

The broadcasting programmes of Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel digitally accessible in the reading room!

Wartime radio was a particularly efficient means of communication. News of the front, official or clandestine speeches, encrypted messages and propaganda broadcasts were communicated to the Belgian citizens on a daily basis. Many families hold memories of evenings gathered around the radio. The radio was a real tool of information and persuasion, used by the allies as well as the occupier. CegeSoma proposes to discover or rediscover the German radio production in Brussels during the Second World War!

Recording by Radio Bruxelles of family messages for the volunteers on the Eastern Front, 1940-1945, Collection CegeSoma, Photo 24655.

During the Second World War, the Belgian authorities mainly produced their broadcasts in London and Leopoldville. In the early hours of the invasion of Belgium by the German army, the programmes of the *Institut National de Radiodiffusion (INR)* focused on the most recent events to provide the population with real-time information on the latest developments.

The second line of propaganda during the Second World War was developed by the Germans in the occupied territories. Already on 28 May 1940, the premises of the *INR* were requisitioned. As the technical facilities had been destroyed by the Belgian authorities before their departure to London, the occupier had to use mobile transmitters during the whole war. On 31 July, a decree from the *Militärverwaltung* officially led to the creation of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*. These new establishments disposed of some 500 Belgian civilians, mostly former employees of the *INR*. The propaganda depended in the first place on the military administration, but was also overseen by Goebbels in Berlin.

Unfortunately, a large part of the Second World War radio archives have disappeared, but not all. The programmes broadcasted by the occupier from the premises of the *INR* have been partially saved and were requisitioned by the military prosecutor's office at the liberation. They were entrusted to the State Archives, and later to CegeSoma at its creation at the end of the 1960s as a Second World War study centre.

The collection of 78 rpm records of the broadcasts of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel* kept at CegeSoma consists of a thousand records in French and nearly two thousand in Dutch. There are also some 500 records in German. This record collection was first kept at the place de Louvain, then in the Résidence Palace and the square de l'Aviation, but are now kept in an air-conditioned room in the depot of CegeSoma in the rue Belgrade in Forest. Apart from the audio archives of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*, CegeSoma also holds the transcriptions of the broadcasts and some administrative files under call numbers AA33, AA1321 and AA1522, briefly described in the corresponding inventories.

Digit03, the digitization programme funded by the Federal Science Policy Office, made the collection of the audio broadcasts digitally available in the reading room of CegeSoma.

A complete inventory of the broadcasts can be consulted [here](#). The digitization of the paper archives has also started, but this project, which is partially carried out by our own teams, will only be finalized in two or three years. However, the transcriptions of the broadcasts between July 1940 and March 1942 are already available in the reading room, as are all the broadcasts *L'Echo du Jour*.

These are of course transcripts that have been kept after the war. They do not correspond with all the broadcasts of *Radio Bruxelles and Zender Brussel*, nor do they always correspond with the audio versions that we keep.

Florence Gillet
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