qualitative Research

***Quantitative Analysis***

*The numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect.*

*Shaw (2007:405)*

***Qualitative Analysis***

*The nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships.*

*Shaw (2007:378)*

As indicated in paragraph 1.3.2, my master thesis contains both quantitative and qualitative aspects. This is – as Grix (2004:124) expresses it – the preferred way since I have chosen my methods according to the research (sub-) question I intend to ask and which is described by Grix as the ‘question-method fit’. Obviously, the content analysis of the main evening news of the two Dutch broadcasters NOS and RTL is mainly quantitative since I am measuring the appearance frequency by counting the number of news bulletins concerning and referring to the European Union and present them in a numerical way. Furthermore, the themes portrayed and the way in which the themes were framed have been put together in a table (see: Annex I). The results have been examined in order to discover underlying patterns of the appearance frequency and framing of European issues, which is a more qualitative way of analysis. Moreover, the qualitative interviews are also aimed at – as Shaw (2007) calls it – discovering underlying meanings for and the rationale behind the coverage of EU affairs. Paragraph 3.2 and 3.3. describe more explicitly the goals that I have by making use of the content analysis and semi-structured interview for answering the main research question.

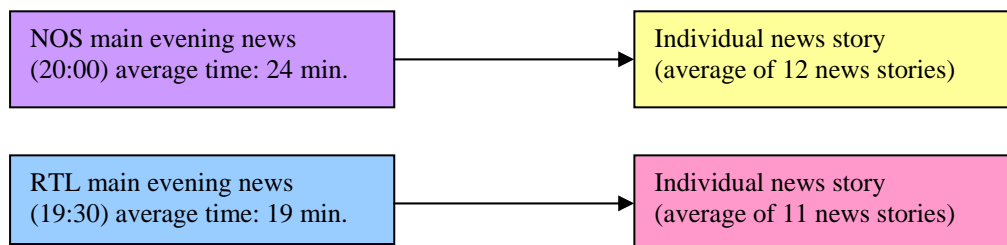
#### 3.2 Content Analysis

In order to examine whether and how the European Union is portrayed in the Dutch main evening bulletins, I have executed a content analysis of the NOS and RTL news covering a period of four months: April, May, June and July 2008. The choice for the main evening news can easily be justified because those are the news bulletins that attract the largest number of viewers. A content analysis is an unobtrusive research method; this means that it is a method of studying social behaviour without affecting it. A content analysis itself is the study of recorded human communications (Babbie, 2007:320) and is – for my research – an adequate way to measure which EU topics occur, how often and in which way EU topics are being framed. Hence, I will analyse how the NOS and RTL News report about the European Union. Do they explain the basics that are necessary for people to be able to understand the news, or do they assume a certain level of knowledge? And when the European Union is covered, from which perspective do they deal with it? For example from a national perspective, whereby the focus is on Dutch members of the European Parliament and the Dutch ministers in the Council of Ministers, or do they focus mainly on statements and proposals of the European

Commission? Is the coverage of EU affairs mainly positive, negative or neutral? And last but not least can we really examine Peter, Semetko & de Vreese's *invisible importance* that is attributed to the European Union? and what does that imply with regard to the EU's legitimacy? All these questions that form the basis for the analysis of the NOS and RTL news bulletins provide me with the necessary information to be able to answer the third sub-research question: How is the European Union being covered in Dutch public and commercial television news?

### 3.2.1 Units of Analysis

The units of analysis belonging to the content analysis are the individual news stories, which are as well my independent variables. These individual news stories can be described and operationalized as news stories that are being announced by the anchorman/woman.



**Figure 6 NOS and RTL News Bulletins**

In both NOS and RTL's main evening news, the total number of news stories as well as the number of news stories concerning the European Union have been measured by means of tallying. Here, a distinction has been between complete news items dedicated to the European Union and news items in which the European Union is only being mentioned in one or more sentences. Such news items about the European Union are operationalized as news stories that are concerned with EU events, EU policies, EU institutions and key persons of those institutions such as Barroso and Solana, or EU decision-making. The dependent variables are the number of news items, the frequency of the European Union and the way in which the EU topics are framed. For the framing of EU issues I have made use of the five generic frames as outlined in section 2.2.3.

#### 3.2.1.1 NOS & RTL

The Netherlands broadcasting foundation (NOS) is the public broadcaster of the Netherlands. For the gross of the Dutch citizens, NOS news is the most important and most reliable news source. Research of the NOS in 2001<sup>2</sup> has shown that television is the most important source (64%) for people to be informed about daily national and international news. The NOS news is the favourite news provider for 37% of the ones who have chosen television as their main source of news and 16% have indicated RTL news as their



<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.radio.nl/2003/home/medianieuws/010.archief/2001/06/74147.html>

most important news provider. The NOS evening news of eight o'clock attracts an average 1.6 million viewers as opposed to the average 1.1 million viewers of the RTL main evening news at half past seven. Radio Television Luxembourg (RTL) is Europe's largest exploiter of commercial radio- and television stations. The RTL news is the main counterpart of the public NOS news. Although, a television news test in the 'Journalist' number 15 of September 2006 has shown that both NOS and



RTL are quite similar as regards topics. The main conclusion of that television news test was that, overall, the news reports by the NOS are more extensive and with a broader international focus than the more domestically focused RTL news.

### **3.2.2 Period of Analysis**

The content analysis of NOS and RTL News has been conducted during the months April, May, June and July 2008. These months have been chosen on the one hand because during those months I was working on my master thesis and contains therefore especially the phase of data collection and on the other hand, this period can be described as a routine period. A routine period indicates that there are no noteworthy European events taking place such as EP elections, Council summits or the introduction of the Euro, which can influence the degree of attention for the European Union. Since previous studies have already mainly focused on key EU events such as the introduction of the Euro and EP elections – events of such an importance that it is obvious that a huge amount of attention is attributed to it – I have focused on a more routine period. In my opinion, - and to recall from paragraph 1.3.2 – an examination of a routine period provides us with more insights in the daily coverage of EU affairs, and besides that, the EU cannot base its democratic legitimacy only on the information provided by television news media during key EU events, as a matter of fact, I would argue that the coverage of EU affairs during routine periods provides us with a more honest image of how the European Union, its decisions and policies are being covered in the main evening news.

### **3.3 Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviews**

The fourth and last sub-research question to which this master thesis provides an answer is: How do Dutch television news media cover EU affairs? This 'how' refers to the way in which the public and commercial television news broadcasters cover the European Union in their (main evening) news bulletins. In contrast with the third sub-research question that focuses on finding out how EU affairs are being covered, this question focuses on how the news media cover EU affairs. In fact, it could be stated that this question points to the process that underlies the coverage of EU affairs in the television news outlets. Thus, this sub-question has the aim to reveal the reasons behind the coverage of the European Union. How do the editors decide whether and which EU news fits in the main evening news bulletins? How do they explain the low level of EU coverage? What problems are they facing when covering EU politics? Are the news media aware of their legitimating function? These, and more, questions are very useful to give us insights in the 'rationale behind' the European Union in daily



television news. The most appropriate method hereby is a qualitative interview that is based on the observations resulting from the theoretical overview and content analysis. Hence, I have conducted two semi-structured qualitative interviews; one with Jantien Niemeijer, foreign affairs editress of the RTL News and one with Gerard van den Broek, chief of the NOS news foreign affairs editors<sup>3</sup>. Both persons are occupied with the ‘creation of a news bulletin’ and are able to provide me with the necessary information to answer my questions. Moreover, the semi-structured interviews contribute as well to the main research-question of this master thesis: How is the European Union being covered in Dutch television news? and how does that relate to the democratic legitimacy of EU politics? The interviews enable me to answer the first part of the research question not only on the basis of a content analysis, in fact, they enable me to discuss both sides of the ‘EU coverage story’. Therefore, this approach results in a better grounded conclusion too. Since the interview questions are derived from the theoretical part of my master thesis as well as from the content analysis, I prefer to discuss the results of my content analysis first and afterwards I will return to the interview questions.

