

Secção Temática/Thematic Section/Sección Temática. Artigos/Articles/Artículos

Rádio Comercial Ukraine Audio Contents: An Inclusion Channel to Welcome and Support War Refugees in Portugal

Conteúdos Áudio da Rádio Comercial Ucrânia: Um Canal de Inclusão Para o Acolhimento e Apoio de Refugiados de Guerra em Portugal
Audio Contenidos de Radio Comercial Ucrania: Un Canal de Inclusión Para la Acogida y el Apoyo a los Refugiados de Guerra en Portugal

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Abstract In the early hours of February 24th, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, sparking war and a massive refugee crisis. Many Ukrainians fled to neighbouring and distant European countries, including Portugal. During conflicts, radio always assumed a fundamental role either as an instrument for propaganda, or as a vehicle of information, dissemination, and humanitarian support. With Ukrainian radios struggling, stations from other countries began to mobilize as replacing news polls. The Portuguese web radio Comercial Ukraine was an example of solidarity and community collaboration. Launched on March 16th, 2022, its mission was twofold: providing news, interviews, and Ukrainian/Portuguese music while connecting refugees with aid organizations like the Jesuit Refugee Service and the Ukrainian Association. Beyond online streaming, it offered in its beginning months, four thematic “podcasts” covering Portuguese lessons (nine), legal advice (10), psychological support (14), and interviews with professionals assisting refugees. Guests (59) included Ukrainian artists, media figures, and companies offering job opportunities. This study used a qualitative approach, combining content analysis, non-participation observation of two live morning programmes, from which the contents were taken for the podcast format, and four semi-structured interviews to examine how Rádio Comercial Ukraine supported the inclusion of Ukrainian war refugees in Portugal. Online audio episodes published from March to June 2022, focusing on refugee integration, were analysed. The interviews were conducted with key figures, including Media Capital Radio's CEO, Salvador Ribeiro, Rádio Comercial's news director (and Rádio Comercial Ukraine's editor) Nuno Castilho de Matos, and the two podcast hosts: Marcos Fernandes and Viktoriya Starchenko.

Keywords: Podcast, Web Radio, War, Ukraine, Community.

Resumo Na madrugada de 24 de fevereiro de 2022, a Rússia invadiu a Ucrânia, desencadeando uma guerra e uma enorme crise de refugiados. Muitos ucranianos fugiram para países europeus vizinhos e distantes, incluindo Portugal. Durante os conflitos, a rádio sempre assumiu um papel fundamental, seja como instrumento de propaganda, seja como veículo de informação, divulgação e apoio humanitário. Com as rádios ucranianas em dificuldades, estações de outros países começaram a mobilizar-se para substituir as fontes de notícias. A rádio web portuguesa Comercial Ucrânia foi um ex-

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emplo de solidariedade e colaboração comunitária. Lançada a 16 de março de 2022, a sua missão era dupla: fornecer notícias, entrevistas e música ucraniana/portuguesa, enquanto ligava os refugiados a organizações de ajuda humanitária, como o Serviço Jesuíta aos Refugiados e a Associação Ucraniana. Além da transmissão online, ofereceu nos seus primeiros meses quatro “podcasts” temáticos que abrangiam aulas de português (nove), aconselhamento jurídico (10), apoio psicológico (14) e entrevistas com profissionais que prestam assistência a refugiados. Entre os convidados (59) contavam-se artistas ucranianos, figuras mediáticas e empresas que ofereciam oportunidades de emprego. Este estudo utilizou uma abordagem qualitativa, combinando análise de conteúdo, observação não participante de dois programas matinais ao vivo, dos quais foram retirados os conteúdos para o formato de podcast, e quatro entrevistas semiestruturadas para examinar como a Rádio Comercial Ucrânia apoiou a inclusão de refugiados de guerra ucranianos em Portugal. Foram analisados episódios de áudio online publicados entre março e junho de 2022, com foco na integração dos refugiados. As entrevistas foram realizadas com figuras-chave, incluindo o CEO da Media Capital Rádio, Salvador Ribeiro, o diretor de notícias da Rádio Comercial (e editor da Rádio Comercial Ucrânia) Nuno Castilho de Matos e os dois apresentadores do podcast: Marcos Fernandes e Viktoriya Starchenko.

