

Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland:

MESSAGE AT THE LAUNCHING OF EURONEWS

European Broadcasting Union  
1 January 1993

Dear viewers,

I am pleased to greet you on this first day of 1993, on the occasion of the opening of Euronews. My congratulations go to the European Broadcasting Union, with my best wishes for the new channel.

As Europe is in a time of rapid transition, broadcasting has a vital role to play. Over the last few years, we have rejoiced in watching - live - the Berlin Wall come down and dictatorship be replaced by democracy in central and eastern parts of the continent. In this process, independent news media have had a decisive influence on both content and speed.

As the nations of the world are growing closer together, we see the need to build understanding between cultures and ways of life. That this is vital to peaceful development also in Europe, is - I am sad to say - demonstrated by every shot being fired between former friends and neighbours in what used to be Yugoslavia.

We are all rooted in Europe's history of armed conflict. While some of us can look back on decades and even centuries of peace, others in this very hour are in the midst of turmoil.

There are compelling reasons why we should all strive to create peace where war and conflict is now raging. It is our obligation as Europeans to care for our own continent. And by doing so, we enhance our ability to care for those who suffer on other continents.

In these efforts, we all depend on free and accurate news reporting - political leaders as well as those who have elected them.

Still, a word of warning should be spoken. Every hour of the day we receive fragmented images from many parts of the world. We must not - neither media people nor viewers - allow that life's own complexity is being reduced to disconnected simplicity.

In many parts of Europe, intolerance, fear and hatred against minorities is growing. Inspiring us all in responding to this are the hundreds of thousands of torchbearers filing through the streets of German cities this autumn and winter. In particular, young people and their organisations all over the continent have a great task in joining hands for a Europe reigned by tolerance and respect.

Let us make 1993 a year of restored tolerance. Let us challenge the young people of Europe to challenge us. And let us challenge the news media to wake us up should we lose sight of this important task.

On this first day of January, as Christmas brings us the ancient message of peace on earth, I greet you in my own language:

God jul og godt nytt år!

Merry Christmas and a happy new year!