

Radio in the Promotion of Croatian Tourism: The Age of Covid-19 and Afterwards

Marina Mučalo*
Anita Šulentić**

SUMMARY

Radio is a traditionally popular medium that still has its continuous and stable listenership. The digital age has endowed it with new technical and technological possibilities and multimedia, including a big breakthrough of digital audio broadcasting (DAB+). The Republic of Croatia is one of the leading European road trip destinations. Most of the tourists reach Croatia by car, which allows them to use their own vehicles for excursions during their holidays. Almost half of the population of the European Union is still in the habit of listening to the radio while driving. Therefore, radio stations, particularly those based in Adriatic Croatia, should not be left out from the endeavours to achieve the best possible results in the sector of tourism. The paper presents the findings of a qualitative survey that was conducted during January and February 2021 at radio stations whose headquarters are in this area (N=49). The aim of the research was to determine the current engagement of radio in the production of content intended for domestic and foreign tourists, the modalities and dynamics of cooperation with tourism entities in the field of broadcasting and the potential use of radio in the post-Covid tourist season. Twenty-eight radio editors (56%) responded to the survey. All of them consider radio to be a good medium for tourist promotion, yet the findings indicate a lack of offer of news and promotional tourist content. The most common reasons are unfavourable financial and per-

* Marina Mučalo, PhD, Full Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, e-mail: marina.mucalo@fpzg.hr

** Anita Šulentić, PhD Candidate, Department of Media and Communication, University North, e-mail: ansulentic@unin.hr

sonnel circumstances. With the synergy between tourist entities and radio stations, radio could prove to be a reliable business partner.

Keywords: tourism, Covid-19, road trip destination, FM radio, DAB+

Introduction

Life in the digital, networked and multimedia age is marked by a declining trend¹ in the number of companies engaged exclusively in broadcasting radio programmes. Nevertheless, radio is still very much present in the media landscapes of the EU member states. Spain leads with 936 radio programmes; it is followed by Italy (720), Greece (622), Hungary (310) and Portugal (293). In relation to the country's population, the order is different. Slovenia is ranked first, with 76 stations per million inhabitants. It is followed by Greece (58), Cyprus (43), Croatia (38), Hungary (32) and Portugal (28). The lowest number of radio stations per million is recorded in Germany, Poland and Slovakia (3) (Eurostat, 2020).

The radio medium has been present in Croatia for almost a hundred years and has traditionally had a large audience. About 46% of the population listens to the radio every day (IPSOS, 2019), which is in accordance with the European average of 47% in 2019 (Statista, 2021). Nevertheless, in the professional and scientific literature, there is a noticeable dearth of work on the role of radio in promoting Croatia's tourism. Therefore, a brief overview of the current Croatian radio landscape will be provided in the introductory part of this paper, and subsequently, the involvement of radio in the promotion of Croatia's tourism will be put under scrutiny.

According to the official data of the Agency for Electronic Media (2021), which is the umbrella body for all electronic media in Croatia, 141 companies have a broadcasting license. In terms of programming, commercial channels (133) dominate, while only eight are non-profit oriented. When it comes to the range of audibility, most of them are local radio stations (113), mostly city radio stations (104) or smaller ones (9). The remaining radio stations are significantly larger because they have a county (21), regional (4) and national (3) range. In addition to analogue terrestrial signal distribution (FM), all radio stations use *streaming*² through their websites.

Commercial programmes are managed by private companies that, as it is the case with all other profit-making companies, are exposed to economic and market conditions, from competition and recession to extraordinary circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The basis of revenue is advertising and various commercial services that are realized through programmes and websites (the so-called media mix). According to the Croatian Association of Communications Agencies (2021), radio advertising revenues have been systematically declining for years.

The only representative of public broadcasting is *Hrvatski radio* [*Croatian radio*], the largest radio station in the country and an integral part of *Hrvatska radiotelevizija (HRT)* [*Croatian Radio-television*], founded by the Republic of Croatia. It is characterized by a long tradition (its foundation dates back to 1926), a high level of technical-technological equipment and personnel resources, as well as a market-protected position. In point of fact, HRT is the only media outlet in the country that is entitled to collect a monthly fee (around 10.55 euros), which amounts to 89% of its total annual revenues or approximately 160 million euros (HRT, 2020).

Croatian Radio has three national channels (First, Second and Third), eight regional channels³ and one satellite radio channel (for Europe). The First Channel (HR1) is extremely news-oriented with a news broadcast every full hour as well as central news programmes. The Second Channel (HR2) is more informal, with an emphasis on entertainment and sports content, while the Third Channel (HR3) is focused on topics from culture and science. The eight regional channels are dedicated to events taking place in the areas where they are broadcast and are at the same time the sources of local news for HR1 and HR2. The satellite channel “Voice of Croatia” is intended for Croatian emigrants and the international public (content in foreign languages).

All radio stations in Croatia broadcast in analogue technology, one of the last in the digital environment of the 21st century. Although it has no development potential anymore, the implementation of Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is uneven, as is the case in many other EU member states. Actually, as DAB is not mandatory in the European Union, each member state develops it at its own pace. According to WorldDAB⁴ (2021), digital transmission is available to more than 95% of the population in Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. In Croatia, Italy and Austria, it is available to 85% (on average) of the population, in Poland to 66% and in Slovakia and Sweden to 45%. However, it reaches only 25% of the population in France⁵, about 20% in Spain, about 10% in Romania, and about 7% in Ukraine. Bulgaria started the trial DAB period in March 2020, whereas there are no data for Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. There have been no examples or announcements among member states that some of them could turn off the FM network as Norway did in December 2017.