Palavras-chave: Podcast, Webrádio, Guerra, Ucrânia, Comunidade.

Resumen En las primeras horas del 24 de febrero de 2022, Rusia invadió Ucrania, lo que desencadenó una guerra y una crisis masiva de refugiados. Muchos ucranianos huyeron a países europeos vecinos y lejanos, entre ellos Portugal. Durante los conflictos, la radio siempre ha desempeñado un papel fundamental, ya sea como instrumento de propaganda o como vehículo de información, difusión y apoyo humanitario. Ante las dificultades de las radios ucranianas, emisoras de otros países comenzaron a movilizarse para sustituir las encuestas de noticias. La radio web portuguesa Comercial Ucrania fue un ejemplo de solidaridad y colaboración comunitaria. Lanzada el 16 de marzo de 2022, su misión era doble: proporcionar noticias, entrevistas y música ucraniana/portuguesa, al tiempo que conectaba a los refugiados con organizaciones de ayuda como el Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados y la Asociación Ucraniana. Más allá de la transmisión en línea, en sus primeros meses ofreció cuatro “podcasts” temáticos que abarcaban lecciones de portugués (nueve), asesoramiento jurídico (10), apoyo psicológico (14) y entrevistas con profesionales que prestan asistencia a los refugiados. Entre los invitados (59) se encontraban artistas ucranianos, personalidades de los medios de comunicación y empresas que ofrecían oportunidades de empleo. Este estudio utilizó un enfoque cualitativo, combinando el análisis de contenidos, la observación no participativa de dos programas matutinos en directo, de los que se extrajeron los contenidos para el formato de podcast, y cuatro entrevistas semiestruturadas para examinar cómo Radio Comercial Ucrania apoyó la inclusión de los refugiados de guerra ucranianos en Portugal. Se analizaron los episodios de audio en línea publicados entre marzo y junio de 2022, centrados en la integración de los refugiados. Las entrevistas se realizaron a figuras clave, como el director general de Media Capital Radio, Salvador Ribeiro, el director de noticias de Rádio Comercial (y editor de Rádio Comercial Ucrania), Nuno Castilho de Matos, y los dos presentadores del podcast: Marcos Fernandes y Viktoriya Starchenko.

Palabras clave: Podcast, Webradio, Guerra, Ucrania, Comunidad.

1. Introduction

Since its early days, radio has served as a vital medium for information, communication, and entertainment, particularly throughout the 20th century. As a source of news, it always provided timely and accessible updates to mass audiences, especially before the widespread adoption of television (Crisell, 1994). At the same time, it has also played — and continues to play — a fundamental role as a tool for education and cultural formation (Girard, 1992). In this context, as UNESCO stated, radio must be regarded as a medium of social integration, acting as an instrument of socialization and acculturation, as well as an educational platform for the transmission and reinforcement of language, and collective identities (Allen & Anzalone, 1978).

Nevertheless, radio has also long been used as a tool in times of war to shape public opinion and influence the conflict's outcomes (Grant & Stone-Davis, 2013). In battle regions, radio broadcasts allow for mass dissemination of information and ideas, assuming a fundamental role as an instrument for propaganda. In the past, various countries used radio to spread their messages, like the German government, under Adolf Hitler's regime, but also under the allied countries, such as England, United States, France or even the Soviet Union. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), for instance, played a crucial role in broadcasting news, information, and morale-boosting messages to the occupied territories and resistance groups (Jeanneney, 1996). Few years later, during the Cold War, radio also acted as “an important part in the ideological confrontation between East and West (...) when Radio broadcasts could penetrate the Iron Curtain and directly address the ‘enemy’” (Risso, 2013, p. 145).

Although it has been — and continues to be — widely used as a tool for propaganda (Briant & Jones, 2025; Kuyucu, 2014) that is not its primary function, has already mentioned. In times of catastrophes, such as hurricanes, earthquakes, or floods, radio stations have also proven to be a lifeline for affected communities (Hugelius et al., 2019). They have facilitated real-time communication, helping to connect people across distances. Its wide reach, reliability, and aptitude to provide localized information, enables it to deliver immediate updates, emergency warnings, and a sense of community support during times of crisis (Rahman et al., 2021).

