

Andrej Brník, Miroslav Kapec

# Impact Of The First And Second Waves Of Coronavirus On Slovak Radio Audiences

## ABSTRACT

During the first and second waves of coronavirus, with the increase in new positive cases of COVID-19, the population of Slovakia had to get used to various restrictive mobility restrictions on several occasions. Among the most significant were the restrictions which closed bars, restaurants, sports grounds, and other cultural and social spaces and events. People were forced to stay more at home and devote their time to themselves and their families. Did this condition help increase radio listening or damage it? Does the main indicator of a pandemic – the number of new cases of disease detected by PCR tests affect radio listening? The paper maps the audiences of selected and the most listened-to Slovak commercial and public radio stations based on a comparison of listening data between March 2019 and January 2020, and between March 2020 and January 2021. We will use data obtained from two surveys by median.sk: MML-TGI and RADIOPROJEKT. The aim of the article is to provide the reader with a detailed analysis of the currently available radio stations Expres, Fun, Vlna, and Slovak public radio stations with regard to the effects of the corona crisis and aims to find out the impact on and possible connection with listening to selected radio stations.

## KEY WORDS

Radio. Radio Communication. Listening. Coronavirus. COVID-19.

# 1. Introduction

It has been more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic entered our lives. None of us could predict how deeply the pandemic would affect society and where it would impact most. Eventually, it turned out that it penetrated all levels of life. It changed our daily routines, work procedures, limited us compared to what we were used to. We all had to adapt to the measures that the pandemic provoked. Some sectors, such as culture, services, and tourism, are experiencing critical times. Even the radio industry, which holds a stable place in our society, has felt the impact of the spread of coronavirus. It is related to the fact that “*all forms of media and communication are playing a major role in helping people feel less alone and closer to each other*”.<sup>1</sup> Various measures to restrict mobility may have seemed to have contributed to increased listening. For example the corona crisis in Belgium led to changes in listening patterns. According to M. Dujardin, listeners started work from home which increased online radio streaming “*by 52% compared to the previous year*”.<sup>2</sup> Also recipients in German speaking countries listened radio “*highly significantly more than before the crisis*”.<sup>3</sup> In some countries radio became one of the most important sources of information about the actual situation.<sup>4</sup> In Slovakia, during the first wave, one large radio station stopped broadcasting and others reported problems.<sup>5</sup> Within a year, however, the radio market also adapted to the new situation. Thanks to the available data, we analysed the impact of the pandemic on radio broadcasting. The paper provides an insight into the analysis of radio listening. Thanks to the analysis of available data on radio listening and the spread of COVID-19, we were able to identify connections and effects of restrictions on the listening to selected radio stations. The aim is to answer the question of whether the pandemic has affected the radio market in the area of listening and, if so, to show the context. The data analysis we have carried out can help to predict the behaviour of listeners in the future, which can have a positive effect on the planning of the programs of commercial and public radio stations. After a thorough search, we found that it is also a current topic, which at the time of our research is not devoted to by scientific study and by only a few foreign research articles, the most important of which we also mention in our article.

## 2. Current Radio Market in Slovakia

Radio broadcasting is a special form of information transmission that has long had an important function. Its advantage is its ability to convey information to the listener right here and now.<sup>6</sup> Other important features that characterize radio broadcasting include, in particular, spoken word, music, passivity (we usually listen to the radio together with other activities), or, for example,

<sup>1</sup> *Radio's Key Role in Crisis and Emergency Situations*. [online]. [2021-10-26]. Available at: <<https://www.itu.int/en/myitu/News/2021/02/12/08/04/Radio-key-role-crisis-emergency-situations-World-Radio-Day-2021>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Radio Provides Solace During COVID-19 Pandemic*. [online]. [2021-10-26]. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/radio-provides-solace-during-covid-19-pandemic>>.

<sup>3</sup> DREISIEBNER, S., MÄRZ, S., MANDL, T.: Information Behavior During the Covid-19 Crisis in German-Speaking Countries. In *Journal of Documentation*, 2021, Vol. Ahead of print, No. Ahead of print. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JD-12-2020-0217/full/html>>.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: BELIK, L.: Radio as a Tool of Education and Resistance in Brazilian Communities during the Pandemic. In *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum*, 2021, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 79-90. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2020.1871192>>; LASKAR, K. A., BHATTACHARYYA, B.: Community Radio Stations' Production Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic in India. In *Media Asia*, 2021, Vol. 48, No. 4, p. 243-257. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2021.1970421>>.

<sup>5</sup> BRNÍK, A.: The Impact of “Corona Crisis” on Slovak Radio Broadcasting. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media – On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 492-501.

<sup>6</sup> PRONER, J., BÔTOŠOVÁ, Ľ., MIČOVÁ, S.: *Ako na mediálne výstupy*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019, p. 23.

acoustics.<sup>7</sup> All these characteristics gave radio its unique quality. Radio as a medium has been our companion for more than 100 years. It has undergone many changes during this time. Since the days of state-controlled and controlled radio broadcasting, radio has also achieved private ownership in Slovakia.

The Slovak radio market, on the basis of dual broadcasting, which was established by the Act of the Federal Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic No. 468/1991 Coll. on the operation of radio and television broadcasting, has been evolving for a long time. Only one year after the fall of communism and the associated censorship, the first competitors to state radio in Slovakia appeared in 1990. With the creation of the first private radio station, assisted by students who were aided by the French Embassy in Slovakia. Exactly on June 10 at 2:00 PM, the first beep sounded, followed by a song by Pink Floyd. Thus began the process of private radio station broadcasting in our territory. This radio station broadcasts to this day and we know it under the brand FUN rádio.<sup>8</sup> Although there was no legislation governing the broadcasting of commercial stations when FUN rádio was established, it soon arrived. Over the years, a dual-radio market in Slovakia has developed.<sup>9</sup> Radio broadcasting, which has a stable place as part of the media, has had to be transformed over time and adapted to current market requirements. In the program structure, in addition to streaming, it also offers news blocks, but these differ depending on the focus of the radio station in terms of work, or in the form of processing and interpretation. Private broadcasting has undergone the biggest change. The composition of the program is governed by the results of surveys. They try to adapt to the largest possible audience in order to maximize profits.<sup>10</sup> In more than 30 years of the free market, new local, regional or multiregional radio stations have been created but have also disappeared.

In 2021, the Broadcasting and Retransmission Council granted a license for terrestrial radio broadcasting to 37 different radio stations broadcasting throughout Slovakia (of which 11 are local, 18 regional and 9 multiregional radio stations), to which must be added a public broadcaster broadcasting on the basis of the law that allows 9 different radio stations on one frequency:

- **Local** – Rádio Aetter, Rádio Liptov, Rádio Mária, Rádio Modra, Rádio Piešťany, Rádio Plus, Rádio Portus, Rádio Roma, Rádio SITY, SKY Rádio, Rádio The End.
- **Regional** – Rádio Beta, Rádio Frontinus, Rádio Goldies, Rádio 7, Kiss Rádio, Rádio Košice, Rádio Muzika, Rádio ONE, Rádio ONE Rock, Rádio Rebeca, Rádio Širava, Trnavské Rádio, Rádio Viva, Rádio WOW, Rádio YES, Záhorácke rádio, Rádio WOW Nitra.
- **Multiregional** – Antena rock, Best FM, Európa 2, Rádio Expres, Fun Rádio, Rádio Jazz, rádio Jemné, Rádio Lumen, Vlna rádio.
- **Public** – Rádio Devín, Rádio\_FM, Rádio Patria, Rádio Regina, Rádio Regina – Západ, Rádio Regina – Stred, Rádio Regina – Východ, Rádio Slovensko, Rádio Slovakia International.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Method of Implemented Research

The aim of the research is, based on the analysis of available data, to determine the impact of the possible effects of government measures concerning the spread of COVID-19 and other related restrictions on the listenership of Slovak radio stations. The basis for the research was a quantitative method - official statistics - analysis of previously collected data and their mutual comparison.

<sup>7</sup> HUDÍKOVÁ Z., HABIŇÁKOVÁ, E.: *Radio Broadcasting and Radio Production*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2018, p. 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> SUDOR, K.: *Študenti pred 30 rokmi na kolene založili prvú súkromnú stanicu FUN rádio a nezarobili na tom*. [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/1924710/studenti-pred-tridsiatimi-rokmi-na-kolene-zalozili-a-postavili-prvu-sukromnu-stanicu-fun-radio-a-nezarobili-na-tom/>>.

<sup>9</sup> *Zákon o vysielaní a retransmisii č. 308/2000, Z. z. z dňa 14. septembra 2000*, from 1st January 2021. [online]. [2020-03-30]. Available at: <<https://www.epi.sk/zz/2000-308>>.

<sup>10</sup> BRNÍK, A., BŤOŠOVÁ, L., KAPEC, M.: *Rozhlasová tvorba a prax*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 56.

<sup>11</sup> *Zoznam terestriálnych rádii*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.radia.sk/radia>>.

## Research questions:

The following main research question was determined within the quantitative method of analysis of previously collected data.