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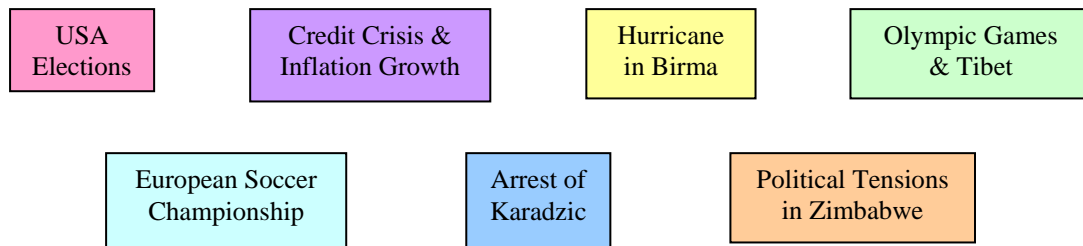
<sup>3</sup> Gerard van den Broek has answered the interview questions by e-mail. Due to busy time schedules at the NOS news office it was not possible to meet him, or one of his colleagues, personally.

## 4. Results: Content Analysis

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### 4.1 Introduction

During four months (April, May, June and July 2008) I have watched the main evening news of both the public (NOS) and private (RTL) Dutch news broadcasters. In these months the news has been dominated by the following topics:



This chapter expounds the results of the content analysis and discusses them in the light of the European Union's democratic legitimacy.

### 4.2 Results NOS & RTL Main Evening News

109 NOS eight o'clock main evening news bulletins have been examined which consist of a total of 1295 different news items. In the graph below, I have visualized the division of those news items.

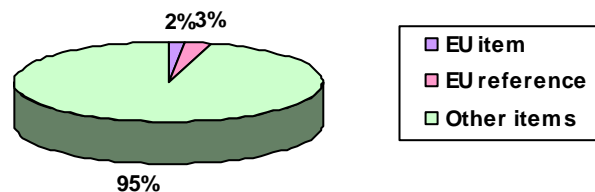


Figure 7 NOS – Division of News Items

As you can see, the percentage of news items dedicated specifically to the European Union is extremely low. Of the 1295 NOS news items that I have watched there were only 20 items (2%) directly attributed to the European Union; and only 39 news items contained a reference towards the European Union. Of RTL's main evening news, 81 bulletins<sup>4</sup> have been examined which consist of 1018 news items. In figure 8, on the subsequent page, you can see the division of RTL news items whereby only 1% concerned an EU item.

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<sup>4</sup> The NOS and RTL news bulletins have been watched on the internet. For the NOS main evening news I have made use of [www.uitzendinggemist.nl](http://www.uitzendinggemist.nl), a website that contains the online versions of every programme that is being televised at the public stations. I have watched the RTL news on [www.rtl.nl/actueel/rtlnieuws/home/](http://www.rtl.nl/actueel/rtlnieuws/home/) via the online news archive. Unfortunately, a lot of these RTL news broadcasts were not working well and couldn't be displayed.

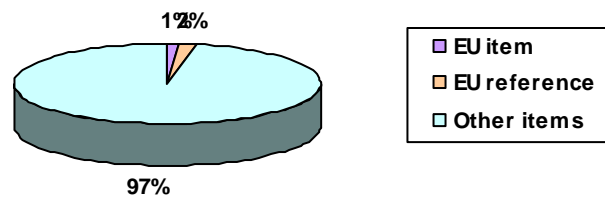


Figure 8 RTL – Division of News Items

The ‘EU items’ dealt – among others – with the Lisbon Treaty, the Irish referendum on the Reform Treaty and announcements of the European Commission concerning the reduction of charges for text messaging across EU borders and concerning the expansion of the milk quota. The references towards the European Union were mostly concerned with EU regulation – for example, the ‘FIFA-plan’<sup>5</sup> which was contradictory to the principle of ‘free movement of persons’ – ; with financing by the European Union; with the contributions of the EU in international and national politics and with the EU as an election theme. Besides textual references, the European Union was ‘visually’ being exposed in news bulletins. This visual aspect implies that in news items where EU topics are not mentioned, the European Union is being represented by the EU flag. Even if there aren’t spend any words over the European Union, the appearance of the EU flag or EU prominents like Barroso and Solana can result in recognition – by the viewers – of the involvement of the European Union in different terrains.

So basically, we can subdivide the EU-items in the following categories:

- |                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| - EU regulation              | - EU co-operation |
| - Commission Proposals       | - EU Economy      |
| - Future of the EU           | - EP Voting       |
| - Cost/Benefits EU Accession | - Opinions        |

Interestingly, we could argue from this ‘topic overview’ that although the amount of EU coverage is very low, the topics discussed in the news bulletins are of a high level of importance. Moreover, this observation makes even more sense when we refer to what has been discussed in paragraph 1.1, “there is an invisible importance to European Union news: although the share of the news devoted to EU affairs was low, when EU news did appear, it tended to be more prominent than other political news” (Peter, Semetko & De Vreese 2003:305) and that exactly is the case. This – often – prominent exposition of the European Union finds utterance in EU news being in the opening of the news

<sup>5</sup> This refers to the plan of FIFA to undermine the power of the rich soccer clubs by means of a 6+5 rule which states that every paid soccer team has to have a minimum of 6 soccer players that originate from the country in question. Within the European Union this cannot be accomplished so easily due to the freedom of movement of persons principle. Nevertheless, the European Union does support FIFA’s goal to restrict the power of the rich soccer clubs.

bulletin and in the length of an EU issue. Especially the news items concerning the Irish referendum and the Russia-EU summit took about five minutes, which is quit a lot for a main evening news bulletin. Such prominently placed or extensive news items can cause viewers to perceive those topics as more important.

The results of Eurobarometer 68 of autumn 2007<sup>6</sup> support my findings concerning the extremely low level of attention towards the European Union in NOS and RTL news bulletins. From this Eurobarometer study we can conclude that as far as ‘Europe in the news’ is concerned, two-thirds (66%) of the Dutch citizens are the opinion that Dutch media do not pay enough attention to the European Union.

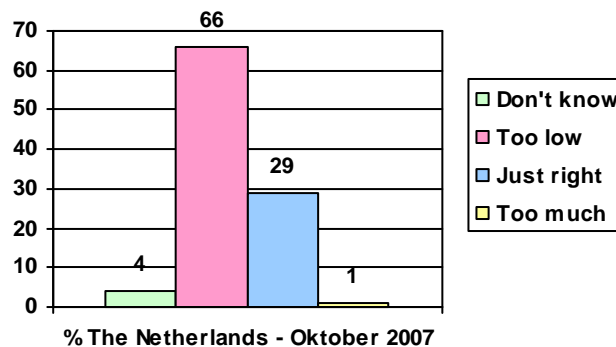


Figure 9 Attention for the European Union in the Media (Eurobarometer 68)

#### 4.2.1 The Provision of EU Information in Television News

Since the power of the media lies in the provision of information as a key ingredient for a democratic process, we can examine here a contradicting situation. As my research has shown, in the Netherlands (as well as in the other EU Member States) there is hardly information on EU issues being supplied via television news broadcasts. As discussed in section 2.2, EU citizens need to be informed in order to accept and perceive a political authority, such as the European Union, as legitimate. It is therefore useful to analyse more specifically whether the EU information provided by NOS and RTL news supplies the public with sufficient insights in the European decision-making processes and the role of the different institutions therein. Can the information be described as sufficient in a way that it leads to acceptance of and support for the EU as a legitimate political authority? One striking observation based on the content analysis is that both broadcasters hardly provide any information about the decision-making process itself and information about the institutions is mainly limited to the European Commission and the European Parliament. Especially the NOS news speaks most of the time in terms of the European Commission when EU affairs are concerned. Some examples of the before mentioned are: “the European Commission directive has been approved<sup>7</sup>...”, “the European Commission calls for

<sup>6</sup>Eurobarometer study 68: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68\\_nl\\_nat.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb68_nl_nat.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See content analysis in the annex I: NOS 7 April 2008.

EU pressure<sup>8</sup> ...”, “European Commission proposal on<sup>9</sup> ...”, “European Commission examines...”, “European Commission wants...”. From this observation it could be argued that the European Commission is the most newsworthy institution, seeing that they come up with proposals for new EU policies and decides on important topics. However, this ‘European Union equals the European Commission’ way of informing about the European Union can also provide the people with a one-sided view of the Commission as being the engine of the European project, or, of the European Union as an elitist project whereby the ‘undemocratic’ Commission decides on European issues that affect the lives of EU citizens. On the other hand, it could as well be the case that news media try to simplify the complicated bureaucratic EU decision-making process by narrowing it down to the ‘European Union equals the European Commission’ way of informing. In the interviews I will discuss these observations in order to reveal the rationale behind. Overall, from the analysis it can be concluded that the available EU information in the news bulletins does not provide citizens with the necessary knowledge that they need in order to be able to understand the European project and to be able to form their own well grounded opinion about it as a necessary ingredient for the EU’s democratic legitimacy.