For instance, during hurricane Katrina, in 2005, New Orleans local radio broadcasters played a crucial role in disseminating evacuation instructions and coordinating rescue efforts (Moody, 2009). On the other side of the world, other models could be cited like the Australian ABC Radio which has been fundamental “in providing disaster coverage during bushfires, cyclones, and floods” (Freeman et al., 2017, p. 342). This station “broadcasted

emergency warnings, evacuation instructions, and information on emergency shelters” and “has been a reliable source of critical updates, helping communities stay informed and make informed decisions” (Freeman et al., 2017, p. 342). Likewise humanitarian Radio Okapi (<https://www.radiookapi.net/>), operated by the United Nations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, offers information and educational programs for local communities, in addition to helping to promote peace, stability and human rights in the country.

Besides traditional radio broadcasters, new advancements in technology, such as the internet and social media have been also means to expand the information reach and impact. Nowadays, non-state actors can explore various online platforms to share data or reports, humanitarian help during war times or natural disasters.

2. Methodology

Following a brief overview of the role played by foreign radio stations in supporting Ukraine since Russia's invasion in February 2022, this study focuses on the Portuguese web-based station Rádio Comercial Ukraine. Attention is given to its audio contents, which were swiftly developed to disseminate practical information intended to assist Ukrainian refugees arriving in Portugal.

To achieve this objective, the research employed a multi-method approach, including:

1. The listening to and analysis of broadcasting between March 16th — marking the launch of Rádio Comercial Ukraine — and June 22nd, 2022, a period during which the number of Ukrainians arrivals in Portugal was increasing. This timeframe was selected to provide a representative sample encompassing the first three months of programming and podcast content uploaded in the Rádio Comercial website^[1].
2. Non-participant observation of two live morning programmes (from which the contents were taken for the “podcast” format), aired on May 4th and 11th. These dates were chosen in coordination with the presenters based on their availability. The researcher was present in the studio during the broadcasting, with the aim of more effectively describing, understanding, and characterising the presenters' performances, the structure of the morning show, and the content delivered by this web-based radio station.
3. Four in-depth, semi-structured interviews following a script of open questions with key stakeholders involved in the initiative — namely, the CEO of Media Capital Rádios, who endorsed the project from its inception; the news director of Rádio Comercial, who served as the principal operational manager of the new web radio; and the two programme presenters, who were the primary voices of the station.

The investigation contemplated the mapping of the Rádio Comercial Ukraine's podcast's initial four months, and its content analysis, trying to answer to the following research questions:

1. What are its audio contents most recurring contents?
2. Are they podcasts or audio extensions of a web radio?
3. Do these podcasts fulfill a social function?

Ethical guidelines were applied throughout the research process: informed consent was obtained from interview participants.

Regarding non-participant observation, particular care was taken to avoid influencing the natural flow of the programmes, and only publicly available content was observed and analysed.

3. Radio Support to the Ukrainian Refugees: The Case of Rádio Comercial Ukraine (Україна)

Since February 24th, 2022, when Russia started its military offensive on Ukraine, thousands of Ukrainians left their country, generating a refugee's gigantic migratory flow not only to neighbouring countries, but also to distant European countries such as Portugal.

The Russian government stopped radio and TV broadcasts in Kharkiv soon after the first bombings. With most Ukrainian stations facing transmission difficulties, radios from other countries began to mobilize as news hubs: the BBC returned to broadcasting a short-wave signal ("BBC Revives Shortwave Radio Dispatches in Ukraine, and Draws Ire of Russia", 2022), becoming a vehicle of information for the Ukrainian population and Russian, as well as the Spanish Radio Exterior de España, which also started transmitting on short wave to Ukraine and Russia (Panorama Audiovisual, 2022).

In Prague, the new Radio Ukrajina (<https://radioukrajina.cz/>) began delivering information and music programming tailored to the needs of refugees arriving in the Czech Republic and, in Poland, the Ukrainian section of *Radio Spółka Akcyjna* (Polish public radio) started broadcasting three daily newscasts on Ukrainian to inform those who could not be informed otherwise (*Polish Radio Broadcasting for Ukrainians*, 2022).