*Does the pandemic, the first or second waves of coronavirus in Slovakia affect radio listenership?*

When we talk about the spread of COVID-19, we mean new confirmed cases of coronavirus in Slovakia, which have a direct impact on the actual introduction of government restrictions. In addition to the main research question, we also determined the following secondary questions:

1. *How did radio listening change during the first and second waves of coronavirus spread?*
2. *Was radio listened to more during the first and second waves of coronavirus spread than the previous year?*

By answering these questions, we will get an overview of listening on the Slovak radio market during the pandemic and its possible context.

The basis for this analysis was data that we drew on the basis of availability from the MEDIAN SK agency, which has been collecting data for a long time via the national survey MML-TGI (Market & Media & Lifestyle - Target Group Index). In Slovakia, this survey has been carried out continuously since 1997. In addition to media consumption, this survey monitors the lifestyle and consumer behaviour of the Slovak population in more than 200 categories of goods and services. The survey is completed annually by 8000 people, citizens of the Slovak Republic aged 14 - 79 years.<sup>12</sup> The data that was important to us from MML-TGI was only the "MEDIA" section.

"Face-to-face" (personal interviews) and "self-complete CAWI" methods are used to collect data from the "MEDIA" section. Respondents were included in the survey on the basis of recruitment by personal interview, telephone, or recruiting via other surveys.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to MML-TGI, the MEDIAN SK agency also conducts another survey, focused only on radio stations and their audiences, the so-called RADIO PROJECT. The results are published monthly and are based on data collected over a rolling period of three consecutive months. It has been implemented since 2009.<sup>14</sup> These are relatively accurate numbers of listening and representation of the radio market in Slovakia. From this part, we analyzed the listening data of the 4 most listened-to radio stations (Rádio Expres, Rádio Slovensko, Fun rádio, Rádio Vlna) over the period: March 2020 to January 2021 and for the previous year, March 2019 to January 2020.

In addition to data from MEDIAN SK, we also worked with data from the korona.gov.sk portal. This portal is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and brings together all the data on the number of people infected with the COVID-19 virus, deaths, PCR tests performed, etc.<sup>15</sup>

## 4. Discussion

MEDIAN SK regularly examines radio listening in Slovakia. **In 2019**, they conducted a survey<sup>16</sup> where 86% of respondents answered positively in the parameter "listened to last week", which represents almost 3.9 million listeners aged 14-79. On the contrary, more than 58% of the population listens to the radio every day, representing 2.6 million people. On average, listeners

<sup>12</sup> *Národný prieskum MML-TGI@*. [online]. [2021-03-11]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/sk/narodny-prieskum-mml-tgi-22/>>.

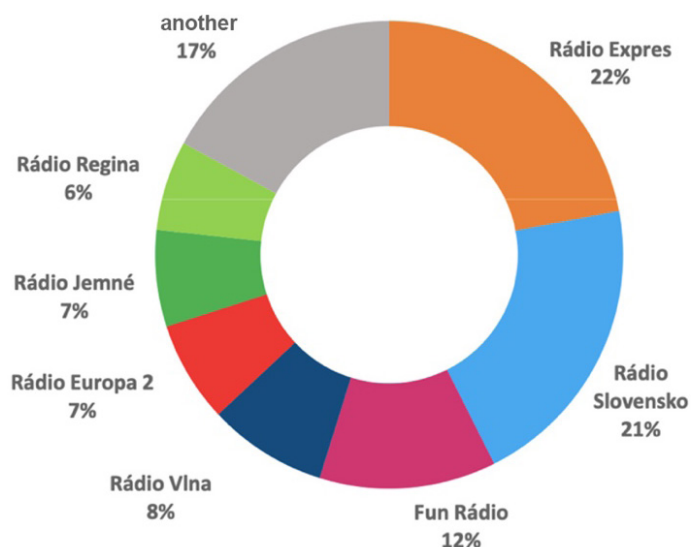
<sup>13</sup> *MML-TGI národný prieskum spotreby, médií a životného štýlu Market & Media & Lifestyle -TGI Základné výsledky za 3. kvartál 2020 a 4. kvartál 2020*. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2020/ZS204SR.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup> *Charakteristika median.sk*. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/sk/>>.

<sup>15</sup> *Koronavírus na Slovensku v číslach*. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://korona.gov.sk/koronavirus-na-slovensku-v-cislach/>>.

<sup>16</sup> The survey was conducted on a sample of 3,157 respondents aged 14-79 years.

listen to the radio for about 50 minutes a day.<sup>17</sup> Rádio Expres has been the leader in the Slovak radio market for several years for example in 2019 it had a share of 22% in the radio market. In second place is the public station RTVS - Rádio Slovakia - with a share of 21%. It is followed by Fun Rádio (12%), Rádio Vlna 8%, Europe 2 (7%), Rádio Jemné (7%), the public station RTVS – Rádio Regina 6%, and other smaller regional or local radio stations.



**PICTURE 1:** Listening to radio broadcasting in 2019 according to MML-TGI

Source: MML-TGI národný prieskum spotreby, médií a životného štýlu Market & Media & Lifestyle -TGI Základné výsledky za rok 2019. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2019/ZS1914SR.pdf>>.

The radio market in Slovakia has been relatively stable for several years. At the beginning of the year, however, since March 2020, several things and facts have radically altered that have contributed to this change. The pandemic has affected all parts of our lives for more than a year. As a result, cultural events and foreign trips were cancelled and people had to learn to work from home. Population mobility decreased significantly. These events could have had a significant impact on shaping the radio market. Let us imagine a series of events that took place during the first and second waves in the period between March 2020 and January 2021 in Slovakia and what restrictive measures were taken by the Slovak government.

#### 4.1 Measures Introduced against the Spread of Coronavirus in Slovakia

The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic in Slovakia is part of the worldwide pandemic of the infectious disease COVID-19, which began to spread from China and of which Italy later became the European epicentre. The first case was confirmed in Slovakia on March 6, 2020. A 52-year-old man from the Bratislava region, who had not been abroad, but whose son was in Venice in mid-February, proved positive.<sup>18</sup> A day later, on March 7, 2020, a positive test was

<sup>17</sup> Slováci počúvajú rádiá, denne majú takmer 2,7 milióna poslucháčov. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/media/2004975-slovaci-pocuvaju-radia-denne-maju-takmer-2-7-miliona-posluchacov>>.

<sup>18</sup> HAJČÁKOVÁ, D.: Na Slovensku potvrdili prvý prípad koronavírusu, od pondelka sa zakážu lety do Talianska. [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22351714/na-slovensku-potvrdili-pripad-koronavirusu.html>>.

also recorded for the son, who was confirmed as patient “0” - the first carrier of the disease.<sup>19</sup> The measures which followed:

- **March** - On March 12, crisis staff adopted the first restrictions on movement - the closure of schools, leisure facilities, international traffic restrictions, and the introduction of a 14-day mandatory quarantine when returning home from abroad.<sup>20</sup> In addition, kindergartens, primary and high schools, universities, retail sales and services other than food, pharmacies, and drugstores, and sports venues were closed on March 16.<sup>21</sup> From March 25, it was required to wear facemasks in public.<sup>22</sup>
- **April** - On April 22, the first phase of the relaxation of measures began, which the government divided into 5 parts. Retail stores and services up to 300 m<sup>2</sup> were opened, long-term accommodation, outdoor contactless sports were allowed, open markets.<sup>23</sup>
- **May** - On May 6 the second and at the same time the third phase of releasing measures began. Short-term accommodation, meals in common areas, pedicures, manicures, outdoor hiking, taxis, massages, museums, and libraries were added.<sup>24</sup> Later, on May 20 the last phase of release began. Theatres and cinemas opened, events with less than 100 participants were allowed, and shopping malls opened. Residents of Slovakia could travel abroad.<sup>25</sup>
- **June** - Kindergartens also opened in June. and the first grade of primary schools, with the second grade being on a voluntary basis. The 5th release phase also started on June 3 for larger service events.<sup>26</sup>
- **July, August** - these months were without any restrictions, the only ones concerned the organization of mass events for up to 1,000 people.
- **September** - so-called traffic lights for districts, which, in addition to measures or those with a worse than green colour, provided for stricter measures for holding mass events (with the exception of weddings). At the same time, the end of September also included the start of the so-called second wave.<sup>27</sup>
- **October** - At the beginning of October, several measures were tightened, in addition to which daily records were broken several times concerning the number of confirmed coronavirus infections.<sup>28</sup> At the end of October, the curfew also came into force and all

<sup>19</sup> COVID-19: Slovensko pozná pacienta “0”. [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <[https://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4064:covid-19-slovensko-pozna-pacienta-0q&catid=250:koronavirus-2019-ncov&Itemid=153](https://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4064:covid-19-slovensko-pozna-pacienta-0q&catid=250:koronavirus-2019-ncov&Itemid=153)>.

<sup>20</sup> COVID-19: Krízový štáb zavádza prísne opatrenia, zatvárajú sa školy, letiská. [online]. [2020-10-19]. Available at: <<https://www.health.gov.sk/Clanok?koronavirus-opatrenia-sprisenene>>.

<sup>21</sup> Termín maturít sa presunul, študenti by sa mali vrátiť do škôl v apríli. [online]. [2020-10-25]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22361633/termin-maturit-sa-presunul-studenti-by-sa-mali-vratit-do-skol-v-aprili.html>>.