Visitors of Adriatic Croatia: reaching one’s holiday destination by car

Croatia is recognized as one of the leading European tourist road trip destinations (ADAC, 2020). Depending on the starting point, it can be reached or left by car in no more than a few hours. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of

personal vehicles was further actualised as this type of transport was compatible with the recommended epidemiological measures of social distancing. According to the European Commission (2020), as early as in April 2020, air traffic recorded a 60% decrease compared to 2019, and due to a further decline in the number of passengers in all types of commercial transport, a set of measures was adopted to help carriers in the sectors of air, rail, sea and road transport.

According to the Croatian Chamber of Economy⁶ (2020), by far the largest number of tourist arrivals (about 95%) take place in seven counties of Adriatic Croatia, especially in Istria, Split-Dalmatia and Primorje-Gorski Kotar counties. According to Thomas' survey on the tourist year 2019, personal vehicles were the main means of transport even before the pandemic for 74% of visitors arriving in Adriatic Croatia, out of which 61% used a car, 5% opted for a car with a caravan and about 8% used campers. Satisfaction with the transport accessibility of the destination was expressed by almost the same number of visitors (74%). To move around the place of staying and the surrounding area (which is one of the ETIS indicators of sustainability of tourism in the destination), almost 62% of visitors again used a car, either their own or rented (Thomas Croatia, 2020: 35).

The radio car receiver has been a standard item of automotive equipment since the mid-20th century. In the 1960s, it was equipped with a cassette player, while at the end of the century, with a CD player and the surround sound system. According to the findings of Edison Research (2019), "when people are in their cars, it is AM / FM Radio that is the overwhelmingly dominant audio companion - with 67% of all listening going to broadcast radio". The practicality of audio content in road traffic remains undeniable, primarily for safety reasons. Today's technology allows for a greater choice of sources, distribution and reception of audio content while driving. According to Richter (2020), drivers mostly use traditional FM (52%) and online (12%) to retrieve real-time radio programmes, while 15% have their own sources stored as playlists in smartphones or on USB.

According to the only analysis of the radio market in Croatia from 2015 (IPSOS, 2015), listening to the radio is part of the usual daily habits of almost 85% of respondents, with an average duration of two hours. Music dominates among content preferences, and short news programmes (radio news) among speech content preferences. When asked to identify the most common situation in which they listened to the radio, most of the respondents singled out the car (31%), estimating that it will be the same in the future. The majority of the experts who participated in this analysis already believed that digital technology, including the numerosity of digital receivers, would determine the future of radio because radio would follow trends in technology and adapt and develop accordingly (IPSOS, 2015: 62).

Nowadays, digital audio transmission (DAB) is no longer considered to be a new technology. However, warnings that DAB cannot be placed on the market as a com-

mercial commodity were received about ten years ago (HAKOM⁷, 2010: 29). In addition to better sound quality, DAB+ today gives the possibility of having up to sixteen channels on one radio frequency, which offers Croatian broadcasters wider business options, and provides users with a greater choice of content. DAB+ in passenger cars supports services such as Transport Protocol Experts Group (TPEG) and Traffic and Travel Information (TTI), which contribute to the safety of all road users. Apart from navigating the direction of vehicle movement, these services provide drivers with up-to-date traffic information on traffic jams, congestion, traffic density, alternative roads, rest areas, petrol stations, *etc.* TTI is linguistically independent because data are received through numeric values that are then translated by the DAB+ receiver into the language of the driver's choice, regardless of whether the vehicle is moving through a different language area. Unlike similar satellite services, these services are free and do not need an Internet connection.

The first experimental broadcasts of digital radio in Croatia began in November 2017 and three experimental phases have been conducted so far. However, DAB+ presented itself in Croatia in a vague and even alarming way, which led to the idea of switching off the analogue network (Mučalo, 2020: 99). According to recent information from the OIV⁸ (2021), test participants are satisfied with the quality and availability of the signal and are interested in continuing DAB+ broadcasting, yet they are worried about whether this investment will pay off and are concerned about the problem of the insufficient number of digital receivers among listeners. Nevertheless, the Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries [HAKOM] will call the first public tender for the commercial exploitation of DAB+ in 2021. Commercial operation means that the network operator should build one or more networks and sign commercial transmission contracts with broadcasters. It is worth reminding that in this period of experimental broadcasting, the OIV bears most of the costs, while radio broadcasters pay only a part of them, all for the purpose of popularizing the new platform (Mučalo, 2020).

At the end of 2020, the European Electronic Communication Code (EECC⁹) came into force. According to this document car receivers must be a mandatory part of the equipment of all new cars that are put up for sale or rent in the European Union (EC, 2018). The decision is binding on all member states, regardless of the penetration of digital audio broadcasting in each of them.

DAB+ is key to securing radio's long-term position in the car [...] to date, our primary focus has been on automotive. The European Electronic Communications Code requires all new car radios in the EU must be able to receive digital terrestrial radio (WorldDAB, 2020).

EECC was published in 2018. As early as in the following year, there were 54% of cars with DAB+ receivers in Germany, 46% in Italy, 45% in Belgium, 43% in the

Netherlands, 30% in Denmark and 25% in France (Statista, 2021a). Today, these percentages are even higher, namely Italy has 90% of vehicles with DAB+ receivers (data referring to 2020), Belgium 59% (2021), the Netherlands 56% (2021) and France 54% (2021) (WorldDAB, 2021). There are currently no data for Croatia and other European member states in which digital audio broadcasting is still in the experimental stage or has not yet been commercialized.