Portugal also contributed to this information "war effort". On March 16th, 2022, the voices of Viktoriya Starchenko and Marcos Fernandes began to be listened on Rádio Comercial Ukraine, a pop-up radio station^[2] spoken in Ukrainian and Portuguese languages, with a charitable nature.

According to Rádio Comercial's CEO, Salvador Ribeiro,

this web radio was born to fulfil a double challenge: on the one hand, to be a vehicle of useful information, with news, interviews, spaces for legal, social and psychological support and music (essentially Ukrainian and Portuguese); on the other hand, to bridge the hundreds of refugees arriving in our country and the organizations that could help them here, namely The Refugees Support Platform (PAR) of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), the Migration High Commission, the Ukraine Association and its Embassy. (Salvador Ribeiro interview — April 26th, 2022)

Rádio Comercial Ukraine may be considered a web radio since, as Pedro Portela (2011) mentioned, one can have access to the linear radio broadcast without the need for transmission via radio or satellite. It is hosted in the Rádio Comercial website, the most listened-to Portuguese broadcasting network. Currently, this nationwide private music station has eighteen broadcasters spread across the country, securing national audience leadership since 2012 (Curvelo, 2021). It is a hot adult contemporary channel, targeting individuals between 25 and 45 years old. Regarding Rádio Comercial Ukraine online broadcast, it does not have its own site or social media, neither can it be listened in platforms such as Spotify or Apple podcasts.

To understand one of the reasons of this Portuguese aid, one must have in mind the recent history of Ukrainian migrations to Portugal, remembering its key dates: in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine became one of the newly independent states in Eastern Europe, although economic crises led many Ukrainians to emigrate.

Host Viktoriya Starchenko's father came to Portugal in 1998, since Ukraine was going through a period of huge inflation and he did not have enough money, as an engineer, to support his family in Iziium, a village near Kharkiv. As she remembers "in those days, after the Soviet Union Fall, factories started to close, people lost their jobs, and those who were still employed felt a great decline in their salaries" (Viktoria Starchenko interview — May 4th, 2022).

A new focus of emigration would happen in 2014, with the Crimea's invasion and annexation by Russia. According to the National Foreign Service and Borders (SEF), by February 2022 there were already 27,200 Ukrainians living in Portugal, even before the invasion of Russia (Redação DN, 2022). According to the same source, one month later, Ukrainian community became the second largest resident in Portugal. Also, by this time, 18,400 Ukrainian citizens have asked Portugal for temporary protection (Redação DN, 2022). Salvador Ribeiro deems that

Rádio Comercial could not remain indifferent to the tragedy that was plaguing the Ukrainian people and decided to contribute with what it

knows best: radio. This project is radio being radio, that is, a way of connecting people who arrive to people who are already here.

Moreover, Rádio Comercial realized that what prevented people who arrived at Portugal from having access to some services was communication and nothing better than us, as a communication channel, to bridge this gap (...). We want to connect those who arrive and those who want to welcome, uniting demand and supply. (Salvador Ribeiro interview — April 26th, 2022)

Nuno Castilho de Matos, news director, also reinforced this idea, by referring that they “wanted to support, to help, to be the humanitarian part of the situation” (Nuno Castilho de Matos interview — April 26th, 2022).

Pursuing these goals, on March 16th, Rádio Comercial Ukraine (Україна) started its bilingual web programming (in Ukrainian and Portuguese) pursuing the aim of being a solidarity radio that supports the Ukrainian community integration in Portugal. Therefore, its main purpose was to provide useful information like the services and support available for refugees arriving in Portugal, news about what was happening in Ukraine, daily interviews, testimonials from Ukrainians, not forgetting Ukrainian, Portuguese, and Anglo-Saxon music.