#### **4.2.2 The Comprehensibility of EU Information in Television News**

In order to hook into information as an important aspect for building the European Union, we can as well refer to what Baetens & Bursens (2005) refer to as the necessity of comprehensibility of information as a precondition for motivating people to become informed about and to understand the European Union and in the end to contribute to the EU’s democratic legitimacy. In my content analysis I wondered whether NOS and RTL news assume a certain level of knowledge or whether they explain the basic principles of the EU that are necessary for people to be able to understand the news. My observations pointed to the former. The news media (NOS to a greater extent than RTL) report about the European Union in a way as though they assume that every person in the Netherlands already completely knows how the EU functions, how its decision-making process works and who the main actors are. This observation of ‘presumed knowledge’ is based on their way of ‘reporting without explaining’, and applies more to the NOS than to the RTL News. For example, on the third of July both broadcasters report on the fact that the European Central Bank has raised its interest rates in order to combat the inflation, however, the difference in here is that the anchorman of the NOS just reads the message and goes on to the next topic; whereby RTL provides people with the same information only then with a reporter on the spot, in front of the ECB building in Frankfurt, who explains the functioning and tasks of the ECB as well.

When comprehensibility is concerned, the RTL news is overall more occupied with making the news understandable than the NOS news. This observation is based on the fact that RTL news uses a lot of

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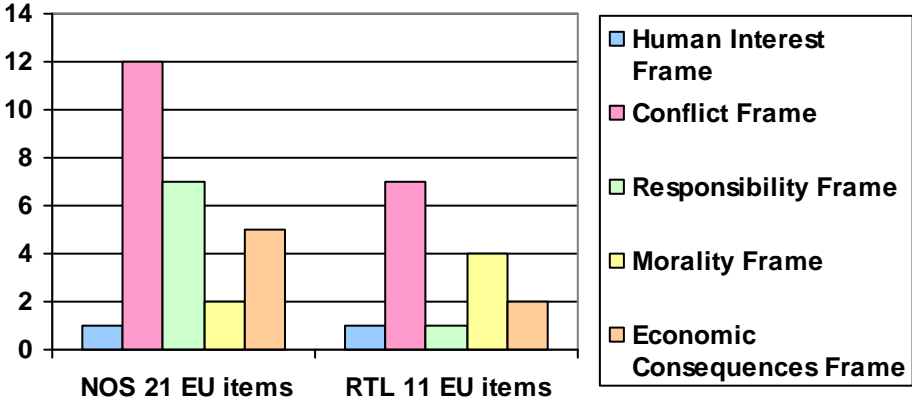
<sup>8</sup> NOS 25 April 2008.

<sup>9</sup> NOS 13 May 2008.

graphs, opinion polls and visualisation of ‘the European Union’. With the last mentioned it is meant that when there is news on voting in the European Parliament, RTL shows images of the voting and when there is news about a Member of the European Parliament, RTL interviews the MEP and shows images of the MEP and the European Parliament. Although it is most of the times outlined from a domestic perspective, this visualisation of Europe makes the EU more tangible for the people. Another way to make news more comprehensible is by means of framing; how the EU items were framed in the NOS and RTL news will be discussed in the subsequent section.

**4.3 Framing NOS & RTL**

To recall from what has been discussed in paragraph 2.4; news media have the ability to influence public opinion by emphasising certain aspects of a topic at the disadvantage of other aspects; this spin given to a news item is called framing. Figure 10 displays the frames that are used by NOS and RTL news for the items concerning the European Union.



**Figure 10 Framing of NOS and RTL news**

From the content analysis we can conclude that – although the numbers are low – in the NOS news, the responsibility and economic consequences frame are considered to be more important than in the RTL news. On the other hand, RTL news discusses more news stories by making use of the morality frame. The one thing that stands out though, is the strong presence of the conflict frame. Previous studies, among others of Peter & De Vreese (2004) and Semetko, De Vreese & Peter (2000), have shown this too. They are the opinion that the conflict frame provides European issues with more news value and a clear way of approaching the topic since European politics is difficult to portray in a lively way. An example of the conflict frame in my content analysis is an item concerning the high price of Diesel. It was stated that the European Commission was examining possible solutions, but that the Heads of Government were disagreeing on measures against the high fuel prices. So, the news item was framed as a conflict between the Commission and the Council. Another example is a news item concerning Tibet. The European Parliament stated that it wants all European leaders to boycott the opening ceremony of the olympic games. However, Balkenende did not respond to the call of the

European Parliament. Thus, this news item was framed in terms of conflict between the European Parliament and the Heads of Government. These examples show that EU items are often framed in terms of 'European level vs. domestic level'. As De Vreese (2003:117-II) argues in his book *'Framing the European Union'*, "by and large, the 'European story' is more a domestic story than a 'European' one, with the significant exception of the summit coverage". De Vreese refers to the former as 'the domestic bias'; the results of this content analysis endorse his analysis as well.

How can we relate these observations concerning news frames to the concept of legitimacy and make them more concrete? Based on the discussion of the linkage between framing and legitimacy in paragraph 2.2 we can argue that most emphasis is put on output legitimacy. For instance, EU news items is often being covered in an economic consequences- and responsibility frame whereby the focus lies on the economic consequences of new EU regulation or when it is stated that the EU is responsible for causing things; like, "due to an EU directive cell phones are allowed to be used in planes above 3000 meter"<sup>10</sup>, "an increase of pick-pockets due to Romanian and Bulgarian EU accession"<sup>11</sup> or "the EU forces member states to inventorise the national security situation"<sup>12</sup>. When tone of the news is concerned, most news can be considered as neutral, for example when the conflict frame is concerned both sides of a story are being covered. Although, issues framed from a responsibility perspective are most of the times being discussed as the 'EU is causing things' or the 'EU as creating things', which results in a divergence between negative and positive EU items and can consequently cause people to think more positively or negatively about the European Union. Similar to the responsibility frame, the conflict frame arises most of the times in terms of output legitimacy, for example with a delegation of fishermen who protest by the European Commission against the high fuel prices<sup>13</sup>. Thus, this analysis shows that most of the news on EU politics is about the results of EU regulations and decisions of the European Commission (output legitimacy). A finding that endorses the conclusion of Baetens & Bursens' (2005) research as discussed in paragraph 2.2 and which states that mass media are not equally relevant for all conditions, dimensions and models of legitimacy. This actually indicates once again that not much news value is attributed to the decision-making process itself (input legitimacy) nor to accountability and identification as sources for legitimacy.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

From the content analysis it can be concluded that the European Union is being exposed to a very limited extent in the main evening news. The proven scarcity of EU information in Dutch television news media does not provide the Dutch citizens with a founded basis of knowledge that they need in order to be able to comprehend the working and significance of the European integration process.

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<sup>10</sup> See: coding scheme NOS April 7<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> See: coding scheme RTL April 26<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> See: coding scheme NOS May 30<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> See: coding scheme NOS June 4<sup>th</sup> and RTL June 4<sup>th</sup>.

Nonetheless, it is arguable whether television news media are the appropriate source for informing citizens about EU basics. In the next chapter I will expand on this presumption.

When related to democratic legitimacy; the way in which news items are framed has the ability to influence the way in which people perceive the European Union. In order for people to be able to understand and accept certain rules and to form their own opinion is dependent on the information that people get. Thus, framing can indeed influence public opinion. For example, slightly negative framed items can cause people to think more negatively about the EU and although the conflict frame provides EU items with more news value, it can cause people to perceive the EU more negatively, for instance as being an organisation with conflicts between its own institutions. Experimental studies of Vliegenthart, Schuck, et al. (2008) have proven that the conflict frame indeed decreases public support.

Moreover, we have to keep in mind that an increase in appearance frequency of the European Union in the news does not necessarily lead to more support for the European Union and in the end an increase of the EU's democratic legitimacy. Obviously, if only negative EU reporting increases, EU citizens are becoming more sceptic about the European project too.



## **5. Results: Semi-Structured Interviews**

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### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the results of the semi-structured interviews. As indicated in paragraph 3.3, the questions are based on both the theoretical research and the outcomes of the content analysis. But before we turn to the results, the questions will be outlined first and complemented with the goals that I have by asking those specific questions. The semi-structured interview has been executed with Jantien Niemeijer, who is one of the foreign affairs editors of the RTL news and who is as well responsible for the coverage of EU-summits in Brussels. Gerard van den Broek, chief of the NOS news foreign affairs editors has answered the same questions by e-mail. In order to create a coherent structure, the interviews have been composed as follows: first, a general question is posed in order to find out how the main evening news is being realized; subsequently, European Union news coverage is being discussed with the aim of discovering underlying inducements for the coverage of European issues; from here it is a logical step to ask questions related to NOS' and RTL's agenda-setting function and their way of framing EU news. All questions have been asked and discussed in the light of the important role of television news media for the legitimization of EU politics and are based for the greater part on my observations coming from the content analysis.