The importance of technological compatibility is especially pronounced in tourism, which is best known to tourism professionals who often encounter their tourists' questions about the "existence" or "speed" of the Internet in a tourist destination. More than a third of tourists in Croatia in the pre-Covid period were university-educated people (43%) who used the Internet (62%) and social media (48%) (Thomas Croatia, 2020). According to the already mentioned data, these people are acquainted with DAB+ services and it should be expected that they will want to use them during their holidays in Croatia.

Traditional FM radio as a medium for the promotion of a tourist destination

What is the importance of traditional media in terms of conveying information about a tourist destination nowadays? Insofar as it is suggested by rather scarce research on this topic conducted in Croatia, the importance of radio for this purpose is decreasing. One of very few science-based surveys on the importance of the media for the tourist success of a tourist destination was conducted in 2007 in Zadar, Šibenik and Split (Zgrabljic Rotar, 2010). According to this research, "word-of-mouth communication", *i.e.*, content transmitted by acquaintances, friends and relatives (43%) was ranked first. It was followed by the Internet (35%) and travel agencies (6.1%). Traditional media (radio) ranked lower (4%) than the foregoing sources of information, while the shares of television and the press were even inferior (2010: 413).

Ten years later, according to Thomas (2020: 33), the main source of information is the Internet, which is used by more than half of the total of all tourists (55.5%). In most cases, the Internet sources refer to websites of travel agencies (62%), followed by social media (48%) and sites of accommodation units (41%). When it comes to conveying information, word-of-mouth communication about a tourist destination is used by not more than a quarter of all tourists (25%).

Instead of the traditional media, new media have strongly imposed themselves as the leading sources of information about a destination. This is especially evident among young Europeans who proactively explore tourist places, book their accommodation and subsequently comment on the experiences gained, most often through official travel websites (34%), destination pages (17%) and travel agencies (14%), social networks

(12 %) and, at the very end, websites of traditional media, such as television and radio (11%) (Eurobarometer, 2016: 26). However, analogue FM radio is still strongly present in Croatia. Today, it is broadcast by more than a hundred city radio stations, which are most often the only medium of local significance in these destinations.

Tourism ought to be considered as an integral part of a local community's life and not a separate activity. In the context of tourism promotion, media reporting has two very important characteristics: it is more economical and more credible than paid advertising (Pike, 2010: 376). However, Pike (2010: 371) notes that "journalists live from interesting stories, but they do not spend their lives waiting for us to contact them. Marketing organizations of a tourist destination need a proactive approach in developing relations with the local media."

Despite the aforementioned digitalization of content and new habits of media consumers in the 21st century, numerous recent research projects undertaken by Asian scientists show the importance of local FM radio stations in tourism promotion in the last ten years (Ponnan, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Salehi and Farahbakhsh, 2014; Syamsuddin Amin and Priansah, 2019).

It is in this geographical area that the radio medium has proved to be a key factor for the discovery, growth, development and promotion of tourist destinations and attractions, especially in the stages of advertising and marketing (Salehi and Farahbakhsh, 2014: 127). Apart from the fact that local radio stations are traditionally engaged in the promotion of Malaysian tourist destinations (Ponnan, 2013), one of the latest successful examples (Syamsuddin Amin and Priansah, 2019) is the marketing strategy of tourism promotion of the Indonesian city of Kuningan, with local FM radio as its main factor. In addition to promotional advertisements, talk shows hosting representatives of competent institutions in the field of sports, tourism and youth are regularly broadcast (Syamsuddin Amin and Priansah, 2019: 163).

According to Kumar (2014: 187), the goal of joint cooperation between media professionals and tourism experts must be recognizing the habits and needs of domestic and foreign tourists and turning potential clients into real tourist clients. Possible limitations of local radio, which can and must be part of a well-thought-out tourist promotion, are compensated by streaming programmes and additional Internet channels that provide multimedia content about the destination, such as photographs and digital files (Kumar, 2014: 188).

The aim and methodology of research

The aim of the research was to determine the current involvement of FM radio in the production of informative, promotional and commercial content intended for tourists in Adriatic Croatia.

The main research questions are:

1. Can FM radio be a medium for the promotion of tourist content in the post-pandemic recovery of Croatian tourism?
2. What needs to be done for local radio to play its promotional role?
3. What are the main obstacles?

This is a qualitative and descriptive research that methodologically relies on a survey questionnaire sent to a deliberate expert sample, *i.e.*, the editors-in-chief of all the radio stations headquartered in the seven coastal counties of Croatia. The research thus included Istria, Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Lika-Senj, Zadar, Šibenik-Knin, Split-Dalmatia and Dubrovnik-Neretva counties (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Adriatic counties of Croatia.

Slika 1. Županije Jadranske Hrvatske.

Source: Croatian counties

The population of FM radio stations based in the Adriatic tourist region consists of 49 radio stations (N=49), out of which 43 are commercial, while six of them are non-profit. In terms of their range, local radio stations (city and municipal) are the most numerous, and each county has one radio station whose audibility range cov-

Table 1. Overview of FM radio stations based in Adriatic Croatia.
Tablica 1. Pregled FM radija sa sjedištem u Jadranskoj Hrvatskoj.