We were not interested in doing political analysis: those who are fleeing war, those who are refugees...they don't want to know about geopolitics, they want to understand what kind of help can they get here, what psychological, legal, social support can they have, what can this country offer them (...) this is the most precious information that someone can have as a refugee. (Salvador Ribeiro interview — April 26th, 2022)

To feed this agenda with trustworthy info, it was necessary to have impartial partners on board. That is why Rádio Comercial Ukraine team only released information from credible sources, namely the Refugee Support Platform (PAR) of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), the Migrations High Commissioner, the Ukrainian Association, and its Embassy. These were, simultaneously, the informants, curators, and institutional affiliates of all contents aired.

We could never forget that we were on a mission in a war environment, at a time when information is also a war appetizing ingredient (...) Since we do not master the language (...) for us it was very clear that whoever came to speak to our microphones would have to go through the sieve of a suitable institution. (Salvador Ribeiro interview — April 26th, 2022)

The morning live programme was delivered by a small team. It featured two presenters: Ukrainian Viktoriya Starchenko and Portuguese Marcos Fernandes. The team also comprised news director Nuno Castilho de Matos and journalist Irineu Teixeira. The broadcast aired daily from 08:00 to 11:00 (Portuguese time).

Its structure combined informative, cultural, and entertainment components. Each edition featured a daily interview, subsequently repurposed in podcast format, and a recurring segment offering commentary and contextualisation of the war in Ukraine by journalist Irineu Teixeira, who contributed twice per broadcast. Additional sections included short features on Portuguese and Ukrainian cultural curiosities, as well as weather reports for both countries. The programme also foregrounded Ukrainian music, interspersed with practical information, brief news summaries, and lighter factual content. Finally, it systematically highlighted solidarity initiatives, thus reinforcing its role as both a communicative and integrative platform for Ukrainian refugees in Portugal.

As hosts, we did not present any data on war casualties. That was the journalist's role: he was the responsible for reporting what was happening on the ground. We didn't even have a top of the hour news bulletin (...) we focused our attention on disclaiming information that could help, motivate, and integrate those arriving to Portugal. (Marcos Fernandes interview — May 4th, 2022)

According to an interview given by Nuno Castilho de Matos to Revista Business Portugal, the songs broadcasted “were chosen in detail so that the community could feel that they were somehow at home and welcomed. We also had exclusives of Ukrainian artists who joined the broadcast to play songs only for the Rádio Comercial Ukraine listeners” (Revista Business Portugal, 2022, para. 5).

Marcos Fernandes also mentioned that there was even the concern of “recording liners with useful information, featured in Ukrainian, to be aired between songs” (Marcos Fernandes interview — May 4th, 2022). The interviews were carried out by the station voices — Viktoriya Starchenko and Marcos Fernandes — who spoke every day with institution's professionals or representatives dedicated to helping those fleeing war, such as the Foreigners and Borders Service, *Cáritas Portuguesa*^[3], the Refugees Support Platforms (PAR), We Help Ukraine platform^[4], Refujob.pt^[5], the associations I Help Ukrain^[6] or UAPT Ukrainian Refugees^[7], parishes and town halls, Ukrainian communities throughout the country, or the Orange Helmets, a nucleus of psychologists, just to name a few. The interview space also welcomed Ukrainian artists, media professionals from Kyiv, Ukrainians in Portugal sharing their integration experiences, and companies offering jobs and support to refugees.

The other 20 hours of the programming were filled with music, and rotation segments, broadcasted once per hour, which provided a structured set of recurring features designed to combine practical guidance with cultural and social content. These includ-

ed sections dedicated to juridical and legal support, psychological care, and Portuguese spoken-language classes, each of which was also made available in podcast format for extended accessibility. Alongside these services, the programme incorporated testimonies from Ukrainian refugees, offering first-hand accounts of displacement and adaptation, as well as short informative liners containing useful advice for everyday life in Portugal. In addition, the show regularly presented features on Portuguese history and culture, thereby fostering intercultural understanding between the host society and the refugee community.