<sup>22</sup> FOLENTOVÁ, V.: Nové opatrenia: Povinné rúška vonku, obchody otvorené pre seniorov, odsun úradných lehôt, sledovanie pohybu mobilov. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/1818474/nove-opatrenia-povinne-ruska-vonku-obchody-otvorene-pre-seniorov-odsun-uradnych-lehot-sledovanie-pohybu-mobilov/>>.

<sup>23</sup> FRANTOVÁ, E.: Uvoľňovanie opatrení: Od stredy sa otvoria maloobchodné prevádzky a služby. [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <<https://ekonomika.pravda.sk/ludia/clanok/549196-nazivo-vlada-o-postupnom-otvarani-prevadzok/>>.

<sup>24</sup> CEHLÁRIKOVÁ, A.: Slovensko vstúpi rovno do tretej fázy uvoľňovania opatrení. [online]. [2020-10-20]. Available at: <<https://bratislavskykraj.sk/slovensko-vstupi-rovno-do-tretej-fazy-uvolnovania-opatreni/>>.

<sup>25</sup> KATUŠKA, M.: Rúška už nebudú povinné všade, povolia cesty do zahraničia na krátky čas. [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22406854/koronavirus-slovensko-uvolnenie-dalsich-opatreni.html>>.

<sup>26</sup> Od 1. júna sa časť detí a žiakov bude môcť vrátiť do škôl. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.minedu.sk/od-1-juna-sa-cast-deti-a-ziakov-bude-moct-vratit-do-skol/>>.

<sup>27</sup> COVID-19: Toto je mapa rizikových regiónov na Slovensku, kde platia nové opatrenia. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.omeiach.com/strucne/18762-covid-19-toto-je-mapa-rizikovykh-regionov-na-slovensku-kde-platia-nove-opatrenia>>.

<sup>28</sup> Nový rekord potvrdených prípadov: Prekročili sme hranicu 2000. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/novy-rekord-potrudenych-pripadov-pre/500741-clanok.html>>.

schools except kindergartens were closed.<sup>29</sup> On the last day of October, we also held the first country-wide testing in Slovakia using antigen tests.<sup>30</sup>

- **November** – In November, the second round of testing took place, this time only in selected, so-called red districts.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the establishment of mobile testing centres began, where it was possible to test for free.<sup>32</sup> In mid-November, for example, churches, fitness centres and swimming pools were opened, subject to strict adherence to hygiene rules.<sup>33</sup>
- **December** – In Nové Mesto nad Váhom, the hospital was re-profiled and was designated as the first hospital only for COVID-19 patients.<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Health introduced the new COVID AUTOMAT, which had 7 phases from green to black and which would start operating in Slovakia in January.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, a new curfew came into force, where it was possible to meet two other households. During the holidays, so-called “Family bubbles” were in existence. The first Slovak was vaccinated with Pfizer BioNtech in December.
- **January** – Stricter measures came into force in January. All ski resorts were closed, outdoor food consumption was banned and the government called for everyone who could do so to work from home.<sup>36</sup> In eastern Slovakia, a new variant of COVID-19 was confirmed, which spread from the south of England and had a 70% higher ability to spread.<sup>37</sup> EMA approved another vaccine from Moderna.<sup>38</sup> At the end of January, screening for COVID-19 was held, resulting in positivity of 1.24%.<sup>39</sup>

The first restrictions during the so-called “first wave” of coronavirus spread came into effect on March 13, and the last major restrictions (apart from organizing mass events with more than 1,000 participants) were lifted on June 3, 2020. Together, these government restrictions lasted 69 days. However, at the end of April, after 39 days, the measures began to ease. The so-called hard lockdown lasted from March 13 to April 22. During this period, the mobility

<sup>29</sup> *Na Slovensku bude zákaz vychádzania, zatvoria školy.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://myzilina.sme.sk/c/22516909/na-slovensku-bude-zakaz-vychadzania-zatvoria-aj-skoly.html>>.

<sup>30</sup> *Prvé kolo celoplošného testovania bolo úspešnou operáciou.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=prve-kolo-celoplosneho-testovania-bolo-uspesnou-operaciou>>.

<sup>31</sup> *Sledujeme online: Druhé kolo celoplošného testovania zatiaľ bez komplikácií a incidentov.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/sledujeme-online-slovensku-zacalo-druhe-kolo-celoplosneho-testovania>>.

<sup>32</sup> FOLETOVÁ, V.: *Odborné miesta na bezplatné testy otvorili len v 15 mestách. Krajčí podľa Matoviča nesplnil úlohu.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/2134174/odberne-miesta-na-bezplatne-testy-otvorili-len-v-11-mestach-krajci-podla-matovica-nesplnil-ulohu/?ref=mpm>>.

<sup>33</sup> FOLETOVÁ, V., BARČÍKOVÁ, M.: *Od pondelka sa otvárajú divadlá, kiná, kostoly, žiaci zostávajú doma, premiér ustupuje od plánu na “komunitné testovanie”.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/2141779/premier-ustupuje-od-planu-na-komunitne-testovanie-chce-otvarat-divadla-kina-a-kostoly/?ref=tema>>.

<sup>34</sup> *Otvorili prvú nemocnicu len pre covidových pacientov, má pomôcť “horiacemu” regiónu.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://slovensko.hnonline.sk/2266599-otvorili-prvu-nemocnicu-len-pre-covidovych-pacientov-ma-pomocet-horiacemu-regionu>>.

<sup>35</sup> *Schválili COVID automat, mal by pomôcť s návratom do normálu.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.ta3.com/clanok/1198898/schvalili-covid-automat-mal-by-pomocet-s-navratom-do-normalu.html>>.

<sup>36</sup> *Začiatok roku 2021: Koniec lyžovačiek, zatvorené kostoly, jedlo len so sebou.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <[https://www.trnavskyhlas.sk/c/29869-zaciatok-roku-2021-koniec-lyzovaciek-zatvorene-kostoly-jedlo-len-so-sebou/?fb\\_comment\\_id=3600448776736449\\_3602387046542622](https://www.trnavskyhlas.sk/c/29869-zaciatok-roku-2021-koniec-lyzovaciek-zatvorene-kostoly-jedlo-len-so-sebou/?fb_comment_id=3600448776736449_3602387046542622)>.

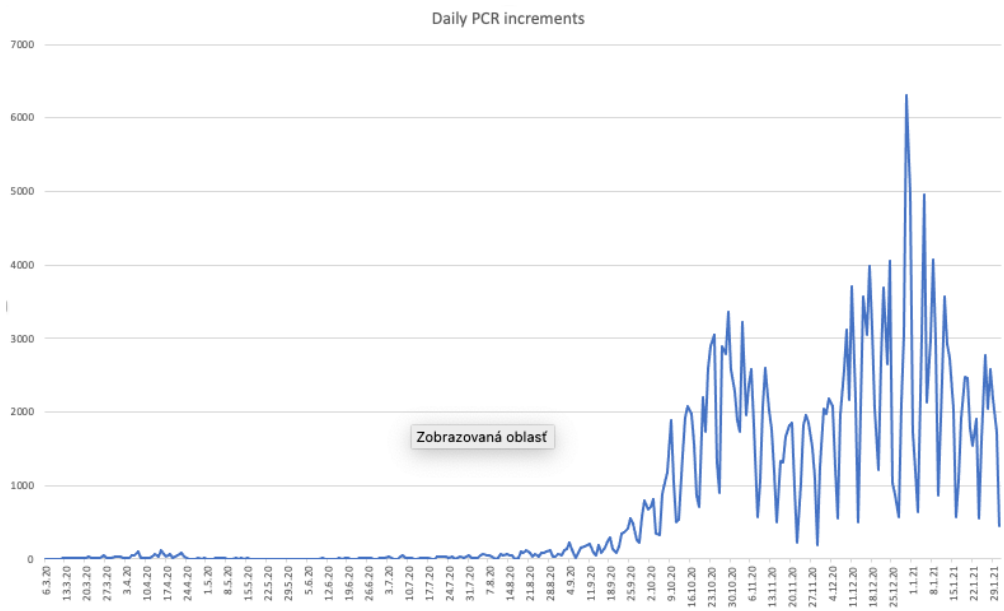
<sup>37</sup> *Zmutovaný vírus, ktorý sa šíri z Anglicka, je už aj na Slovensku.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.ta3.com/clanok/1200111/zmutovany-virus-ktory-sa-siri-z-anglicka-je-uz-aj-na-slovensku.html>>.

<sup>38</sup> *Európska agentúra pre lieky schválila vakcínu od spoločnosti Moderna.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/europska-agentura-pre-lieky-schvalila-vakcinu-spolocnosti-moderna>>.

<sup>39</sup> *Definitívne výsledky skriningu: z 2,9 milióna ľudí malo pozitívny test 1,24 percenta.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=definitivne-vysledky-skriningu-z-2-9-miliona-ludi-malo-pozitivny-test-1-24-percenta>>.

of citizens in Slovakia was the lowest, as factories, schools, churches remained closed and people remained at home. From this, we could reasonably expect that March, and in particular April, would record higher listening figures than in previous months if the lockdown had an effect on radio listening. This period was followed by a period of relaxation, and life returned to normal for most of society. Except for large mass events (over 1000 people), all movement restrictions were lifted.