### **5.2 The European Union in the Main Evening News**

When the creation of a news bulletin is concerned, NOS and RTL news are executing fairly similar procedures. Various correspondents abroad, reporters, and editors in Hilversum are working together on the main evening news. Throughout the day there are meetings in which the news of the day before is being reviewed and whereby topics in newspapers and on the internet are being discussed, next to the topics that are already on the agenda. These items concern for example national elections or elections to the European Parliament; the introduction of the smoking ban and the entry to the European Union of new member states. Though, in the end it is the chief editor who decides which items are being covered in the news bulletins.

Before news can be considered as news it has to fulfill two conditions. First, it has to be new and, secondly, it is important for television news that there are pictures and that a story is expressive. As Van den Broek of NOS news states it: "News is something that deviates from the ordinary, in most cases it is deviating in a negative way. News can as well be the result of a long process of, for example, a political proposition that in the end results in European regulation". Whether EU news is appropriate for coverage in the NOS and RTL News bulletins depends among others on the other available news items. Every day there is a lot of fresh news to be covered in a limited period of time, so news items have to be chosen very carefully. The interviewees have indicated 'real' EU news as being a proposal for new legislation, regulations or directives, but it can as well be an evolvment in an ongoing

discussion and, obviously, European summits are news in any case. However, the application of the two conditions for ‘news’ to the case of the European Union can be seen as rather complicated. As we all know, the EU decision-making processes are being considered as very extensive, bureaucratic, of minimal transparency and faceless and therefore difficult to cover as ‘news’. All these accusations can as well be linked with the concept of legitimacy or, to be more precise, with the legitimacy deficit as discussed in paragraph 2.1.2. For example, we can interpret the expressiveness of EU news as ‘Europe with a face’. Nowadays the European Union has no real ‘face’ which makes it difficult for people to identify themselves with the EU (identification as a source of legitimacy). Besides that, output legitimacy (eg. results of EU regulation) is more often emphasized in the news than input legitimacy, which implies that it is difficult for television news broadcasters to find the right news moment. Van den Broek describes the difficulty of finding the right news moment as follows: “at the launch of a proposal it is considered too early, during the discussion too incomplete and at the final decision too late”.

Unlike RTL, NOS news has its own office in Brussels with a group of six correspondents and editors who follow and criticize European news on a daily basis and who have the ability – due to their substantial experience, knowledge and contacts – to see the news coming and to determine or check their own news moments. Press releases that are sent to the Hilversum office are always being checked by the Brussels office first. This NOS office in Brussels right ‘on the EU spot’ could provide NOS with a lot of first hand and more extensive EU news. In comparison, NOS news has 32 correspondents over the world in contrast with 9 RTL correspondents. With that and with the NOS’ own EU office in mind, it is rather strange that the NOS news doesn’t cover EU affairs to a much greater extent.

**5.2.1 Problems with EU Coverage**

In the interviews, Niemeijer and Van den Broek have indicated a couple of problems that come across when covering the European Union in the main evening news. Table 1 expounds these problems.

NOS news	RTL news
Lack of transparency	Lack of frequent and active communication from the European Union itself (eg. EU press releases)
Lengthy EU decision-making process that complicate the determination of the news moment	Lack of decisiveness as a consequence of the lengthy EU decision-making process
Unattractiveness of EU news according to the NOS public	Domestic perspective is not always easy to find

**Table 1 Problems with EU coverage**

From table 1 we can conclude that, in general, NOS and RTL news are pointing towards the same reasons underlying the low coverage of EU affairs. Van den Broek agrees that a lot of decision-making originates from the European Union, though, everybody seems to be focused on how decisions are be made at national level. People perceive the decisions that are made in the Hague as more important

because it is better recognizable and closer to the people's own world of experience. He adds an example of the upcoming elections to the European Parliament. The preparations are in full swing, the elections in the Netherlands are on Thursday the 4<sup>th</sup> of June and in all other EU Member States on Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of June; nonetheless, the emphasis is on the Dutch elections, not only for the people but also for the politicians, because the EP elections are being seen as an opinion poll for Dutch politics which is almost more important than the real outcome of the elections for the EU level. This does not indicate NOS' or RTL's focus, but more the general tendency.

### **5.2.2 News Value of EU Affairs**

Obviously, certain EU topics have more news value than other topics, especially topics that affect the Netherlands directly. For the NOS news, decisions concerning agriculture and fisheries have more news value than EU decisions concerning immigration; and economic developments such as the four freedoms that enable Poles to work in the Netherlands have more news value for the Dutch than does the Growth and Stability Pact. With these examples Van den Broek shows that the NOS news is always occupied with 'translating' important European developments to the world of experience of its audience. This 'translation' is especially important because it has the ability to increase the attractiveness of EU news. As Niemeijer states it, it is the aim of the main evening news to attract as much viewers as possible and provide them with an overview of the news of the whole day. During this selection of news items for the main evening news bulletin, EU items are being dropped out the fastest. The editors are always trying to think from a viewers perspective; "what's in it for me? and why do I want or should I – as a viewer – become to know something about the European Union?". It could be argued that former points to a 'spiral', seeing that the previous statement about 'thinking from the perspective of the viewer' can be interpreted as media depending on the viewers' news demand. Citizens are not interested in the EU because they are not properly informed nor hear about it on a frequent basis in television news; the news media, on the other hand, think in their turn that people are not interested in the European Union and so they do not cover it to a great extent. Van den Broek refers to this spiral as the 'chicken or the egg' discussion. When there is a limited EU coverage in the news, the EU stays for its citizens far away and it is not being considered as attractive; but when EU news becomes more attractive, the awareness of and interest in the EU increases. Chapter six will provide you with a more extensive discussion of the 'chicken or the egg' problem in communicating the European Union.

### **5.3 The Legitimizing Function of Television News**

When the legitimating function of television news is concerned, both NOS and RTL news are absolutely aware of it. Though, this legitimating function is not confined to EU issues only. It is the duty of NOS and RTL news to commit journalism in an independent way, instead of becoming a European press officer which is of course a task for the EU itself. Both interviewees agree that when

the European Union provides for news they will use it in their bulletins. However, as one of the interviewees states it: it is neither the task of television news media to prove the EU's right of existence nor to enlarge the support for the EU among the citizens. So, the news media are not directly responsible to inform the people in the strict way of being some kind of European service hatch and promote the European Union. Though, it is the task of news media to report about existing scepticism and criticism; for example, by means of reporting about resistance to decision-making, protests against European initiatives or about member states that oppose the will of other member states. The before mentioned is actually the task of journalism, inform people in a decent way so that they can form their own opinion about the European Union. According to Van den Broek, this can be detached from the amount of EU news coverage seeing that an enormous amount of news stories can as well create a one-sided story of what happened.

#### 5.4 EU Basics and Television News Coverage

As discussed extensively in previous chapters, television news is the most important source for citizens to become informed about EU affairs and to provide them with the necessary information that they need in order to form their own opinion about the European Union. Before citizens are able to understand the workings of the European Union they have to be provided with the basic principles of the EU, its decision-making process and its policies. Therefore it is questionable whether the television news is the most suitable and effective medium for the provision of the EU basics. From the editors' point of view, it is already very difficult to bring the news itself in about one and a half minute; it would even be more difficult to explain and repeat the basics everytime. Choices have to be made as regards the content of a news item. RTL and NOS news cannot start every news bulletin by stating 'the European Parliament is...'. They just can't treat every item exhaustively, otherwise there is no room for the news itself; that's why only the most important news is being reported whereby some knowledge is being presumed.

#### 5.5 The 'Invisible Importance' of EU News

De Vreese et al. have identified a certain 'invisible importance' with regard to EU issues in the main evening news. The interviewees of both NOS and RTL news agree as well that an 'invisible importance' can be attributed to the European Union in the news. Table 2 gives an overview of possible causes underlying the 'invisible importance' as provided by Niemeijer and Van den Broek.