Regarding this web radio format, one cannot affirm that it is a news station. In the words of Nuno Castilho de Matos,

it's a radio with useful information for its target audience (...) We don't want to be a political radio; we don't want to get involved in the conflict (...) In musical terms it cannot be classified as AC [adult contemporary] or Hot AC [hot adult contemporary]. It is a generalist radio also in music, there are no segmentations, it must be inclusive. (Nuno Castilho de Matos interview — April 26th, 2022)

Using the typology established by Miguel Midões (2019) concerning the main characteristics of community radio stations, it can be stated that this is a useful information radio, communitarian in its objectives, accessible and non-profitable. The author emphasises that community radios are

holders of a communicational objective common to the community; they give voice to minorities (...), they are a local interest's safeguard (...) they ensure and reflect cultural and linguistic diversity (...) allow to be a communication tool for the development (...) and are non-profit. (Midões, 2019, p. 167)

Considering its main target, it reached mainly Ukrainian refugees arriving in Portugal, Ukrainian community living in Portugal, Portuguese people and institutions that wanted to help those displaced by war. By April 24th, 2022, the web radio had already reached 20,000 listeners, in more than 25 countries all over the world, mostly from Portugal, followed by Ukraine, France, United States and Germany (Cavaca, 2022).

Before analysing the “podcasts” of Rádio Comercial Ukraine, it is important to acknowledge that other Portuguese radio stations — such as *Renascença*, *Observador*, Antena 1, and TSF — also made efforts to inform Ukrainian refugees through their news bulletins, special programmes, or podcasts. However, as the objective of this research is not to undertake a comparative analysis, the content of the previously mentioned stations will not be studied.

4. Rádio Comercial Ukraine's Podcasts

In the aftermath of the war's outbreak, significant numbers of Ukrainians sought refuge in Portugal, requiring both support and

accurate information about the host country. In response, Rádio Comercial rapidly established a web radio to meet those needs. Accordingly, and in line with Marcos Fernandes (interview — May 4th, 2022), “the podcast was not a priority during the web radio's first days”, because they “only started to put audio contents in this format in the third week, and since [we] didn't have enough people, they didn't suffer any edition process”. That is why, as it will be stated, these audio contents only share some of the main podcast's characteristics and, therefore they cannot be considered native podcasts. Recalling Richard Berry (2006), the author states that podcasts are “audio content created in mp3 format that users can subscribe to and receive at home, download and listen to on different devices” (p. 157). Tiziano Bonini (2015) mentions that

podcasting is a technology used to distribute, receive, and listen, on-demand, to sound content produced by traditional editors such as radio, publishing houses, journalists, and educational institutions (...) as well as content created by independent radio producers, artists, and radio amateurs. (p. 21)

According to Sellas (2012), radio was the first media which offered its show's podcasts, followed by newspapers, back in 2004, by channels such as BBC, Canadian CBC, and ABC, along with other stations associated with the US National Public Radio (NPR) consortium. Nevertheless, the audio format only started to be more popularized all over the world in the “golden era for podcasting” (Berry, 2015, p. 170) or, as Bonini (2015) names it, “the second era of podcasting” (p. 21), soon after the launch of NPR's “Serial”, in 2014, with very expressive audiences. From this time on, and thanks to the growing ubiquity of smartphone and social networks, we've assisted to “the transformation of podcasting into a commercial productive practice and a medium for mass consumption” (Bonini, 2015, p. 21). According to Kischinhevsky (2017), this was also the moment when podcasting gained “massive audiences, not only with entertainment but above all with information” (p. 7). The author recalls that the core of this phenomenon was the U.S. sound media market, where public broadcasting, like NPR, began hosting large-scale independent productions.

In Ana Isabel Reis' opinion, the “use of podcast by radio stations and newspapers is a way to expand their stories” and “a strategy that can be facilitated by the current panorama of media ownership, dominated by the concentration of media” (Reis, 2018, p. 211). The same author states that “podcasts are effectively a means of disseminating interviews, debates, and comments (by traditional media), and can act as a tool to encourage reader participation” (Reis, 2018, p. 211).

The Portuguese news radio TSF was the first to create podcasts, a strategy later followed by other media, namely newspapers. *Ex-*

pressa was the first Portuguese newspaper to present audio formats on the website and with innovative features (Reis, 2018).

In the specific case of the web Rádio Comercial Ukraine, it used the podcasting as an audio tool to support fragile communities escaping from war, playing an important role, as we will see, on providing essential data and services to the newcomers, information integration, language classes, cultural orientation, and psychosocial support.