Other measures came into force in September. These measures were further tightened in October. The second wave of COVID that occurred was far more widespread than the first wave regarding the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 patients and the number of deaths. In December, the so-called slight lockdown took place. Schools remained closed except for the final graduation years and kindergartens were available to parents working in critical infrastructure (doctors, soldiers, firefighters, police, businessmen, etc.). In addition, it was recommended that all those who could, by the nature of their work, be permitted to work at home. Restaurants could only sell take away food, and some shops providing necessary supplies remained open. It was the so-called second wave of coronavirus. In our analysis, we will see how both waves affected the audiences of selected Slovak radio stations.



**PICTURE 2:** Numbers of daily PCR increments positive for COVID-19

Source: *Koronavirus a Slovensko*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.korona.gov.sk>>.

## 4.2 Listening to Slovak Radio Stations during the First and Second Waves of Coronavirus

The global community (not only Slovakia) was forced to remain in domestic quarantine due to the measures in place. According to UN estimates, 3.4 billion people worldwide, about 50% of the world's population, were forced to stay at home during the first wave of coronavirus and associated restrictions.<sup>40</sup> We can assume that these numbers meant an increased demand for

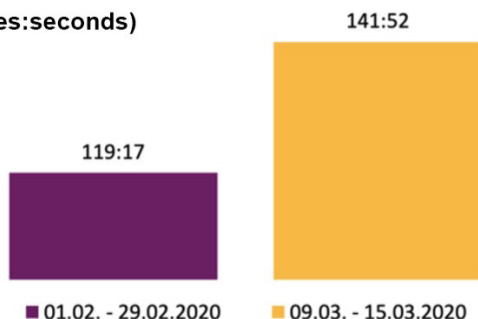
<sup>40</sup> *Pandémia prinútila zostať doma takmer 3,4 miliardy ľudí*. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/547072-online-v-najhorsom-scenari-moze-virus-v-usa-zabit-200-tisic-ludi/>>.



media such as television, streaming services and, of course, radio.<sup>41</sup> According to a survey conducted by the MEDIAN SK agency during the first wave, from an average of six and a half hours spent before the introduction of individual measures, the time spent on media, between individual media types, increased to more than seven hours a day. Radio stations also performed well, with about a 25% increase in listening in March.<sup>42</sup> However, we are not talking about an increase in new listeners, but an increase in time spent with popular radio stations. For example, according to the BBC, interest in the online streaming of their radios rose by 18%, while data from two US analysts meanwhile indicated that the use of music streaming applications such as Spotify had fallen by about 8%.<sup>43</sup> The online environment, which was sometimes perceived as a free environment fighting large-scale media cooperation, “*paradoxically, media corporations have expanded their original spheres of influence by stepping into the world of multimedia and digital applications, i.e. into the virtual world that used to be perceived as the most efficient ‘weapon’ against media monopolies and oligopolies*”.<sup>44</sup> In the classic media, more began to watch more television than listen more to radio, which according to several sources broke first wave viewership records as well as making additional website visits.

### Radio listening

(ATS relative, minutes:seconds)



**PICTURE 3:** Listening to ATS relative radio (minutes: seconds) in February. compared to March

Source: adMeter a koronavírus – zmeny v mediálnej konzumácii Slovákov. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <[https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN\\_SK\\_adMeter\\_koronavirus\\_media\\_20200330\\_22\\_v014.pdf](https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN_SK_adMeter_koronavirus_media_20200330_22_v014.pdf)>.

Home isolation did not change only radio listening habits,<sup>45</sup> but also affected news media in general.<sup>46</sup> An example is data from Canada. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, the most-listened time during the radio broadcasting schedule was the block from 6:00 to 9:00a.m., but subsequently lockdown, plus a later wake-up time caused by “working from home” or forced home isolation, shifted the start time of this block’s prime time. In Canada, radio before

<sup>41</sup> See, for example: RODERO, E.: Radio: The Medium that Best Copes in Crises. Listening Habits, Consumption, and Perception of Radio Listeners During the Lockdown by the Covid-19. In *Relaciones Públicas*, 2020, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 1-14. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.may.06>>.

<sup>42</sup> adMeter a koronavírus – zmeny v mediálnej konzumácii Slovákov. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <[https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN\\_SK\\_adMeter\\_koronavirus\\_media\\_20200330\\_22\\_v014.pdf](https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN_SK_adMeter_koronavirus_media_20200330_22_v014.pdf)>.

<sup>43</sup> Coronavirus: Radio Listening Booms while Music Streaming Stalls. [online]. [2021-01-23]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-52037461>>.

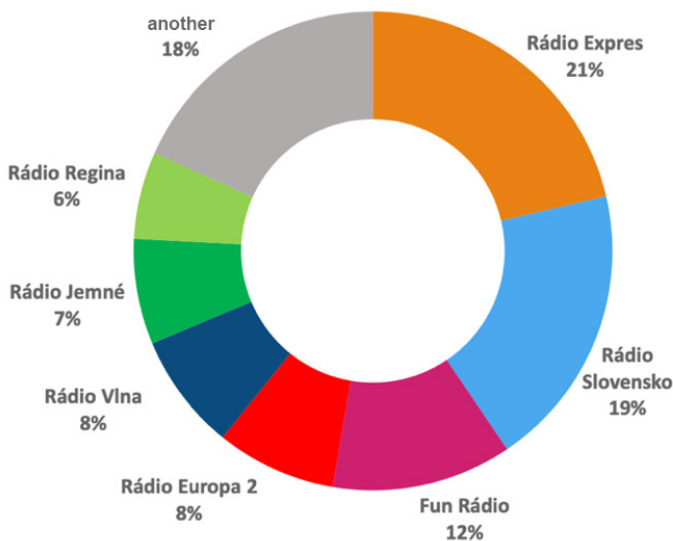
<sup>44</sup> RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today’s Media Industries. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 18.

<sup>45</sup> Not only that the radio stations professionals started working remotely, programs had to be modified with content about the coronavirus, but even radio prime time had changed. See: RODERO-ANTON, E., BLANCO-HERNANDEZ, M.: The Role of Radio in Crisis Situations. Initiatives in the Coronavirus Pandemic. In *Index Comunicación*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 193-213. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.33732/ixc/10/03Elpape>>.

<sup>46</sup> VAN AELST, P. et al.: Does a Crisis Change News Habits? A Comparative Study of the Effects of COVID-19 on News Media Use in 17 European Countries. In *Digital Journalism*, 2021, Vol. 9, No. 5, p. 1-31. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1943481>>.

the pandemic was listened to around 7 a.m. In the period from the end of March to the middle of May (during the first wave), however, this trend shifted to 8 o'clock in the morning, whereas even during the period until the end of August it had moved to 9 o'clock. Overall, radio stations accepted the trend of getting up later due to restrictions and moved their early moderated program blocks to 7:00 - 10:00 a.m.<sup>47</sup>

For the 1st and 2nd quarters of 2020, during the first wave and the beginning of the second wave of coronavirus, according to the obtained MML-TGI data, Slovak radio stations performed as follows: 90% (compared to 86% in 2019) of respondents reacted positively in the parameter "listened to last week", aged 14-79. Conversely, "every day" radio is listened to by just over 59% of the population (58% last year).<sup>48</sup> The first place in listening was occupied by the stable Rádio Expres with a 21% share of the radio market. In second place in listening is the public channel RTVS – Rádio Slovensko with a share of 19%. Third-place belongs to Fun Rádio with 12%, Rádio Vlna 8%, Európa 2 (8%), Rádio Jemné (7%), the public channel RTVS – Rádio Regina 6% and other smaller regional or local radio stations.



**PICTURE 4:** Listening to radios in Slovakia in 2020 according to MML-TGI

Source: MML-TGI za 1. kvartál 2020 a 2. kvartál 2020. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2020/ZS202SR.pdf>>.

We looked at the listening of the first four of the most listened-to radio stations in even more detail and we tried to find out whether the restrictions or the pandemic affect the listening of selected radio stations.

### 4.3 Characteristics of Selected Radio Stations

For our research, we chose the four most listened Slovak radio stations as a sample (according to the MML-TGI survey). In the first four, in addition to commercial radio stations, there is also a public broadcaster (Rádio Slovensko channel). At the beginning, we briefly characterize

<sup>47</sup> BREE, R.: *The Biggest Difference Between Pre-COVID Radio Listening and Now*. [online]. [2021-01-23]. Available at: <<https://mediaincanada.com/2020/09/23/the-biggest-difference-between-pre-covid-radio-listening-and-now/>>.