NOS news	RTL news
Limited space and time for television news items	Difficulties with selection of news moments due to lengthy EU decision-making process
Difficulties with the selection of news items and news moments	Amount of EU news depends on overall news offer
The extent to which EU issues can be translated to the Netherlands	(Un)attractiveness of EU news

**Table 2 Causes of the EU's Invisible Importance**

According to the editress of RTL News, this so-called ‘invisible importance’ can be attributed to the lengthy decision-making process of the European Union. The editors have to choose whether they report about all steps in the process or whether they make a large and extensive story about it when there is actually something to report about. RTL News’ preference goes to the second option; according to them the European Union is important and when there is something to report about, they prefer to do this as good and extensive as possible. Besides that, the amount of EU news depends also on the overall news offer of the day and has to deal with the editors’ instinct of “what does the public want to know”? Van den Broek states that – as opposed to radio news with more time and space for ‘news in progress’ – television news bulletins are shorter, and so are the topics. Therefore the selection of news items as well as the selection of news moments is very important, as a consequence, the important moments such as EU summits are automatically part of the news. During these important summits, important decisions are being made or prepared and are therefore being dealt with in the main evening news. So, although there is relatively little EU news in the main evening bulletins, it is the most important news that is being covered.

According to Van den Broek, the ‘invisible’ part can be attributed to other things as well, namely the extent to which European issues can be translated to the Netherlands. When Brussels for example decides on trade agreements, NOS tries to make a story about the harbour in Rotterdam. This may cause that the story is not immediately recognizable as a European story, but its source can actually be a European story. Within the content analysis I have also focused on such ‘Dutch stories’ with a European tincture. To recall from paragraph 4.2, the NOS news contained 39 (out of 1295) domestic or foreign news stories with a reference to the European as opposed to 20 EU items and the RTL news contained 20 (out of 1018) references as opposed to 10 EU items. Thus, the amount of references or ‘indirect EU topics’ was indeed higher than the number of actual EU items. It could be argued that such indirect EU items, or EU issues covered from a Dutch perspective makes the European Union more tangible for the ordinary viewer. On the other hand, news items that are not immediately recognizable as a European story may cause people to slightly miss the European link and perceive it as a Dutch story. In that case, the information that has been provided can contribute to more knowledge about decision-making and policies and so contributing to the legitimacy of the Dutch government, instead of contributing to the EU’s legitimacy.

## **5.6 Framing and Agenda-Setting**

The results of my content analysis (paragraph 4.3) have shown that the conflict frame is strongly represented in the television news bulletins. According to the interviewees, the conflict frame is more or less the standard frame for news items; although for the coherence of a news bulletin a good mixture of news frames is necessary. The conflict frame has the ability to make the news more attractive; this way of framing is especially applied on the – often considered as boring - political news.

As Van den Broek expounds, the conflict frame does not only come across in news reports that deal with what has been decided but also in news reports about how things are being decided or discussed. An example of the NOS news is the coverage of European summits in which the focus of news reports lies in power balances within the European Union. What are the member states' or head of governments' interests? and how do they think to secure their interests? The interviewee refers here to the previous EU presidency of France which has been dominated, or at least seemed to be dominated, by the personal political ambitions of Sarkozy. Federal Chancellor Merkel's problems with Sarkozy's style and the fact that because of that certain decisions have or have not been taken is politically relevant and results therefore in coverage from a conflict model of framing.

Television news media always strive for the provision of both sides of a news story. This counts as well for coverage of European politics. One interviewee gives as an example that when EU regulation on milk quota is being covered, they aim to cover from the European political perspective and perspective of the Dutch farmers. We can discuss this example in light of the broader scope of this master thesis since coverage of the EU as opposed to Dutch interests is determined to have an influence on the legitimacy issue. Obviously, when EU affairs are being covered as opposed to the Dutch interests it may cause people to think more negatively about the European Union and does therefore not contribute to the EU's legitimacy. However, the opposite can as well be the case when EU affairs are being discussed in terms of the gains for the Netherlands which then has the ability to improve support for the European Union and, thus, its legitimacy. All in all, this example emphasizes once again the influential function of television news media and its way of framing.

When the agenda-setting function of television news media is concerned, both NOS and RTL news editors state that they have no own interests in reporting about EU affairs nor by framing news items in a particular way. Nevertheless, television news executes an important role in guiding public opinion on the one hand, and in following what lives among the people on the other hand. Everything the news reports on, citizens perceive as being true. Television news as a medium is partly leading and partly following. On the one hand they elaborate on what plays in society and, on the other hand, they try to bring issues that are at stake at EU level to the domestic level. For RTL news, the focus lies for the biggest part on domestic news; news from abroad and EU news have a higher threshold, especially because people still perceive the EU as being 'abroad'.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, and as an answer to the fourth sub-research question we can examine from the interviews that both NOS and RTL news are pointing to four main problems that form the basis for the limited extent to which the European Union is being covered in the main evening news bulletins. First of all, the lengthy European decision-making process makes it hard for news broadcasters to choose

the right news moment. Secondly, due to the lack of transparency of EU institutions and decision-making processes it is as well hard to obtain news material. Thirdly, the European Union itself is suffering from a communication deficit which results in a lack of frequent and effective communication towards national broadcasters and last but not least EU news is being considered as unattractive by the public. In order to increase the attractiveness of the European Union, broadcasters are trying to translate EU issues to the world of experience of its audience, though this 'Dutch angle' is not always easy to find. Furthermore, it became clear from the interviews that NOS and RTL news are both fully aware of their legitimating function. However, it is their task to commit journalism, not to become some kind of European press officer who has the task to prove the EU's right of existence nor to enlarge the support for the EU among the people.

## 6. Conclusion

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### 6.1 Results

This master thesis has shed a light on the influence of television news coverage of the European Union on the legitimation of EU politics by examining how the EU is covered in Dutch television news and by relating the former to the democratic legitimacy of EU politics. In the past few years it became clear that the European Union has become disconnected from its citizens, in other words, there is a gap between the EU and the people. This assumption was the starting point of my master thesis. The meaning of legitimacy in the EU – the right to rule and make decisions – can be brought back to the Maastricht Treaty establishing the European Union, whereby the EU broadened its scope from economic standards to democratic standards with a result of direct intervention in the live of its citizens. Given that legitimacy is derived from popular consent, information is a very important aspect for building the European Union. As we all know, democracy relies on communication between citizens and power holders, though, within a European Union of about 495 million citizens, direct communication is not possible. Thus, the important role of mass media, and especially television news media, comes to the fore, seeing that EU legitimacy relies indirectly on them to strengthen its legitimacy and to increase citizens' awareness of its policies and activities as a result of the media's own legitimate function and their position in opinion-building and interest formation processes. Television news media have the ability to influence public opinion by emphasising certain aspects of topics and by conferring authority upon certain issues, therefore it is possible to conclude that television news media could indeed contribute to a decrease of the EU's legitimacy deficit, seeing that they are for the majority of the citizens the most important source of information about EU affairs and seeing that they have the ability to influence the knowledge and public opinion of people by means of framing.

As my content analysis has shown, coverage of EU news is very limited on Dutch public and commercial television news, an observation that counts for all EU member states. Only 2% of the 1295 NOS news items and 1% of the 1018 RTL news items were directly attributed to the European Union. Given the fact that for the gross of the people television news is the most important source of EU information, the results show that such a low amount of EU coverage does not provide citizens with the necessary knowledge that they need in order to be able to understand the European project and to be able to form their own well-grounded opinion about it. Moreover, the results of my content analysis have demonstrated that the news broadcasters presume a certain level of knowledge; that there is a strong presence of the conflict frame with regard to EU topics; that there are no major differences between the public and commercial broadcasters when EU coverage is concerned and that we can indeed examine an 'invisible importance', although there is a low number of EU issues being covered, when NOS and RTL news pay attention to the EU, it is being exposed very prominently.



The semi-structured interviews have resulted in finding out the 'rationale behind' the (low) coverage of EU affairs in Dutch television news. Both NOS and RTL are fully aware of their legitimating function. When agenda-setting is concerned they indeed tell people what to think about, but that is more or less an automatic process, they don't have an own interest in reporting about EU affairs or by framing news items in a particular way. Besides that, they don't have a role to fulfil in society as an agenda-setter for EU issues and they cannot be considered as promoters of the European Union. Moreover, there is no time and space for an explanation of the EU basics. Both public and commercial broadcasters state that as the EU becomes more decisive and transparent and provide broadcasters with more frequent and effective communication, the amount of EU news will increase, as well as the amount of EU coverage on the main evening news.