Name of the County	County FM Radio stations	Local FM radio stations
Istria County	Radio Istra	Rovinj FM; Radio Poreč; Radio Eurostar; Medulin FM; Radio Maestral; Radio Labin
Primorje-Gorski Kotar County	Laganini FM Rijeka	Radio Kastav; Pomorski Radio; Radio Marija; Radio Mali Lošinj-Radio Jadranka; Radio Rab; Radio otok Krk, Radio Korzo, Radio Gorski kotar
Lika-Senj County	Radio Gospić	Radio Senj, Hrvatski radio Otočac
Zadar County	Novi radio	Radio 057; Radio Biograd n/m; Radio Pag; Antena Zadar, Radio Benkovac
Šibenik-Knin County	County Radio Šibenik [Županijski radio Šibenik]	Radio Ritam, Radio Drniš
Split-Dalmatia County*	Ultra Split	Megamix Radio Hvar; Radio Makarska rivijera; Radio Brač; Radio Sunce; Radio Marija; Gradski radio Trogir; Radio Nautic, Radio Imotski, Hit Radio, Radio Biokovo
Dubrovnik-Neretva County **	Soundset Ragusa	Radio Delta; Radio Korčula; Radio Jug; Radio postaja Ploče; UNIDU radio

* The County in which the regional Radio Dalmatia is based.

** The county has three municipal radio stations: Radio M and Radio Val (Vela Luka) and Radio Blato (Blato).

Source: Authors' research

ers the county's territory. The largest radio station in this area is one regional radio, whose programme is heard in several counties.

The regional centres of Croatian Radio are not included in the research due to large differences between private broadcasters and the only public radio service in Croatia in terms of ownership, programming and market positioning.

Istria County has the highest annual attendance of domestic and foreign tourists and the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. The radio headquarters are located in Rovinj, Poreč, Pula, Pazin, Labin and Buje. In terms of the tourist attendance rate, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County is medium, whereas when it comes to the achieved GDP, it is one of the most developed counties in Croatia. The county's radio stations are located in Rijeka, Kastav, Bakar, Mali Lošinj, Krk, Rab and Del-

nice. The radio stations of Lika-Senj County are located in Gospić, Senj and Otočac; those of Zadar County in Zadar, Biograd, Pag and Benkovac, while those of Šibenik-Knin County in Šibenik (two radio stations) and Drniš. Split-Dalmatia County has the greatest number of radio stations. They are based in Split, Trogir, Makarska, Sinj, Imotski, Vrgorac and Hvar (on the island of Hvar), Supetar (on the island of Brač) and Komiža (on the island of Vis). The radio stations of Dubrovnik-Neretva County are located in Dubrovnik, Metković, Ploče and the island of Korčula (Vela Luka and Blato).

The areas of radio signal coverage are determined by the differences in broadcasting power. Table 1 shows the radio stations of Adriatic Croatia with regard to their broadcast ranges.

This is one third of all radio broadcasters in Croatia, which, given their diversity of programming and broadcasting licenses, encapsulates Croatian commercial broadcasting in general. All commercial radio stations (43) are privately owned companies, whereas the founders of non-profit radio stations (6) are associations. For the time being, one regional and three city radio stations are involved in digital broadcasting.

Methodologically, the research relies on a questionnaire with open and closed questions sent on 8 January 2021 to the editors-in-chief of all stations covered by the survey. The main questions are focused on the current programme offer intended for foreign and domestic tourists (diversity, formats and use of foreign languages), cooperation with local tourist boards and/or other tourism actors and possible exploitation of the radio media potential in Croatia's post-epidemic tourism recovery.

However, despite their promises, some editors did not respond, some could not be contacted, while one of them promptly refused to participate. After several cycles of persuasion, the study was concluded after six weeks, that is, on 26 February 2021.

Research results

Twenty-eight editors (57%) participated in the research, out of which six from the county radio stations, 21 from the local radio stations and one from the regional radio station. The editors from Lika-Senj County responded in full (100%), from Istria County – five of them (71%), from Primorje-Gorski Kotar County – six of them (66%), from Split-Dalmatia County – seven (58%), from Zadar County – three (50%), from Šibenik-Knin County – one (33%) and from Dubrovnik-Neretva County – three (33%).

The reasons for the non-participation of 21 editors-in-chief (one from a county radio station, seventeen from city radio stations and three from municipal radio stations)

can only be assumed. Covid-19 had been shaping the way of life in Croatia for almost a year, and three weeks before the start of the research, a new cycle of restrictive epidemiological measures started (18 December 2020). Numerous restrictions had been re-enforced, such as the ban on gatherings, the closure of catering facilities, the suspension of all types of sports, economic, tourist and cultural activities, and the ban on leaving one's place of (temporary) residence. If we take into account the 2020 results in the sector of tourism and the estimates that the recovery of the overall economy, including tourism, will occur in a few years (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 2021), demotivation is somewhat understandable. The results are presented individually for each county, from the northernmost to the south. Radio stations are anonymized and numbered according to the designations of the territorial level of broadcasting as Rr (regional radio), Žr (county radio) and Gr1, Gr2, Gr3, etc. (city radio 1, 2, 3...). The responses are structured in order: from news content (including foreign languages), use of digital platforms, advertising, cooperation with tourism entities to the editorial vision of development (assessment of the potential of the radio medium in tourism).

(a) In the County of Istria, five out of seven radio editors participated in our research. The majority of radio stations (4) prepare and broadcast news content for domestic visitors during the summer season (Žr, Gr2, Gr3 and Gr4). These are most often specialized news stories on local tourism (Žr, Gr2 and Gr3) or daily announcements of events (Žr and Gr4). Some consider them to be unprofitable as the costs that their production incurs cannot be covered autonomously (Gr1). The accompanying digital platforms (websites and social networks) are not used to place tourist information.