<sup>48</sup> MML – TGI za 1. kvartál 2020 a 2. kvartál 2020. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2020/ZS202SR.pdf>>.

the selected radio stations. We are also adding an overview of their origin, ownership and radio format, which has the greatest impact on the station's listening. Large commercial radio stations in Slovakia only specifically changed the broadcasting program itself due to the pandemic during the first wave. For example, Fun rádio included reading from audiobooks on weekdays from 18:00. Other radio stations added more news.<sup>49</sup> However, public service broadcasting fully adapted itself in all areas to include:

- Educational programs for children who did not go to school, which was included mainly in the morning.<sup>50</sup>
- Religious programs for people who were unable to attend church - half-hour broadcasts for catholic believers are broadcast on Rádio Regina, always from Monday to Thursday from 5.30 pm, and on Friday for Greek and Orthodox catholics. Mass is broadcast directly from the studio.<sup>51</sup>
- Increased demands for information in the fields of news and journalism.

**Rádio EXPRES** – since the last quarter of 2002 it has been the most listened-to commercial radio station and since mid-2005 the most listened-to radio station in Slovakia. Its broadcasting contains only the biggest music hits, the latest news and transport reports throughout the day. The signal of Rádio Expres covers 88.08% of the territory of Slovakia through a network of its own transmitters (*official text of the broadcaster*).<sup>52</sup>

Start of broadcast: 2000.

Station type: private.

Target group: 18 - 40 years.

Music format: Hot AC - a radio format that includes music of various genres from the 70s to the present. At the same time, it avoids aggressive genres (hard rock, heavy metal, hip-hop), music intended for young people and genres of techno and dance music. It has a high proportion of new songs and these are included early in the broadcast.<sup>53</sup>

**Rádio SLOVENSKO** – in its 24-hour program it is primarily focused on streaming with a dominant focus on current news and analytical journalism, supplemented by blocks of artistic programs. The mission of Radio Slovakia is to provide a service to the public in the field of broadcasting, which is universal in terms of its geographical reach, programmatically diverse, prepared on the principle of editorial independence and which develops the cultural level of listeners while providing space for current social and cultural activities. It focuses primarily on credible opinion-forming news, unrivalled sports news (live broadcasts from sports events), and analytical journalism. It provides information that is impartial, verified, unbiased, up-to-date, comprehensible and, as a whole, balanced and pluralistic. Radio Slovakia is in constant contact with its listeners through interactive broadcasting and discussion sessions, in which it presents a wide range of opinions. Primarily, Rádio Slovensko wants to correctly inform, educate interestingly and, at the same time, entertain (*official broadcast text*).<sup>54</sup> The RTVS program structure consists of news, current affairs, documentaries, drama, music, sports, entertainment,

<sup>49</sup> *Sed' doma a počúvaj, Fun rádio uvádza audioknihu do tvojich uší.* [online]. [2020-03-27]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4174\\_sed-doma-a-pocuvaj-fun-radio-uvadza-audioknihu-do-usi-tvojich](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4174_sed-doma-a-pocuvaj-fun-radio-uvadza-audioknihu-do-usi-tvojich)>.

<sup>50</sup> *Bohatá rozhlasová ponuka na vzdelávanie aj príjemné trávenie času.* [online]. [2020-03-27]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4169\\_bohata-rozhlasova-ponuka-na-vzdelavanie-aj-prijemne-travenie-casu](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4169_bohata-rozhlasova-ponuka-na-vzdelavanie-aj-prijemne-travenie-casu)>.

<sup>51</sup> *RTVS rozširuje vysielanie bohoslužieb.* [online]. [2020-03-28]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4181\\_rtv-s-rozsiruje-vysielanie-bohosluzieb](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4181_rtv-s-rozsiruje-vysielanie-bohosluzieb)>.

<sup>52</sup> *O Rádiu Expres.* [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://www.expres.sk/reklama/o-radiu/>>.

<sup>53</sup> *Malý lexikon rozhlasových formátov.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[https://www.radiotv.cz/p\\_radio/r-program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/](https://www.radiotv.cz/p_radio/r-program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/)>.

<sup>54</sup> *Programové služby RTVS – Rádio Slovensko.* [online]. [2021-01-22]. Available at: <<https://www.rtv-s.org/programove-sluzby/radio-slovensko>>.

educational programs for children and youth. Speaking of the activities of RTVS, the law states that there should be radio broadcasting on at least four radio program services, one of which is intended for content and regional balanced programs in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia.<sup>55</sup>

Start of broadcast: 1993.

Station type: private.

Target group: 25 - 60 years.

Music format: *Full Service* – provides a complete service, ie music, news, journalism, entertainment. The greatest emphasis is on the information component.<sup>56</sup> The core consists of proven hits of the '80s and '90s. There is no fundamental emphasis on any volume of contemporary (current chart) music. The exception is current domestic production. In addition to the profiled music format in streaming, Rádio Slovensko does not neglect minority genres in specialized journalistic programs. Special attention is paid to contemporary and older Slovak music. Radio Slovakia also supports new musical talent in its broadcasting.<sup>57</sup>

**FUN rádio** - Fun rádio was the first Slovak private radio station, born on the frequency 94.3 FM on June 10, 1990. Initially, the broadcast from the studio in Bratislava covered 4 hours, then for the rest of the day, the broadcasting was taken over by French Fun Radio. Gradually, the broadcast from Bratislava expanded - from 4 hours to 12 to finally 24 hours a day. We make the day more pleasant for our listeners with fantastic music and in addition to having fun with our presenters, we also provide them with a fully-fledged information service throughout the day - the latest news, transport and weather reports (*official broadcast text*).<sup>58</sup>

Start of broadcast: 1990.

Station type: private.

Target group: 18 - 40 years.

Music format: *CHR* – music format based on current hits. The playlist is very narrow and the rotation of songs is high.<sup>59</sup>

**Rádio VLNA** - Rádio Vlna plays hits proven over time from the 60's to the millennium. We are oldies radio. There is plenty of current news monitored by experienced editors throughout the day (*official text of the broadcaster*).<sup>60</sup>

Start of broadcast: 2015.

Station type: private.

Target group: 30 - 60 years.

Music format: *Oldies AC* - they play mostly pop/rock music of the '60s and '70s with an overlap into the '80s and '90s. The latest songs do not belong to this format.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> BÔTOŠOVÁ, L.: Genre Diversity in Journalism in Public Service Broadcasting. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media – On the edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2020, p. 20.

<sup>56</sup> *Malý lexikon rozhlasových formátov*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[https://www.radiotv.cz/p\\_radio/r\\_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/](https://www.radiotv.cz/p_radio/r_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/)>.

<sup>57</sup> *O Rádio Slovensko*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.rtls.org/programove-sluzby/radio-slovensko>>.

<sup>58</sup> *O Fun rádiu*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.funradio.sk/clanok/750-o-nas-o-fun-radiu/>>.

<sup>59</sup> *Malý lexikon rozhlasových formátov*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[https://www.radiotv.cz/p\\_radio/r\\_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/](https://www.radiotv.cz/p_radio/r_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/)>.

<sup>60</sup> *O Rádio Vlna*. [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://www.radiovlna.sk/o-radiu>>.

<sup>61</sup> *Malý lexikon rozhlasových formátov*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[https://www.radiotv.cz/p\\_radio/r\\_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/](https://www.radiotv.cz/p_radio/r_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/)>.

## 4.4 Listening to Selected Radio Stations in Numbers

We collected data from the RADIOPROJEKT survey within our monitoring period during the pandemic and compared them with the previous period before the pandemic. We visualize the data in more detail in the attached tables. First, we analyse listening data over a selected period from March 2020 to January 2021.

The first restrictions on movement occurred in mid-March, during the summer months of July and all restrictions were lifted in August, and with the arrival of the second wave of coronavirus, new measures restricting citizens' mobility were gradually introduced again in September. As this contribution was created in February 2021, the data ends in January 2021.

RADIO	Listening 2020 - 2021 median.sk (in millions)										
	March	April	May	Jun	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Expres	1,507	1,502	1,535	1,535	1,548	1,527	1,524	1,534	1,528	1,534	1,533
Fun	1,033	1,048	1,073	1,081	1,060	1,044	1,051	1,062	1,057	1,063	1,058
Vlna	0,712	0,775	0,760	0,764	0,752	0,787	0,803	0,827	0,833	0,855	0,853
Rádio Slovensko	1,130	1,123	1,134	1,127	1,140	1,087	1,073	1,073	1,096	1,111	1,112
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,382</b>	<b>4,448</b>	<b>4,502</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>4,445</b>	<b>4,451</b>	<b>4,496</b>	<b>4,514</b>	<b>4,563</b>	<b>4,556</b>