## **6.2 Discussion**

From the research in this master thesis we can conclude that some kind of vicious circle can be examined. A vicious circle in which the task of providing information as the key to a legitimate European Union is floating between the EU, the media and the citizens. The European Union knows, for example from their own Eurobarometer studies, that the majority of the people point to television news as their main source of information about the EU. However, the EU can't expect television news broadcasters to become a 'European press officer'. So, in my opinion, the EU needs to increase and improve their information supply and enhance its newsworthiness. A more effective and transparent decision-making process would already be one step in the right direction, since that increases the provision of EU news; but obviously this is not feasible to achieve in a short period of time. However, the EU could already become more pro-active as regards to their communication strategy and information supply to its citizens and the national news broadcasters. Nowadays, the EU's communication strategy is based on the principle of 'no news is good news' and it has the aim to make people love Europe, not to give citizens the information they need in order to be able to understand and tolerate it. Of course, the European Commission has launched in 2005 its Plan D for democracy, dialogue and debate but in there they don't focus on television news media. A missed chance, seeing that television news is the key resource of EU information.

Another contradiction that stood out in my research and that I would like to discuss here is the fact that television news is the key resource for people when learning about the European Union and which has the ability to contribute to the image of the EU as a legitimate source of political power. So, people use television news to become informed about the basics of the European Union. However, television news broadcasters only provide for news; they don't have the time and space to explain the EU basics over and over again. Since the European Union is fully aware of the important function of (television) news media, I think that it would be useful if there is going to be an 'effective communication relationship' between the EU institutions and the national broadcasters. Which then results in a better

provision of EU news by means of press releases from the EU towards the national broadcasters and in national broadcasters becoming more aware of their important agenda-setting role as regards EU news.

### **6.3 Limitations and Implications for Further Research**

Just like every master thesis, research or article, one can always find aspects that can cause for limitations. That is as well the case in my master thesis. A first limitation can be the use of the news frames. In order to outline the news frames of NOS and RTL news, I have made use of de Vreese's five recurrent frames. The majority of the EU items were evidently attached to one of the frames, nevertheless, some news items were not that clearly framed and have been placed under one or more frames. This could however cause reliability problems seeing that someone else could indicate these EU items as belonging to another frame. A second limitation might arise with regards to case selection since I only focus on Dutch public and commercial news broadcasters. Both NOS and RTL news are quit alike, perhaps I would have come to more surprising results when I would have chosen for another sample, like a news bulletin and a current events program such as NOVA (although, that could have limitations as being two different purpose television programmes with different audiences). A third limitation can be the period of analysis, as a consequence of various factors (for example, other major news events or the EU presidency) I could have come to other results during another period of analysis, although the overall conclusion would be the same.

When implications for further research are concerned, I think that it would be very interesting to study the impact of EU presidencies on EU news coverage or to have a closer look at the EU's communication strategy in relation to the legitimation of EU politics. Another possibility for future research is to make a comparison between EU coverage on television news and in newspapers or between television news and radio news. Finally, it would as well be interesting for further research to explore and compare EU news on the EU portal with television news bulletins.

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## **Annexes**

- I. Questionnaire (in Dutch)
- II. Content Analysis

**Semi-Gestructureerd Kwalitatief Interview**  
**“De Europese Unie in het 20:00 uur NOS Journaal”**

1. Hoe komt het NOS journaal tot stand? (algemene vraag)
  - a. Hoe wordt bepaald welke onderwerpen ‘nieuws’ zijn?
  - b. Wanneer is EU nieuws geschikt voor in het NOS Journaal?
  - c. Hoe komt ‘EU nieuws’ tot op de redacties van het NOS Journaal?  
(bijv. via correspondenten in Brussel, persberichten vanuit EU, of ...?)
  
2. Gedurende de maanden april t/m juli 2008 heb ik een inhoudsanalyse uitgevoerd van het 20:00 uur NOS Journaal. Daaruit is gebleken dat slechts 2 procent (20/1295) van het nieuws een EU-item betreft en in slechts 3 procent wordt gerefereerd aan de EU. Dit terwijl zo’n 70% van de Nederlandse wetgeving dat de bevolking direct raakt afkomstig is uit Europese besluitvorming en zodoende niet geheel onbelangrijk is.
  - a. Kunt u mij vertellen waarom de Europese Unie in zo’n beperkte mate naar voren komt in het NOS Journaal?
  - b. Zijn er bepaalde Europese onderwerpen die meer nieuwswaarde hebben dan andere onderwerpen? Zo ja, welke en waarom?
  - c. Wat zou er volgens u moeten gebeuren om het percentage EU nieuws in het NOS Journaal te vergroten? (bijv. een betere inbedding van de EU in de nationale politiek? Of...?)
  
3. Voor het gros van de bevolking is de EU een ver-van-mijn-bed-show en is het televisienieuws de voornaamste bron om zich te informeren over de Europese Unie en daarover een mening te vormen. De EU legitimiteit (het recht om te bestaan en om te regeren met de goedkeuring van de burgers) is zodoende indirect afhankelijk van de media om zijn legitimiteit te versterken en om het bewustzijn van EU activiteiten en EU beleid bij de bevolking te vergroten.
  - a. Is het NOS Journaal zich bewust van de belangrijke legitimerende functie van de nieuwsmedia?
  - b. Waaruit blijkt dat? Hoe wordt deze legitimerende functie door het NOS Journaal vervuld?

Uit onderzoek is gebleken dat nieuwsmedia inderdaad kunnen bijdragen aan de inperking van het democratische legitimiteitstekort van de EU, maar de vraag is of zij dat zouden moeten willen.

  - c. Hoe ziet het NOS Journaal zijn rol in het inperken van het democratische legitimiteitstekort van de EU? (Heeft u bijv. niet een bepaalde verantwoordelijkheid tegenover de burgers om ze te informeren?)
  
4. Zoals gezegd is het televisienieuws de voornaamste bron voor de burgers om zich te informeren over de EU en zodoende een mening te vormen. Hiervoor is het noodzakelijk dat de mensen basiskennis hebben van de werking van de Europese Unie, het besluitvormingsproces, EU beleid etc. om het EU nieuws te kunnen begrijpen. Uit de inhoudsanalyse van het NOS journaal en het RTL nieuws is gebleken dat het RTL nieuws meer basis informatie verschaft en dat het NOS journaal van een hoger algemeen kennisniveau uitgaat. Herkent u zich in deze analyse? Zo ja, vanwaar deze insteek?
  - a. Vindt u het tv-nieuws een geschikt medium om mensen te informeren over de algemene basisbeginselen van de Europese Unie? Of vindt u dat die rol voor een ander (EU, overheid, ...) is weggelegd?



5. Opvallend aan de berichtgeving over de Europese Unie is dat er voornamelijk wordt bericht vanuit het perspectief van de Europese Commissie als zijnde de EU. (De Europese Commissie wil...; onderzoekt...; stelt voor...; voert druk uit op...) Waarom wordt er voornamelijk over de EU bericht vanuit het Europese Commissie = EU perspectief?
  
6. Een ander opmerkelijk punt is dat als er over de EU wordt bericht het wel gelijk een prominente plaats inneemt en er ook uitgebreid aandacht aan wordt geschonken. Eerder onderzoek (van o.a. de Vreese) heeft aangetoond dat wat betreft EU nieuws er een soort van 'invisible importance' te herkennen is. Aan de ene kant wordt er zeer gering over de EU bericht en aan de andere kant wordt de EU wel als belangrijk beschouwd. Vanwaar deze 'invisible importance'? (onzichtbaar belang)
  - a. Hoe zou deze 'invisible importance' meer 'visible' kunnen worden en wat is de rol van het NOS Journaal daarbij?
  
7. Verder heb ik gekeken vanuit welke frames EU-items worden belicht, de conflict frame was hierbij de meestvoorkomende. Zou u mij kunnen vertellen hoe er wordt bepaald op welke manier (EU) nieuws items worden geframed?
  - a. Welke factoren spelen een rol bij de keuze om bepaalde aspecten van een nieuws item meer te belichten dan andere aspecten?
  - b. Wie is verantwoordelijk voor de framing van een nieuws item? (de journalist zelf, de eindredactie, of ...)
  - c. Waarom wordt er voornamelijk vanuit de conflict frame bericht?
  
8. Nieuwsmedia hebben ook een belangrijke functie als agenda-setter, waarbij ze het publiek niet vertellen wat ze moeten denken, maar waarover ze moeten denken. Ze hebben dus een soort duale rol waarbij ze zowel 'mediators van informatie' zijn en aan de andere kant 'actors in their own right'.
  - a. Hoe vervult het NOS Journaal deze duale rol met betrekking tot berichtgeving over de EU?
  - b. Waarom gebruikt het NOS Journaal zijn functie als agenda-setter niet om de EU hoger op de publieke en persoonlijke agenda te krijgen?