Tables 1 and 2 show two of the four section's audio contents hosted on Rádio Comercial's website which as a section named Rádio Comercial Ukraine. These segments were the same as those broadcasted in the web station during its first four months, from March 16th to June 22nd, 2022. They were pre-recorded for a radio format, not for a podcast one, they were not designed to be podcasts, only replying to the web radio content. In other words, they are not "native podcasts, planned from production to be published directly on the internet (Oliveira et al., 2023, p. 97).

Table 1 Psychological Support Podcasts

Main Topics	Duration
How to deal with panic attacks	4' 16"
Cultural shock	2' 49"
Children	3'58"
How to assess emotional stability	2'
Emotional stability	1'55"
Inner strength and resilience	3'
Separated families	4' 14"
How to deal with the war news	3' 46"
How to deal with sadness	3' 26"
Ukrainian children adaptation to Portuguese schools	4'11"
Importance of learning the Portuguese language	4'42"
Adaptation to a different country (Portugal)	3'25"
Understanding the self	3'02"
Importance of reacting/not being isolated	3'09"

Table 2 Juridical Support Podcast

Main Topics	Duration
Minors	1'46"
Right to employment	1'39"
Documentation	2'42"
Families of various nationalities	1'39"
Student enrolment	1'12"
Taxpayer number, social security number, national health assurance	1'39"
Income and status	1'20"
Family allowance	2'37"
Prebirth allowance	1'04"
Social insertion income	1'34"

Also, they were not allocated on platforms such as Spotify or Apple Podcasts, only in the Rádio Comercial website and app, as it was already mentioned.

Presented by a Ukrainian psychotherapist, in Ukrainian, the aim of the psychological section (14 episodes) was to give some mental health advice and help to the affected Ukrainian communities who were arriving at Portugal, by seeking to address the main problems experienced by those who left their country to flee the war: "dealing with sadness and fear, panic attacks, giving advice about the importance of not being isolated at home, or guidance on how to tell children what was happening in Ukraine" (Marcos Fernandes interview — May 4th, 2022). This section's duration was short, varying between two to four minutes: it started with a psychological problem identification, followed by some advice on how to deal with it. Despite being only 14 episodes, they all rotated during the day on the web radio throughout its first four months, which correspond to the time scope of the present investigation.

The same can be stated about the juridical support section (10): few episodes but in a daily rotation. Also presented in Ukrainian, by a Ukrainian lawyer living in Portugal since 2012, this section's goal was to give some legal advice to the same communities, regarding juridical, social and health documentation and family's allowances. In comparison with the psychological section, fewer episodes were aired, and its duration was also shorter, varying between one to two minutes.

Regarding the Portuguese spoken-language classes segment, with a typical duration of approximately one minute and five seconds to two minutes and 26 seconds, focused on essential language skills for refugees. The classes (only nine episodes) were structured around key topics, beginning with Portuguese greet-

ings and progressing to basic and action-oriented expressions. Learners were also introduced to basic Portuguese vocabulary, as well as important locations such as hospitals, police stations, supermarkets, pharmacies, and embassies. Additional content included numbers, days of the week, and names of garments in Portuguese. This modular approach aimed to equip refugees with practical linguistic tools for daily interactions in Portugal. This Portuguese classes' section was presented by a Ukrainian teacher living in Portugal for several years, and it was the only bilingual one. Also, with few episodes, they were repeated during the programming's 24 hours.

As we may see, the larger number of this short audio contents was about psychological support (14), followed by juridical advice (10). Portuguese spoken language classes had only nine episodes between March and June. According to Nuno Castilho de Matos these numbers can be explained with the audience's needs: "people needed psychological help since they were escaping from a war. They also required needed legal and social advice, and there were several lawyer's offices that showed their willingness to do *pro bono* work" (Nuno Castilho de Matos interview — April 26th, 2022).