All the channels have news content in foreign languages (news, announcements of local events, traffic information, etc.). In most cases, the Italian language is used (Gr1 and Gr2) or a combination of German, Italian and English (Žr, Gr3 and Gr4). They are mostly prepared by members of radio staff themselves. Furthermore, two city radio stations advertise them in the daily press or through leaflets (available to guests at hotel receptions, in tourist boards and in the changing rooms on the beaches).

- *[...] we would be delighted to produce it if there was a sponsor of that section. Otherwise, it is not profitable for us as its production incurs costs (Žr).*
- *We have a multilingual news supplement Tourist Navigator in four languages [...], each of which has its own separate marketing sponsor (Gr3).*

Commercials are broadcast in English, German, Italian and Slovenian. Mostly services (aquaparks, rent-a-bike, employment) and events (concerts, fairs) (Gr2, Gr3, Gr4 and Žr) are advertised.

All editors cooperate with tourist boards, organizers of local tourism events and cultural institutions. There are no negative experiences in communication with any

of the local government bodies or local communities. In the projection of further development, the editors consider radio a key medium for the promotion of local tourism, but in order for this potential to be truly exploited, financial support from cities, tourist boards and event organizers is needed.

- *The Croatian National Tourist Board (HTZ) and the Ministry of Tourism as well as local tourism entities and communities must provide logistical and financial support to the radio (Žr).*
- *[...] this requires the development of a specific strategy [...] This would further raise the quality of the offer of both the programme and the destination (Gr2).*

(b) Six out of nine radio editors participated in Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. During summer tourist seasons, most of them (5) broadcast news content targeted at domestic visitors. In cooperation with local tourist boards, they have daily announcements of events (Gr3 and Gr5) and shows (Gr1, Gr2 and Gr4). They consider tourist content important for tourists, but also for the local population, especially tourist workers and entrepreneurs (rental owners of tourist accommodation facilities). The accompanying digital platforms (websites and social networks) are not used to broadcast tourist information.

Only some channels (Gr1, Gr2 and Gr4) have news content in foreign languages. Sometimes they broadcast only during the *Ferragosto* period when they offer regular news in Italian (Gr1), while other months are dependent on visitors in the broadcast area. The pandemic circumstances and cancellation of numerous events also resulted in the cancellation of news in English, German and Italian (Gr4).

- *I may be wrong, but I think that foreign tourists who come here rely more on the websites of tourist boards, etc. Of course, it would be good if a project was made at the county level or beyond, so that the whole thing could make sense (Gr5).*

Only one radio has commercials in foreign languages (Gr2), while others claim that there is no advertising interest for this kind of content. All six radio stations cooperate with tourist entities, especially tourist boards. In addition to the usual short announcements and service information, some regularly host responsible persons from the local tourist community and city administration in order to inform the population about tourism topics and destination development (Gr2, Gr5), and broadcast educational shows for rental owners (Gr3). Despite the relevance of these topics, some editors are worried about the question of its cost-effectiveness.

- *Local companies from the tourism sector stopped co-financing the project, so we gave up due to unprofitability. For one programme, we asked the members of the Tourist Council of the local Tourist Board to co-finance the pro-*

ject, but they refused with the explanation that the Tourist Board should not spend funds on “internal advertising”. The next item on the agenda was: Insufficient information of rental owners and tourists (Gr3).

All the editors interviewed believe that the radio is a valuable support for tourist promotion of their county. They consider institutional support to be necessary, and they believe that it should be strengthened (Gr2 and Gr3). In the context of financial support, the Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media¹⁰ was also mentioned. It is through this fund that the Electronic Media Council supports the production of content of public interest (Gr3). The editors evaluate digital platforms as a very good supplement to tourism information and promotion, yet they make little use of them.

(c) In Lika-Senj County, all three editors responded to our survey. All radio stations have news content for domestic visitors as it is a way to contribute to tourism of their county. Digital platforms are used only by the county radio.

There is no tourist news content in foreign languages in their programmes. The main reason lies in the limited staff and financial circumstances, but also the lack of interest in this type of content by the local community. The situation is similar when it comes to advertising content in foreign languages. The editors believe that such content would be a good promotional step, yet advertisers are not interested (Žr and Gr2).

All the radio stations have been cooperating for years with local tourist boards, administrations of national parks, nature parks, colleges and libraries, sailing clubs, *etc.* In terms of the development projection, they believe that continuous institutional support would certainly result in better content for visitors of the county. In this context, they are hoping for an increase in the number of journalists on the radio and an increase in listenership.

(d) In Zadar County, three out of six radio editors responded. During summer seasons, two channels offer news content intended for visitors (Žr and Gr2). On the other hand, the third editor notes that the local tourist board is not interested in publishing this kind of content and his radio does not have it in its programme. Web and profile pages are rarely used for publishing this type of content.

There is no news content in foreign languages, but one radio re-broadcasts news from a German and a British station (Gr1). Others consider such content unprofitable, uninteresting and consequently not listened to and do not plan to introduce it (Žr and Gr2). The editors note that there are generally few commercials, including those in foreign languages.

All editors cooperate to some extent with tourism entities. What is typical of this kind of cooperation is verbal agreement, its being free of charge and its seasonality (only in the summer). There is “an agreement that they send us the latest information via e-mail. We are not going beyond that.” (Gr2).