NOS		RTL	
Date	1 April 2008	Date	1 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	EU is going to boycott seal fur from Canada, as insisted by NL.
Framing		Framing	Morality frame
Date	2 April 2008	Date	2 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	The Hague wants to become cultural capital city of Europe in 2018.	EU themes portrayed	The presence of the EU at the NATO summit is shortly mentioned.
Framing		Framing	
Date	3 April 2008	Date	3 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	2 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- Credit crisis and inflation growth in Europe causes a brake on Dutch economy. - NATO summit. Towards EU defence. Role EU in training police and defence. According to NATO: UN, EU and Worldbank have to participate in Afghanistan to a greater extent.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	4 April 2008	Date	4 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0

EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	5 April 2008	Date	5 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	8	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	6 April 2008	Date	6 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	9 (week overview included: 21)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	7 April 2008	Date	7 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	European Commission directive has been approved which contains new measures that will allow cell phones to be used in aeroplanes above 3000 meter.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Responsibility frame	Framing	
Date	8 April 2008	Date	8 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Dutch minister wants to stimulate bio-fuel only via European regulation.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	

Date	9 April 2008	Date	9 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	Vice-president of the Council of State is worried about the functioning of Dutch politics. Politicians are too much focused on hypes (“current events -by media- set the agenda”) and debate hardly about real important topics such as the European Union, which causes a decrease of trust in the government.	EU themes portrayed	Dutch military exploration mission in Tsjaad as part of the European Union peacekeeping force.
Framing		Framing	
Date	10 April 2008	Date	10 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed	Joint inspections of Waterpol - association of 11 European countries. Shipping goes beyond borders and because of EU regulation, they arrange joint inspections concerning safety on the waters (under-complements and transportation of dangerous chemicals)	EU themes portrayed	European Parliament voting concerning Tibet (images of the voting in EP). EP wants that European leaders put more pressure on Tibet.
Framing		Framing	Morality frame and conflict frame
Date	11 April 2008	Date	11 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	EP shortly mentioned in a news item concerning the Olympic Games. EP has	EU themes portrayed	

	called up for governments to consider a boycott of attending the opening ceremony.		
Framing		Framing	
Date	12 April 2008	Date	12 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	Opinion of Dutch military analyst Holman that the EU should provide for more money and people for the rebuilding of Afghanistan.
Framing		Framing	
Date	13 April 2008	Date	13 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	8	Number of news items	9 (week overview included: 17)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (week overview included: 2 items)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	- Elections Italy, Italy is the worst performing Eurozone country with an economic growth of 0. - EP wants EU leaders to boycott the opening ceremony of the olympic games. Balkenende does not respond to this call.
Framing		Framing	Economic consequences frame, morality frame and conflict frame
Date	14 April 2008	Dat	14 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	

Date	15 April 2008	Date	15 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	16 April 2008	Date	16 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	17 April 2008	Date	17 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	18 April 2008	Date	18 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	19 April 2008	Date	19 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	

Date	20 April 2008	Date	20 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	7 (week overview included: 23)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	21 April 2008	Date	21 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	Interview with Dutch MEP Worthmann. She puts an effort in the adaptation of the European crashtest, she want extra airbags for bicycles outside the car.
Framing		Framing	Responsibility frame
Date	22 April 2008	Date	22 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	23 April 2008	Date	23 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	24 April 2008	Date	24 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	10

Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	25 April 2008	Date	25 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Commission President Barosso calls for EU pressure on China (olympic games) to talk with Tibet	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Morality frame and conflict frame	Framing	
Date	26 April 2008	Date	26 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	Increase of pick-pockets due to the EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria, according to the police.
Framing		Framing	
Date	27 April 2008	Date	27 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	28 April 2008	Date	28 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	



Framing		Framing	
Date	29 April 2008	Date	29 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	Stabilisation and Association Agreement EU with Serbia for possible accession. NL has signed but with preconditions.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Conflict frame (?)	Framing	
Date	30 April 2008	Date	30 April 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	1 May 2008	Date	1 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	8	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	Merkel has won an award for her leadership in the EU and the realization of the Reform Treaty	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	2 May 2008	Date	2 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	3 May 2008	Date	3 May 2008

Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	14
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	4 May 2008	Date	4 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	7 (week overview included: 15)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	5 May 2008	Date	5 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	6 May 2008	Date	6 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	7 May 2008	Date	7 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	9
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia: pro-Europe vs. Anti-Europe. Opinions about EU and gap between Serbia and EU.	EU themes portrayed	

Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	8 May 2008	Date	8 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	9 May 2008	Date	9 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	(Europe Day is not even mentioned)	EU themes portrayed	(Europe Day is not even mentioned)
Framing		Framing	
Date	10 May 2008	Date	10 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia, opinions about EU accession	EU themes portrayed	EU as election theme #1 in Serbia. EU works on the rebuilding of Serbia by means of diplomacy and finance (2,4 mrd Euro). EU is like Kosovo an 'infected' topic in Serbia.
Framing	Conflict frame, human interest frame	Framing	Conflict frame
Date	11 May 2008	Date	11 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia, opinions about EU accession	EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia: pro or anti EU? EU supports the separation of Serbia, therefore anti-EU sphere in Eastern

			Serbia. EU demands consignment of war criminals to the Yugoslavia Tribunal.
Framing		Framing	Conflict frame
Date	12 May 2008	Date	12 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	6	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia, pro-Europe party has obtained most of the votes.	EU themes portrayed	Elections Serbia result: pro-Europe.
Framing		Framing	
Date	13 May 2008	Date	13 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	Commission proposal for tyre pressure meters in new cars and the necessity of sufficiently inflated tyres.	EU themes portrayed	Foreign Coordinator of EU, Solana, states in interview that it is time for action in Birma. (Humanitarian aid from EU).
Framing	Responsibility frame	Framing	
Date	14 May 2008	Date	14 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Opinion NL: black saving of money on other European and foreign banks. EU wants agreements with Singapore but they don't co-operate.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	15 May 2008	Date	15 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	16	Number of news items	10

Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	Dutch/European economy, consequences of strong Euro.
Framing		Framing	
Date	16 May 2008	Date	16 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	9
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	17 May 2008	Date	17 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	18 May 2008	Date	18 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	8 (week overview included: 21)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	19 May 2008	Date	19 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	NL initiative of police co-operation concerning a missing people data-base.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	20 May 2008	Date	20 May 2008

Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	9
Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	The inhabitants of Texel fear to lose their own ferry due to EU regulation on public tender of public transport which provides for ferry companies all over EU to take over the ferry line (-).
Framing		Framing	Conflict frame, human interest frame
Date	21 May 2008	Date	21 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	22 May 2008	Date	22 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	MEP Maaten states that the junta of Birma should be stopped and aid should be provided.
Framing		Framing	Morality frame, conflict frame
Date	23 May 2008	Date	23 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	24 May 2008	Date	24 May 2008

Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Eurovision songcontest, Serbia in the European spotlights. Serbia, the country who is divided on the issue of EU.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	25 May 2008	Date	25 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	26 May 2008	Date	26 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	9
Frequency of EU	2 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- EU educates since 2002 the Afghan police and doubles the number of instructors. - Texel keeps its own ferry. The Dutch secretary of state makes an exception on EU regulation concerning public tender.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	27 May 2008	Date	27 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	The socialist party wants to create their own bill to enforce a referendum on the European constitution.