1<sup>st</sup> wave of measures

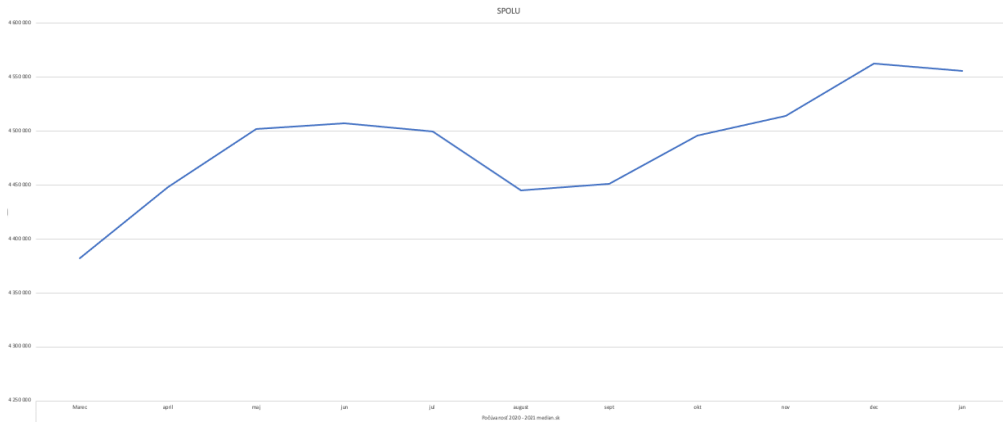
2<sup>nd</sup> wave of measures

**TABLE 1:** Listening to selected radio stations over the period March 2020 to January 2021

Source: own processing, 2021

Within the RÁDIO PROJECT from the analytic company MEDIAN SK, the listening to of multiregional and nationwide radio stations in Slovakia is measured every month. According to the available data, which are shown in Table 1, it is clear that the radio stations maintained their audiences during the pandemic, in approximately the same numbers every month, therefore the difference in audience was small. Rádio Expres held its position and audience steadily and FUN rádio grew slightly from March to the end of the so-called first wave. Rádio Slovakia fluctuated the most and Rádio Vlna is on the rise, growing most significantly of all the monitored radio stations. It is interesting to observe that the largest radio listening numbers were not during the first wave, in March, but paradoxically in May and June, when anti-pandemic measures were gradually released. Since March, all commercial radio stations have improved slightly in their numbers, except in April, when we expected an increase in listening. It did not affect Rádio Expres and Rádio Slovensko, but for example Fun rádio grew and so did Rádio Vlna. The second wave was especially good for Radio Slovakia, which increased its audience. In addition, Rádio Vlna also grew. Express and Fun rádio kept about the same audience numbers.

It is interesting to monitor the data on total listening for the four most listened-to stations, as the individual listening data usually changed only slightly. However, the summary data show a better view of the changes. Their listening generally increased during the first wave, then slightly decreased in the summer, and after the onset of the second wave, their listening increased again.



**PICTURE 5:** Listening curve of the first four most listened-to radio stations in Slovakia over the period March 2020 - January 2021

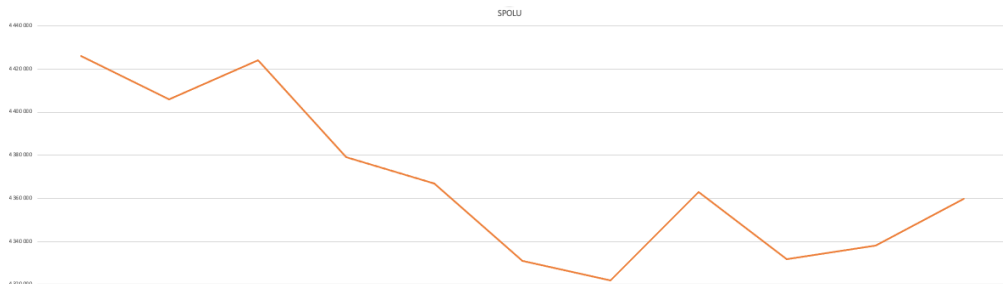
Source: own processing, 2021

If we compare it with the previous year and period, 2019, compared to 2020, the listening rate was slightly lower. Rádio Vlna did not increase in the previous period, on the contrary, it decreased, as did Rádio Slovensko. Overall, the combined listening of the selected four radios over the same period more or less declined.

RADIO	Listening 2019 - 2020 median.sk (in millions)										
	March	April	May	Jun	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Expres	1,497	1,494	1,494	1,481	1,482	1,481	1,483	1,484	1,497	1,501	1,511
Fun	1,045	1,042	1,068	1,053	1,045	1,009	1,003	0,999	1,014	1,023	1,042
Vlna	0,682	0,673	0,672	0,659	0,659	0,660	0,662	0,721	0,680	0,686	0,677
Rádio Slovensko	1,202	1,197	1,190	1,186	1,181	1,181	1,174	1,159	1,141	1,128	1,130
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,426</b>	<b>4,406</b>	<b>4,424</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>4,367</b>	<b>4,331</b>	<b>4,322</b>	<b>4,363</b>	<b>4,332</b>	<b>4,338</b>	<b>4,360</b>

**TABLE 2:** Listening to selected radio stations over the period March 2019 to January 2020

Source: own processing, 2021



**PICTURE 6:** Listening curve of the first four most listened-to radio stations in Slovakia over the period March 2019 - January 2020

Source: own processing, 2021

A representative survey from MEDIAN SK shows the difference from previous years in the increase in listening. In the case of the most listened-to commercial radio, Express, we see only small differences at the level of a few per cent. Rádio Vlna grew the most, on average up to 17% in the period under review, also at the expense of the public channel Rádio Slovensko, which lost a significant share of listeners compared to the previous year 2019, 2020 - 5%.

However, new listeners arrived, as evidenced by the joint data for each month. In total, the four most listened-to radio stations in the pandemic period grew on average by 17% compared to the same period in the previous year before the onset of the pandemic. These good numbers are mainly thanks to Rádio Vlna, which saw the most significant additions. The first (orange) and second waves (blue) are marked in colour. We can observe that, compared to the same period last year, all radios grew during the autumn. Not significantly, but nevertheless, almost all of them improved in listening numbers, except for public radio stations, which, on the contrary, lost but gradually reduced the losses.

RADIO	Diference 2019 - 2020 and 2020-2021 median.sk											AVERAGE
	March	April	May	Jun	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	
Expres	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	17%
Fun	-1%	1%	0%	3%	1%	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%	2%	
Vlna	4%	15%	13%	16%	14%	19%	21%	15%	23%	25%	26%	
Rádio Slovensko	-6%	-6%	-5%	-5%	-3%	-8%	-9%	-7%	-4%	-2%	-2%	
Totals	-2%	10%	12%	17%	17%	18%	20%	17%	25%	29%	27%	

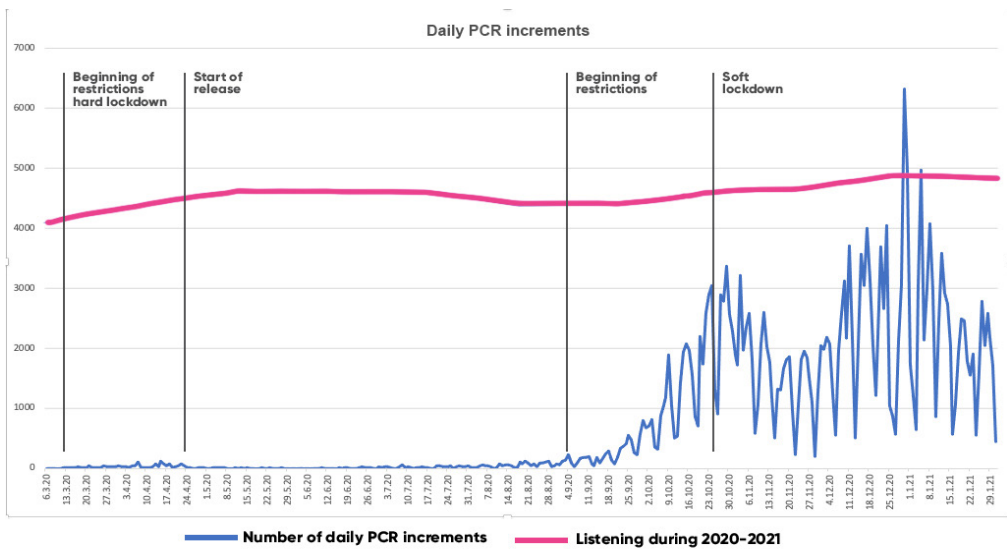
1<sup>st</sup> wave of measures

2<sup>nd</sup> wave of measures

**TABLE 3:** Difference in %, for the period March 2019 - to January 2020 and March 2020 to January 2021 - median.sk

Source: own processing, 2021

However, we will try to compare the main indicator and the cause of the restrictions - daily increments of confirmed COVID-19 cases using PCR tests. If we combine this graph with the audience graph, which we already know has grown, we can see the real impact of the pandemic on the growth of the audience.



**PICTURE 7:** *Listening curve of the first four most listened-to radio stations in Slovakia in comparison with the daily growth of patients confirmed by COVID-19 PCR tests*

Source: own processing, 2021

It is evident that with the onset of the first restrictions during the first, hard lockdown, the overall audiences of the first four most listened-to radio stations in Slovakia increased. In April, the individual measures were gradually relaxed. A bigger release occurred in May, where we see that the radio station audiences we studied began to decline slightly. Summer followed when listening again decreased. After new restrictions, listening began to increase slightly again, and after the announcement of a new lockdown, and after sharp increases in daily cases of COVID-19, listening became significantly higher again. With the decrease of new PCR positive increases, the audiences of selected radio stations also started to decrease slightly. It is thus clear and evident that the audience replicates the measures and the numbers of new PCR cases.

Based on our findings, we can answer our secondary research questions:

*1. How did radio listening change during the first and second waves of coronavirus?*

People are worried about themselves and their loved ones. Although not everyone strictly adheres to the measures, the high number of new patients with COVID-19 also affected them and during this period they spend more time at home for fear of possible infection. It benefits radio stations that take advantage of being a good companion for people during a variety of activities. This is the reason for the arrival of new listeners.