- *Sometimes during the summer season, promotions of certain activities or events are arranged, but they are made with private organizers rather than with the Tourist Board. (Gr1).*

All editors believe that the radio medium is a good promoter of the tourist offer. Yet again, they point to the importance of institutional support “as such content is not interesting to the local population” (Žr).

(e) In Šibenik-Knin County, only one in three radio editors responded to the survey. He emphasizes that there is tourism-related content in their programme throughout the year.

- *The Tourist Agency, the Fortresses of Culture, National Parks and organizers of events and concerts cooperate with us, so all their activities are reported on in our programme on several occasions and in many ways, whether as advertising, or in the form of field reports or shows dedicated to the event in question.*

This editor considers news content in foreign languages to be expensive and unprofitable, especially because there are no relevant indicators (research) that would suggest that foreign visitors are interested in such content at all. However, commercials in English are broadcast almost every tourist season.

- *We believe that content in a foreign language could be a good addition to the programme, but given the insufficiently researched market, we should weigh how best to present it.*

The respondent considers cooperation with tourist entities to be one-sided because he regularly includes this type of information in the programme, yet without receiving any favour in return. He considers radio to be a good tourist promoter, especially for domestic tourists, and is committed to researching the media habits of foreign tourists, including their habit of listening to radio. He wishes for more systematic financial support, which he would invest in improving the situation with the personnel of the radio, which would certainly contribute to the intensity of announcements for visitors, both in Croatian and in foreign languages.

(f) In Split-Dalmatia County, seven out of eleven editors responded to our survey. Most of them (5) have news content intended for domestic visitors during the tourist season. This content includes news (Gr2), shows about domestic tourism (Gr2 and Gr4) or short daily announcements of the events of interest for tourists (Gr1, Gr4, Gr5 and Žr).

- *These are primarily announcements of tourist and cultural events. Besides, summer programming includes stories/programmes about places in Croatia that are very attractive for tourists. Thus, the audience is instructed or reminded of how to protect themselves from sunburn, sea urchin injuries, dehy-*

dration and other summer accidents. Weather forecast and tips about UV radiation are content that is broadcast frequently (Gr4).

News in foreign languages is viewed by most editors as a programme expense. Consequently, news in English (general, not specialized) is available only on regional radio stations. They consider their regular listeners to be the priority of their programming because “tourists already have enough platforms, sites and organizations that direct them to all attractions and events.” (Rr).

The regional radio, the county radio and three city radio stations (Gr1, Gr2 and Gr5) have commercials in foreign languages. The county radio also has weekly prize contests in English:

- *Every year, more and more clients need to present their services to foreigners residing in the area where they operate, and the trend of creating marketing messages in a foreign language is on the rise (Žr).*

Other radio stations complain about the general shortage of advertisers and advertisements because, despite favourable prices, “there is no local marketing on the island”:

- *Residents of the island still believe that they do not need advertising. The answers are always the same: “What do I need an advertisement for if my facility is located on the waterfront and everyone sees me.” And yes, they are always booked in summer and they work well, while they close their facilities when the tourist season is over (Gr3).*

Experiences of cooperation with tourism entities are diverse. Some editors evaluate it as good (Rr, Žr, Gr3 and Gr5), while others complain about the lack of interest (Gr2) and act on their own in search of appropriate tourist information (Gr4).

All editors consider radio to be a valuable promoter of tourism in the area where it broadcasts, but major radio stations (county and regional) point out the following:

- *No radio station exists because of tourists and it would not be good to fully adapt their programme to tourists who are only temporarily there. We welcome them as listeners but the real listenership is affected and determined by the local population. (Žr).*
- *Content that is targeted only at tourists is aimless because we cannot keep this kind of listener. They are transient, we can only please them for a short period of time so that they feel “better” and “privileged” for the fact that they can listen to, for example, some news in their own language. Unfortunately, this is not the goal or task of radio companies (Rr).*

In the development projection, all editors consider that institutional support is of special importance, and they would be satisfied even with support for production in

foreign languages (Rr, Žr, Gr1 and Gr3). They believe that contractual cooperation with tourist boards is the optimal model.

(g) In the Dubrovnik-Neretva County area, three out of six radio stations responded to the survey. Among them, only the county radio prepares and broadcasts news content for domestic tourists during summer seasons, while the city radio stations claim that there is no interest among visitors, nor in the local community: “We tried to realize something in cooperation with the city tourist community, but we did not find support either in financial or in marketing terms.” (Gr1). Digital platforms for publishing tourist content are not used by any radio.

The county radio is the only one to have news in English that is broadcast twice a day during the season and once a week for the rest of the year. The shows are prepared by an external contributor who is a native English speaker and a fellow citizen. However, “in financial terms, the cost of production is not negligible as well as the cost of external contributor’s fee.” (Žr). Costs are the main reason why other radio stations do not offer similar programmes. The county radio and one of the city radio stations have advertising content in a foreign language (English and Italian) (Gr2).

All editors have cooperated with the tourist entities of their county for many years. However, pandemic circumstances, uncertainty of the upcoming season and new legal provisions have led to a rupture:

- *Until a few days ago, we had this kind of cooperation with the City Tourist Board, but recently, according to the Law on Tourist Boards and the Promotion of Croatian Tourism, this cooperation has been terminated (Gr1).*

They consider the radio medium to be a significant promoter of tourist content and wish for more extensive and long-term cooperation with the tourism sector. They consider institutional support to be necessary.