Framing		Framing	
Date	28 May 2008	Date	28 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	EU wants to extend the milkquota, Dutch farmers are affraid that the prices will fall and undertake action.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	29 May 2008	Date	29 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	30 May 2008	Date	30 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	2 (items)	Frequency of EU	2 (references)
EU themes portrayed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU forces member states to inventorise the national security situation; a tangible result of EU regulation (-).</li> <li>- Fifa plan to limit the power of rich clubs conflicts with EU's freedom of movement of persons principle.</li> </ul>	EU themes portrayed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eurocommissioner states that the Fifa plan conflicts with the EU's freedom of movement of persons principle.</li> <li>- Polish economy grows due to EU accession. Dutch fench construction companies busy with building fences around villas of rich Poles.</li> </ul>
Framing	Responsibility frame & conflict frame.	Framing	
Date	31 May 2008	Date	31 May 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	



Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	10
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	0
Framing		Framing	
Date	1 June 2008	Date	1 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	10 (week overview included: 22)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	2 (references, week overview included: 2)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	- Dutch marines on EU-for mission in Tsjaad. - There is no chance that the EU level will lower the Diesel-tax.
Framing		Framing	
Date	2 June 2008	Date	2 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	3 June 2008	Date	3 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	EU supports Palestinian police. EU experts teach them how to manage and finance the police force.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Responsibility frame	Framing	
Date	4 June 2008	Date	4 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)

EU themes portrayed	Delegation of fishermen has spoken with the Commission, they protest against the high fuelprices and demand for compensation.	EU themes portrayed	- Protest of fishermen at the Commission building. The European Commission is not going to reduce the Dieselprices.
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	5 June 2008	Date	5 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	People in Europe think that electing Obama is better for Europe than electing McCain.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	6 June 2008	Date	6 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	7 June 2008	Date	7 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	8 June 2008	Date	8 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	

Framing		Framing	
Date	9 June 2008	Date	9 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	The European Commission has called for mobile phone companies to lower their prices before the first of July.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	10 June 2008	Date	10 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	The European Commission wants to bring down the costs of text messages till a maximum of €0,12 per sms.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Morality frame	Framing	
Date	11 June 2008	Date	11 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	2 (1 reference & 1 item)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	- European Commission opinion on high fuel prices. - Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, emphasis on both 'yes' and 'no' campaign.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	12 June 2008	Date	12 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (item, 5 min.)	Frequency of EU	1 (item)

EU themes portrayed	Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, the fate of Europe lies with Ireland. Description of Ireland's EU membership.	EU themes portrayed	Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Pro's and cons of voting yes/no.
Framing	Conflict frame and economic consequences frame	Framing	Conflict frame
Date	13 June 2008	Date	13 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (item, 5 min.)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	Irish 'no' to Lisbon Treaty. Explanation of the treaty, motives for voting 'no', effects of Irish 'no' for Europe, reaction of Barosso.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Responsibility frame, conflict frame	Framing	
Date	14 June 2008	Date	14 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	15 June 2008	Date	15 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	Own constitution for Kosovo; most EU member states recognize Kosovo.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	16 June 2008	Date	16 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	12

Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	17 June 2008	Date	17 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	18 June 2008	Date	18 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	19 June 2008	Date	19 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (item, 3 min.)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	EU leaders discuss the Lisbon Treaty which cannot enter into force after Irish 'no'. Irish president comes up with possible solutions; Balkenende's opinion.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Responsibility frame	Framing	
Date	20 June 2008	Date	20 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	2 (references)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	- European Commission examines solutions for the high Diesel price. EU	EU themes portrayed	

	heads of government cannot agree on measures against the high Diesel prices. - The EU abolishes sanctions against Cuba.		
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	21 June 2008	Date	21 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	22 June 2008	Date	22 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	23 June 2008	Date	23 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	24 June 2008	Date	24 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	25 June 2008	Date	25 June 2008

Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	EU and Russia negotiate about co-operation possibilities in Siberia at the Europe-Russia summit. Russia states: we are EU's energy supplier and therefore we demand political respect.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	26 June 2008	Date	26 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed	Europe & Russia summit, Russia wants to strengthen EU-Russian relationship, a disputed co-operation agreement; Solana & Barroso; Dutch EU ambassador states 'energy is what connects EU and Russia'.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Conflict frame and economic consequences frame	Framing	
Date	27 June 2008	Date	27 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	14
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Europe & Russia Summit	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	28 June 2008	Date	28 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Eurlings calls for toleration of truckruns	EU themes portrayed	

	with disabled children, which conflict with EU regulation concerning driving and rest times.		
Framing		Framing	
Date	29 June 2008	Date	29 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	7	Number of news items	8 (week overview included: 20)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	30 June 2008	Date	30 June 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	1 July 2008	Date	1 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	15	Number of news items	14
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	EU DNA databank (european co-operation, DNA exchange treaty)
Framing		Framing	
Date	2 July 2008	Date	2 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	The ECB prepares to raise the interest rates.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	



Date	3 July 2008	Date	3 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	1 (item)
EU themes portrayed	The ECB (Trichet) has raised the interest rates in order to combat the inflation.	EU themes portrayed	ECB has raised interest rates. Explanation of tasks ECB, correspondent in Frankfurt.
Framing	Economic consequences frame	Framing	Economic consequences frame
Date	4 July 2008	Date	4 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	5 July 2008	Date	5 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	6 July 2008	Date	6 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	6 (week overview included: 18)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	7 July 2008	Date	7 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	???	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	???	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	

Framing		Framing	
Date	8 July 2008	Date	8 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	2 (items)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- First Chambre has approved the Treaty of Lisbon: official Dutch 'yes'. - European Commission proposal to make the Eurovignet more expensive, though the European Parliament and the 27 Member States have to confirm it first.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Responsibility frame and economic consequences frame	Framing	
Date	9 July 2008	Date	9 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	15	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	10 July 2008	Date	10 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Sarkozy (France is EU chairman) states that the EU cannot enlarge as long as the Lisbon Treaty is not in effect.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	11 July 2008	Date	11 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	15	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???

EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	12 July 2008	Date	12 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	13 July 2008	Date	13 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	7 (week overview included: 20)
Frequency of EU	2 (references)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference, week overview included: 1)
EU themes portrayed	- Mediterranean Union; Sarkozy calls for more political influence of Europe in the Middle East. - Kedemek, Polish MEP since 2004 passed away.	EU themes portrayed	Foundation of the Mediterranean Union. International co-operation Mediterranean see area with 27 EU member states.
Framing		Framing	
Date	14 July 2008	Date	14 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	2 (references)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- Dutch marines participate in peace mission EUFOR in Tsjaad. - Radical changes for Dutch dairy producers; European agriculture committee meeting on milk quota abolition.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	15 July 2008	Date	15 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	11

Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	16 July 2008	Date	16 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	2 (1 reference & 1 item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- Inflation Eurozone compared to the Netherlands and USA. - Slovakia's EU accession has given a boost to Slovakia's economy, therefore they are going to adopt the Euro on 1 January 2009.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Economic consequences frame	Framing	
Date	17 July 2008	Date	17 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	EU co <sup>2</sup> directives. No Europe-wide raising of flight-tax.
Framing		Framing	
Date	18 July 2008	Date	18 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	ECB and Trichet are not optimistic about the Eurozone economy despite of rate increase.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	19 July 2008	Date	19 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h

Number of news items	12	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	Solana has stated – on behalf of EU – that if Iran is prepared to quit the enrichment of uranium, there will be no new sanctions against Iran.	EU themes portrayed	Iran/America debate on nuclear energy (Solana)
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	20 July 2008	Date	20 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	6 (week overview included: 20)
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	21 July 2008	Date	21 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	2 (1 reference & 1 item)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	- EU agricultural subsidies - Sarkozy (EU chairman) is in Ireland to talk about a solution for the Irish ‘no’ to the Lisbon Treaty.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing	Conflict frame	Framing	
Date	22 July 2008	Date	22 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	1 (reference)
EU themes portrayed	Arrest of Karadzic; EU has always demanded the handover of Kadic and Mladic of Belgrade, before EU accession is even possible.	EU themes portrayed	Arrest of Karadzic; interview with Solana, EU happy with the arrest of Karadzic
Framing		Framing	

Date	23 July 2008	Date	23 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	13	Number of news items	10
Frequency of EU	1	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	24 July 2008	Date	24 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	10	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	2 (references)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	- EU wants more research on the safety of cloning. - The European Commission has edited its blacklist of unsafe airlines.
Framing		Framing	
Date	25 July 2008	Date	25 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	26 July 2008	Date	26 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	11	Number of news items	11
Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	27 July 2008	Date	27 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	9	Number of news items	7 (week overview included: 19)

Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	0 (week overview included: 0)
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	28 July 2008	Date	28 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	13
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Rotterdam investigates the increase of Bulgarians in the Netherlands since their EU accession in 2007.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	29 July 2008	Date	29 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	15
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	The Romanian are the new 'Poles' in the Netherlands. Discussion about the abolishment of the work permit for the Romanian and Bulgarians by 2009.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	30 July 2008	Date	30 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	14	Number of news items	12
Frequency of EU	1 (reference)	Frequency of EU	0
EU themes portrayed	Report about Polish people in the Netherlands.	EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	
Date	31 July 2008	Date	31 July 2008
Time	20:00 h	Time	19:30 h
Number of news items	12	Number of news items	???

Frequency of EU	0	Frequency of EU	???
EU themes portrayed		EU themes portrayed	
Framing		Framing	