*2. Were the radio stations more listened-to during the first and second waves of coronavirus than the previous year?*

The radio stations recorded a slight increase in listening compared to the same period of the previous year. The increase was mostly only slight, except for Radio Vlna, which grew significantly. In addition, according to the data, we can say that people spent more time listening to the radio during the pandemic than at the same time before the arrival of COVID-19.



At the same time, after answering our secondary research questions, we can also answer the main research question:

*Did the pandemic, either the first or second wave of coronavirus in Slovakia affect radio listening?*

**Yes, the pandemic and the associated mobility restrictions had an impact on radio listening, and we can even say that the number of new cases is replicated by the curve of new listeners in radio listening.**

## 5. Conclusion

So how has the corona crisis affected the radio market? We can summarize this in a few points that characterize its impact on radio listening:

- 1. Increased listening time** - as is clear from the median.sk survey, new listeners did not appear, only their time spent listening to individual radio stations increased. During the first lockdown, listeners had more time at home and could have their radios on for longer.
- 2. Program changes shift in morning broadcasting** - due to reduced mobility and working from home, people's habits changed, and their morning rituals around getting up shifted, which is related to the shift in the morning moderated block of radio broadcasting by about an hour.
- 3. Only a slight increase in listening** - we recorded a certain increase, really only in small percentages, which, however, are at the expense of Slovenský broadcasting or radio stations, which disappeared or stopped playing during the peak of the crisis. However, it is in small numbers. In most cases, the increase was associated with an increase in new COVID-19 cases confirmed by PCR tests.
- 4. The order of listening does not change** - the corona crisis did not change the order of listening, so the most listened-to radio stations still maintain their share of the radio market.
- 5. The clear winner of the epidemic is Rádio Vlna** - during the corona crisis, Rádio Vlna improved the most. It gained new listeners - up to 5 times (on average 15%) more than its competitors.
- 6. Public Radio Broadcaster** - while all radio stations more or less kept their broadcasting structure the same (increased the share of news and supplementary short programs), Public Radio Broadcaster was forced to change its structure quite significantly in all areas due to its public nature. This also affected its most listened to channel, Rádio Slovensko. It lost the most listeners of all on average – up to 5%. We can thus state that the changes in its broadcasting structure did not help.

Although the pandemic and its consequences are far from over, we now know that in some respects it has also highlighted radio broadcasting in Slovakia. On the one hand by gaining new listeners and on the other hand by a longer listening time to favourite stations. In addition, the lockdown shifted morning radio blocks. Whether everything will soon return to the same state as before the pandemic is questionable and currently unpredictable. It will only be possible to assess the overall impact of the spread of the coronavirus on Slovak Radio, as well as on the entire media market, over a period of several years.

**Acknowledgement:** *This article was created with support under the Operational Program Integrated Infrastructure of the project: "Addressing societal threats due to the COVID-19 pandemic", project code 313011ASN4 and is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.*

## Literature and Sources

*adMeter a koronavírus – zmeny v mediálnej konzumácii Slovákov*. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <[https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN\\_SK\\_adMeter\\_koronavirus\\_media\\_20200330\\_22\\_v014.pdf](https://www.median.sk/pdf/OSTATNE/MEDIAN_SK_adMeter_koronavirus_media_20200330_22_v014.pdf)>.

BELIK, L.: Radio as a Tool of Education and Resistance in Brazilian Communities During the Pandemic. In *Design and Culture: The Journal of the Design Studies Forum*, 2021, Vol. 13, No. 1, p. 79-90. ISSN 1754-7083. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2020.1871192>>.

*Bohatá rozhlasová ponuka na vzdelávanie aj príjemné trávenie času*. [online]. [2020-03-27]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4169\\_bohata-rozhlasova-ponuka-na-vzdelavanie-aj-prijemne-travenie-casu](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4169_bohata-rozhlasova-ponuka-na-vzdelavanie-aj-prijemne-travenie-casu)>.

BŔTOŠOVÁ, Ľ.: Genre Diversity in Journalism in Public Service Broadcasting. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media – On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2020, p. 18-29.

BREE, R.: *The Biggest Difference Between Pre-COVID Radio Listening and Now*. [online]. [2021-01-23]. Available at: <<https://mediaincanada.com/2020/09/23/the-biggest-difference-between-pre-covid-radio-listening-and-now/>>.

BRNÍK, A.: The Impact of “Corona Crisis“ on Slovak Radio Broadcasting. In KVETANOVÁ, Z., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and media – On the Edge*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020, p. 492-501.

BRNÍK, A., BŔTOŠOVÁ, Ľ., KAPEC, M.: *Rozhlasová tvorba a prax*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2020.

CEHLÁRIKOVÁ, A.: *Slovensko vstúpi rovno do tretej fázy uvoľňovania opatrení*. [online]. [2020-10-20]. Available at: <<https://bratislavskykraj.sk/slovensko-vstupi-rovno-do-tretej-fazy-uvolnovania-opatreni/>>.

*Coronavirus: Radio Listening Booms while Music Streaming Stalls*. [online]. [2021-01-23]. Available at: <<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-52037461>>.

*COVID-19: Krízový štáb zavádza prísne opatrenia, zatvárajú sa školy, letiská*. [online]. [2020-10-19]. Available at: <<https://www.health.gov.sk/Clanok?koronavirus-opatrenia-sprisenene>>.

*COVID-19: Slovensko pozná pacienta “0”*. [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <[https://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=4064:covid-19-slovensko-pozna-pacienta-0q&catid=250:koronavirus-2019-ncov&Itemid=153](https://www.uvzsr.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4064:covid-19-slovensko-pozna-pacienta-0q&catid=250:koronavirus-2019-ncov&Itemid=153)>.

*COVID-19: Toto je mapa rizikových regiónov na Slovensku, kde platia nové opatrenia*. [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.omeiach.com/strucne/18762-covid-19-toto-je-mapa-rizikovych-regionov-na-slovensku-kde-platia-nove-opatrenia>>.

*Definitívne výsledky skríningu: z 2,9 milióna ľudí malo pozitívny test 1,24 percenta*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=definitivne-vysledky-skriningu-z-2-9-milionu-ludi-malo-pozitivny-test-1-24-percenta>>.

DREISIEBNER, S., MÄRZ, S., MANDL, T.: Information Behavior During the Covid-19 Crisis in German-speaking Countries. In *Journal of Documentation*, 2021, Vol. Ahead of print, No. Ahead of print. ISSN 0022-0418. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JD-12-2020-0217/full/html>>.

*Európska agentúra pre lieky schválila vakcínu od spoločnosti Moderna*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/europska-agentura-pre-lieky-schvalila-vakcinu-spolocnosti-moderna>>.

FOLENTOVÁ, V.: *Nové opatrenia: Povinné rúška vonku, obchody otvorené pre seniorov, odsun úradných lehôt, sledovanie pohybu mobilov*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/1818474/nove-opatrenia-povinne-ruska-vonku-obchody-otvorene-pre-seniorov-odsun-uradnych-lehot-sledovanie-pohybu-mobilov/>>.

FOLENTOVÁ, V., BARČÍKOVÁ, M.: *Od pondelka sa otvárajú divadlá, kiná, kostoly, žiaci zostávajú doma, premiér ustupuje od plánu na “komunitné testovanie”*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/2141779/premier-ustupuje-od-planu-na-komunitne-testovanie-chce-otvarat-divadla-kina-a-kostoly/?ref=tema>>.