Discussion

All editors of radio stations based in the area of Adriatic Croatia share the opinion that radio is a good (according to many, excellent) medium for informing visitors and promoting tourist content. However, apart from Istria County and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, where most radio stations are considerably engaged in producing tourism-related content, other counties have an uneven approach that depends on staff, motivation, potential sponsors and the quality of relations with various public and private tourism actors (communities, societies, associations). Some editors, however, have doubts as to whether it is justified to broadcast this kind of content primarily because of the differences in the preferences between the “permanent” radio audience and “transient” visitors.

Most of the tourist content that is broadcast is not original (produced by journalists themselves). Generally, radio channels only distribute the communications, announcements and information that come from other public or private sources. In actual fact, there is a noticeable reliance on typified short speech forms such as announcements, service information and news. Some author programmes or field reporting are certainly the exceptions, not the rule. The phenomenon of “copycat journalism” is not new in the commercial segment of Croatian broadcasting; it is explained by the lack of journalists due to the “high cost” of hiring professional journalists and a chronic lack of money (AEM, 2018: 80-81).

As it is the case in all local communities, the relationship between local politicians, businesspersons, media owners and journalists can be very complex (AEM, 2018: 101-102). Our research has shown that the tourist boards of some local communities know how to act as a kind of centre of power that decides whether, how and to what extent they should cooperate with the local radio. Due to the fact that the institutional actors of Croatian tourism (of national, regional and local significance) are also the official sources of interesting media content, the professional interest of journalists is completely expected. However, the media can do much more than simply carrying out daily information-delivery tasks. The potential synergy between radio stations and tourist boards would certainly contribute to improving the promotion of the destination, especially in Covid and post-Covid times. The research showed that many broadcasters call for contractual and remunerated professional cooperation, with special emphasis on local tourist boards, as well as the support of the Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media.

In the context of the role of radio in informing visitors and promoting the destination, it is worth reminding again that more than half of the visitors of Adriatic Croatia arrive at the destination in their own cars. During their holidays, more than half of the visitors go on excursions (54%) and about 70% of them use their own vehicle or a rented car (Thomas Hrvatska, 2020: 39). During longer rides to national parks, nature parks, archaeological sites and other more distant destinations, the powerful habit of listening to car radio receivers provides an opportunity to place news, promotional and storytelling content.

The use of digital platforms, that is, one’s own web and profile pages in order to promote current tourist content, is rather rare and weak. Although all editors consider web and profile pages to be a valuable radio “supplement” suitable for promoting tourist content, they are actually used by a small number of radio stations. The most common reason for this is the lack of funds, and consequently the shortage of professional staff. However, some editors doubt that it is justified to invest in content that “can be found on all portals anyway”.

Radio is primarily an auditory medium, hence spoken language is of particular importance. Despite the fact that 90% of the total number of arrivals and overnight

stays during 2019 were realized by foreign tourists in the area of Adriatic Croatia (Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 2020), there is little radio content in foreign languages. The current Electronic Media Law [Law on Electronic Media-ZEM] obliges the use of the Croatian language and Latin script, but “media service providers may broadcast informative programme and service information for the needs of foreign guests in the languages according to the representation of foreign guests in the area of its concession.” (ZEM, 2009, Art. 4, Para. 5). The Electronic Media Agency claims that no radio broadcaster has so far asked for permission to broadcast certain spoken parts of its programme in a foreign language. The law does not allow broadcasting the entire programme in a foreign language, yet:

... news programme and service information within the programme can definitely be broadcast in a foreign language. The broadcasting of such a programme depends on the capacity of the broadcaster to have such a programme (availability of journalists who speak foreign languages, etc.) and the potential listenership of such a programme. (AEM, 2020).

Many editors would love to have this kind of programming, but they cannot afford it. These are jobs that combine journalistic-editorial, translation and vocal competencies. The lack of use of foreign languages is noticeable on radio websites and radio profile pages as well.

Even during tourist seasons, the airwaves of the Adriatic Croatia are quite “deaf” to foreign languages. This makes the role of Croatian Radio, with its long tradition of producing content in foreign languages, ever so prominent. The first programmes in Italian, Hungarian and Slovak were broadcast after the Second World War with the aim of providing information to ethnic minorities, but also the foreign audience in the country (embassies, foreign companies, foreign students, *etc.*). In the independent Republic of Croatia, daily newscasts in English have been broadcast on the First Channel since 2000. Today, all regional centres of Croatian Radio have their own production of news in foreign languages. However, this content is created by editors who are employed on a permanent basis to carry out specifically these tasks.

Newscasts in a foreign language are not seasonal and are broadcast every day. Seasonal information in a foreign language boils down to service information of the Croatian Auto Club (HAK), which is broadcast in the summer scheme from 15 June to 15 September in English, German and Italian. (HRT-HR, 2021).

In addition to the news, Radio Osijek has a daily 25-minute mosaic programme in Hungarian and a thirty-minute weekly programme in Slovak. Radio Pula has a ten-minute Sunday religious programme in Italian. The scope of this research is regional programming in its entirety, rather than an analysis of the listenership of in-

dividual shows. Therefore, there are no specific indicators of the extent to which these shows are listened to. The only indicators are individual reports by listeners who largely approve of content in foreign languages (HRT-HR, 2021).

At this point, it is worth reminding that multilingual policy is one of the fundamental principles of the functioning of the European Union, which protects the rich European linguistic diversity and promotes the learning of foreign languages. However, the legal status of these languages and the support they receive depend on the governments of individual member states. (European Union, 2021).