- FOLENTOVÁ, V.: *Odberné miesta na bezplatné testy otvorili len v 15 mestách. Krajčí podľa Matoviča nesplnil úlohu.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/2134174/odberne-miesta-na-bezplatne-testy-otvorili-len-v-11-mestach-krajci-podla-matovica-nesplnil-ulohu/?ref=mpm>>.
- FRANTOVÁ, E.: *Uvoľňovanie opatrení: Od stredy sa otvoria maloobchodné prevádzky a služby.* [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <<https://ekonomika.pravda.sk/ludia/clanok/549196-nazivo-vlada-o-postupnom-otvarani-prevadzok/>>.
- HAIČÁKOVÁ, D.: *Na Slovensku potvrdili prvý prípad koronavírusu, od pondelka sa zakáza lety do Talianska.* [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22351714/na-slovensku-potvrdili-pripad-koronavirusu.html>>.
- HUDÍKOVÁ Z., HABIŇÁKOVÁ, E.: *Radio Broadcasting and Radio Production.* Trnava : FMK UCM, 2018.
- Charakteristika median.sk.* [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/sk/>>.
- KATUŠKA, M.: *Rúška už nebudú povinné všade, povolia cesty do zahraničia na krátky čas.* [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22406854/koronavirus-slovensko-uvoľnenie-dalsich-opatreni.html>>.
- Koronavirus na Slovensku v číslach.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://korona.gov.sk/koronavirus-na-slovensku-v-cislach/>>.
- LASKAR, K. A., BHATTACHARYYA, B.: Community Radio Stations' Production Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic in India. In *Media Asia*, 2021, Vol. 48, No. 4, p. 243-257. ISSN 2377-6277. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2021.1970421>>.
- Malý lexikon rozhlasových formátov.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[https://www.radiotv.cz/p\\_radio/r\\_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/](https://www.radiotv.cz/p_radio/r_program/maly-lexikon-rozhlasovych-formatu/)>.
- MML-TGI národný prieskum spotreby, médií a životného štýlu Market & Media & Lifestyle -TGI Základné výsledky za 3. kvartál 2020 a 4. kvartál 2020.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2020/ZS204SR.pdf>>.
- MML-TGI za 1. kvartál 2020 a 2. kvartál 2020.* [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/pdf/2020/ZS202SR.pdf>>.
- Na Slovensku bude zákaz vychádzania, zatvoria školy.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://myzilina.sme.sk/c/22516909/na-slovensku-bude-zakaz-vychadzania-zatvoria-aj-skoly.html>>.
- Národný prieskum MML-TGI®.* [online]. [2021-03-11]. Available at: <<https://www.median.sk/sk/narodny-prieskum-mml-tgi-22/>>.
- Nový rekord potvrdených prípadov: Prekročili sme hranicu 2000.* [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/novy-rekord-potvrdenych-pripadov-pre/500741-clanok.html>>.
- Od 1. júna sa časť detí a žiakov bude môcť vrátiť do škôl.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.minedu.sk/od-1-juna-sa-cast-deti-a-ziakov-bude-moct-vratit-do-skol/>>.
- O Fun rádiu.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.funradio.sk/clanok/750-o-nas-o-fun-radiu/>>.
- O Rádiu Expres.* [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://www.expres.sk/reklama/o-radiu/>>.
- O Rádiu Slovensko.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://www.rtv.slovensko.org/programove-sluzby/radio-slovensko>>.
- O Rádiu Vlna.* [online]. [2020-10-22]. Available at: <<https://www.radiovlna.sk/o-radiu>>.
- Otvorili prvú nemocnicu len pre covidových pacientov, má pomôcť "horiacemu" regiónu.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://slovensko.hnonline.sk/2266599-otvorili-prvu-nemocnicu-len-pre-covidovych-pacientov-ma-pomocet-horiacemu-regionu>>.
- Pandémia prinútila zostať doma takmer 3,4 miliardy ľudí.* [online]. [2020-10-23]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/547072-online-v-najhorsom-scenari-moze-virus-v-usa-zabit-200-tisic-ludi/>>.
- Programové služby RTVS – Rádio Slovensko.* [online]. [2021-01-22]. Available at: <<https://www.rtv.slovensko.org/programove-sluzby/radio-slovensko>>.

- PRONER, J., BÔTOŠOVÁ, L., MIČOVÁ, S.: *Ako na mediálne výstupy*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019. *Prvé kolo celoplošného testovania bolo úspešnou operáciou*. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.minv.sk/?tlacove-spravy&sprava=prve-kolo-celoplosneho-testovania-bolo-uspesnou-operaciou>>.
- Prvým zaočkovaným na Slovensku je Vladimír Krčmery, nasledovali ďalší epidemiológovia*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/prvym-zaockovanim-slovensku-bude-krcmery-spolu-nim-aj-dalsi-epidemiologovia>>.
- Radio provides solace during COVID-19 pandemic*. [online]. [2021-10-26]. Available at: <<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/radio-provides-solace-during-covid-19-pandemice>>.
- Radio's Key Role in Crisis and Emergency Situations*. [online]. [2021-10-26]. Available at: <<https://www.itu.int/en/myitu/News/2021/02/12/08/04/Radio-key-role-crisis-emergency-situations-World-Radio-Day-2021>>.
- RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: To Thrive Means to Entertain: The Nature of Today's Media Industries. In *Communication Today*, 2020, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 4-21. ISSN 1338-130X.
- RODERO, E.: Radio: The Medium that Best Copes in Crises. Listening Habits, Consumption, and Perception of Radio Listeners During the Lockdown by the Covid-19. In *Relaciones Públicas*, 2020, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 1-14. ISSN 1699-2407. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2020.may.06>>.
- RODERO-ANTON, E., BLANCO-HERNANDEZ, M.: The Role of Radio in Crisis Situations. Initiatives in the Coronavirus Pandemic. In *Index Comunicación*, 2020, Vol. 10, No. 3, p. 193-213. ISSN 2444-3239. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.33732/ixc/10/03Elpape>>.
- RTVS rozširuje vysielanie bohoslužieb*. [online]. [2020-03-28]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4181\\_rtv-s-rozsiruje-vysielanie-bohosluzieb](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4181_rtv-s-rozsiruje-vysielanie-bohosluzieb)>.
- Sed' doma a počúvaj, Fun rádio uvádza audioknihu do tvojich uší*. [online]. [2020-03-27]. Available at: <[https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4174\\_sed-doma-a-pocuvaj-fun-radio-uvadza-audioknihu-do-usi-tvojich](https://www.radia.sk/spravy/4174_sed-doma-a-pocuvaj-fun-radio-uvadza-audioknihu-do-usi-tvojich)>.
- Schválili COVID automat, mal by pomôcť s návratom do normálu*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.ta3.com/clanok/1198898/schvalili-covid-automat-mal-by-pomocet-s-navratom-do-normalu.html>>.
- Sledujeme online: Druhé kolo celoplošného testovania zatiaľ bez komplikácií a incidentov*. [online]. [2021-03-15]. Available at: <<https://www.trend.sk/spravy/sledujeme-online-slovensku-zacalo-druhe-kolo-celoplosneho-testovania>>.
- Slováci počúvajú rádiá, denne majú takmer 2,7 milióna poslucháčov*. [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <<https://strategie.hnonline.sk/media/2004975-slovaci-pocuvaju-radia-denne-maju-takmer-2-7-miliona-posluchacov>>.
- SUDOR, K.: *Študenti pred 30 rokmi na kolene založili prvú súkromnú stanicu FUN rádio a nezarobili na tom*. [online]. [2020-10-24]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/1924710/studenti-pred-tridsiatimi-rokmi-na-kolene-zalozili-a-postavili-prvu-sukromnu-stanicu-fun-radio-a-nezarobili-na-tom/>>.
- Termín maturít sa presunul, študenti by sa mali vrátiť do škôl v apríli*. [online]. [2020-10-25]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22361633/termin-maturit-sa-presunul-studenti-by-sa-mali-vratit-do-skol-v-aprili.html>>.
- VAN AELST, P. et al.: Does a Crisis Change News Habits? A Comparative Study of the Effects of COVID-19 on News Media Use in 17 European Countries. In *Digital Journalism*, 2021, Vol. 9, No. 5, p. 1-31. ISSN 2167-082X. [online]. [2021-10-27]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1943481>>.
- Vianoce v bubline. Za porušenie zákazu vychádzania 1000 eur na mieste*. [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/572456-ako-maju-vyzerat-vianoce-v-rodinnej-bubline/>>.

*Začiatok roku 2021: Koniec lyžovačiek, zatvorené kostoly, jedlo len so sebou.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <[https://www.trnavskyhlas.sk/c/29869-zaciatok-roku-2021-koniec-lyzovaciek-zatvorene-kostoly-jedlo-len-so-sebou/?fb\\_comment\\_id=3600448776736449\\_3602387046542622](https://www.trnavskyhlas.sk/c/29869-zaciatok-roku-2021-koniec-lyzovaciek-zatvorene-kostoly-jedlo-len-so-sebou/?fb_comment_id=3600448776736449_3602387046542622)>.

*Zákon o vysielaní a retransmisii č. 308/2000, Z. z. z dňa 14. septembra 2000,* from 1st January 2021. [online]. [2020-03-30]. Available at: <<https://www.epi.sk/zz/2000-308>>.

*Zmutovaný vírus, ktorý sa šíri z Anglicka, je už aj na Slovensku.* [online]. [2021-03-16]. Available at: <<https://www.ta3.com/clanok/1200111/zmutovany-virus-ktory-sa-siri-z-anglicka-je-uz-aj-na-slovensku.html>>.

*Zoznam terestriálnych rádii.* [online]. [2020-10-21]. Available at: <[rádií https://www.radia.sk/radia](https://www.radia.sk/radia)>.

## Authors



### *Mgr. Andrej Brník, PhD.*

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava  
Faculty of Mass Media Communication  
Námestie J. Herdu 2,  
917 01 Trnava  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
[andrej.brnik@ucm.sk](mailto:andrej.brnik@ucm.sk)

Andrej Brník has been working at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication for several years. From the beginning, he has been scientifically focused on student radio broadcasting, the preparation of anchors and the technical side of radio broadcasting. 10 years ago, he founded the student radio Aetter and since then he has been involved in the training of moderators and its technical side.

### *Mgr. Miroslav Kapec, PhD.*

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava  
Faculty of Mass Media Communication  
Námestie J. Herdu 2,  
917 01 Trnava  
SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
[miroslav.kapec@ucm.sk](mailto:miroslav.kapec@ucm.sk)



Miroslav Kapec works as a lecturer at the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. In his scientific activities, he deals with the issue of mainstream and alternative media and the phenomenon of fake news in the context of these media. In addition, he is actively interested in media culture, radio production and social media.