Conclusion

The recovery of Croatia's tourism should be viewed through two phases. The duration of each of these two phases can only be assumed, rather than determined with accuracy. The first phase is the one that is currently underway and is dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous restrictions and epidemiological measures, while the second one will be marked by the recovery from the consequences of the pandemic and efforts to reaffirm Croatia's tourism. The imperative of the first phase is survival, *i.e.*, adapting tourism to extraordinary circumstances. The second phase will be by far more complex and will require "harmonization of data, activities, policies and measures, along with the need for closer collaboration between practitioners and policy makers and scholars, both universities and research organizations" (Čorak, Boranić Živoder and Marušić, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic, which threatens the collapse of one of the most important industries, raises our awareness of the fact that the solution should be searched for through cooperative behaviour. The reliance of visitors of Adriatic Croatia on their cars, and especially the data on their habit of listening to the radio, obliges us to redefine the present-day role of radio in Croatia's tourism. The potential exposure of visitors to domestic radio channels indicates that radio channels, whether FM or (future) digital broadcasting, ought to be employed in a better way. In the current, but also post-Covid circumstances, which are likely to result in major changes in terms of arrivals, stays and habits of the tourists in Adriatic Croatia, any kind of help is welcome. It is for the general well-being of local communities that cooperation is an imperative, not just an option.

Finally, it is worth reminding that people are connected by technology as well. The implementation of DAB+ concerns all residents of Croatia, all its tourists and all tourist entities, both public and private. The possibilities of digital broadcasting are so wide that, in addition to broadcaster and traffic options, DAB+ can easily be used for tourism purposes. Specialized tourist and/or nautical channels, including the possibility of multilingualism, are just one of the content options to which the Min-

istry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Croatia should pay attention. As Patrick Hannon, President of WorldDAB (2020), put it: “We need clear messages about DAB+ and the benefits for listeners, broadcasters and policy makers”.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ There were 5,017 enterprises operating as radio broadcaster across the European Union (EU) in 2017. This is 300 fewer than in the previous year and 11% fewer than the 5,641 enterprises in 2013. (Eurostat, 2020, Feb 13).
 - ² Streaming (or stream) is a way of distributing radio programming (in real time) via the Internet.
 - ³ Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Osijek, Dubrovnik, Pula, Zadar, Knin.
 - ⁴ WorldDAB is a not-for-profit association with legal personality governed by Swiss law and by its Statutes. WorldDAB has over 100 member organisations gathering 1300+ digital radio experts from 32 countries across the world, representing public and commercial radio broadcasters, media regulators, broadcast network providers, and manufacturers of receivers, chips, professional equipment and automobiles.
 - ⁵ The French national regulator *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA) decided that on 15 July 2021, the strategic implementation of DAB+ in France would begin. Twenty-five broadcasters were selected, including six national radio stations.
 - ⁶ The Croatian Chamber of Economy (abbreviation HGK) is an independent professional and business organization, which promotes, represents and coordinates the common interests of its members in Croatia and abroad.
 - ⁷ The Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (abbreviation HAKOM) is the national non-profit regulatory agency. Its founder is the Republic of Croatia, and the founding rights are held by the Croatian Parliament and the Government.
 - ⁸ OIV - Digital Signals and Networks is a state-owned company. They cover all types of content transmission through network channels and allow the greatest reach in the national area or satellite beyond borders.
 - ⁹ Any car radio receiver integrated in a new vehicle of category M which is made available on the market for sale or rent in the Union from 21 December 2020 shall comprise a receiver capable of receiving and reproducing at least radio services provided via digital terrestrial radio broadcasting (EECC, Anex 11)
 - ¹⁰ The Fund for the Promotion of Pluralism and Diversity of Electronic Media is part of the Agency for Electronic Media. The financial resources of the Fund are provided by the Law on Croatian Radio and Television (3% of revenues from the RTV fee).
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Radio u promociji hrvatskog turizma: doba pandemije bolesti COVID-19 i poslije

Marina Mučalo
Anita Šulentić

SAŽETAK

Radio je tradicionalno popularan medij koji i danas ima kontinuiran i stabilan auditorij. Digitalno doba donijelo mu je nove tehničko-tehnološke mogućnosti i multimedijalnost, ali i intenzivnu afirmaciju digitalnog audio odašiljanja (DAB+). Republika Hrvatska jedna je od vodećih europskih auto-destinacija. Većina gostiju i dosad je stizala osobnim vozilima koje su tijekom odmora često koristili i za izlete. Naviku slušanja radijskog programa tijekom vožnje i danas konzumira gotovo pola stanovnika Europske unije. Stoga bi napori uloženi u ostvarenje čim boljih turističkih rezultata morali uključivati i radijske postaje, osobito na području Jadranske Hrvatske. Rad donosi nalaze kvalitativnog istraživanja koje je tijekom siječnja i veljače 2021. provedeno na radijskim postajama čije je sjedište upravo na tom području (N=49). Cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi dosadašnji radijski angažman u produkciji sadržaja ciljno namijenjenih domaćim i stranim turistima, način i dinamiku suradnje s turističkim subjektima na području emitiranja te potencijal korištenja radija u postpandemijskoj turističkoj sezoni. Istraživanju se odazvalo 28 radijskih urednika (56 %). Svi smatraju radio dobrim medijem za turističku promociju, ali nalazi ukazuju na manjkavost ponude informativnih i promotivnih turističkih sadržaja. Najčešći su razlozi nepovoljne financijske i kadrovske okolnosti. Sinergijom turističkih subjekata i radijskih postaja, radio bi se mogao pokazati pouzdanim poslovnim partnerom.

Ključne riječi: turizam, COVID-19, auto-destinacija, FM radio, DAB+