Regarding the interviews (listened by the author during May and June 2022), also available to every listener in a podcast format allocated on the website cited above, as they were translated into Portuguese or Ukrainian, depending on the guest's nationality, they had a much longer time length. According to the Portuguese presenter Marcos Fernandes "they were pre-recorded and edited for the morning show" (Marcos Fernandes interview — May 4th, 2022). Although they started short in March, its duration quickly began to be extended, mainly in May and June. They all started with a Ukrainian introduction and first questions by Viktoria Starchenko if the personality invited was Ukrainian and, after five or six minutes, this conversation first part would be shortly translated into Portuguese by Marcos Fernandes. The interview continued in Ukrainian during more four or five minutes and was later translated again into Portuguese. The opposite order occurred when the guest only spoke in Portuguese.

For a more accurate analysis, the interviews were grouped in nine categories: Institutional partners, non-partner entities, lawyers/jurists, volunteering, public and private support, health, life stories, artists, and media. The first three category's interviews are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 **Institutional Partners, Non-Partners Entities and Lawyers**

Categories	Guests	Language	Month	Duration
Institutional partners	Inna Ohnivets, extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ukraine ambassador to the Portuguese republic	Ukrainian	March	8'
	André Costa Jorge, The Refugee Support Platform of the Jesuit Refugee Service	Portuguese	March	23'55"
	Viktorya Kuznietsova, Ukrainian consul	Ukrainian	March	6'19"
	Ivan Muzychak, President of the Ukrainians in Portugal Association (the case of Porto)	Bilingual	May	24'36"
	Inna Ohnivets, extraordinary and plenipotentiary Ukraine ambassador to the Portuguese republic	Bilingual	May	29'28"
	André Costa Jorge, PAR/ JRS (World Refugee Day)	Bilingual	June	33'59"
Non partners entities	Vlad Martyniuk, SEF (foreign service and borders) inspector	Ukrainian	March	11'
	Nuno Félix, tax authority general deputy director	Portuguese	March	8'20"
	Ana Mocho, Portuguese banks association	Bilingual	April	17'19"
	Catarina Marcelino, social security institute president	Bilingual	April	27'44"
	Sofia Sousa, European Commission representative in Portugal	Bilingual	April	23'44"
Lawyers and jurists	Pedro Rainho, SEF inspector	Bilingual	May	24'36"
	António Ferrão, lawyer	Portuguese	March	14'41"
	Kateryna Ilchko, lawyer	Ukrainian	March	15'09"
	Silva Cordeiro, coordinator of Lawyers in Solidarity with Ukraine, from the Bar's Association	Bilingual	May	21'46"
	Jorge Batista da Silva, Notaries Order Chairman, presenting ucrania.notários.pt*	Bilingual	June	26'53"

According to Table 3, there was the same number of institutional partners and non-partners interviews. Regarding the first one, the more extended ones were with the institutions directly linked to the Ukrainian cause (PAR, Ukrainians in Portugal Association, Ukraine Embassy), and Portuguese entities capable of providing clarifications on the best way to enter and live in Portugal (Social Security Institute, European Commission Representative in Portugal, and SEF). Also noteworthy was the interview given by the Notaries Order Chairman, presenting ucrania.notários.pt, an initiative that joined several associates and volunteer translators offering their free services to Ukrainians citizens arriving to Portugal.

As shown in Table 4, the number of interviews included in the volunteering category, all bilingual, was much higher, revealing the weight of Portuguese private support for Ukrainian war displaced persons. With the exception to the interviews with two guests, understandably bigger, the longer ones were from members of Baby Shark Day Care, which is a development centre for Ukrainian refugee kids, the Portuguese We Help Ukraine "a meeting point between those who need help and want to leave Ukraine and those who can help provide that support in terms of accommodation, work and medicines (Sousa, 2024), and Refujob.pt, "a digital job contract support tool, which has more than 150 job offers", wishing "to enhance the professional skills of refugees and job opportunities available in Portuguese entities and companies" (ACEGIS, n.d., para 2).

Table 4 Volunteering (Bilingual)

Category	Guests	Month	Duration
Volunteering	Rita Rugeroni and Natalia Pereplotkina, a Portuguese family welcoming example	April	18'
	Sofia Tilo e Marina Roloska, I help Ukraine Association	April	21'50"
	Maria João Tomás, United for Ukraine Platform	April	17'18"
	Roman Barchuk, Humanitarian Caravan	April	23'40"
	Mykhailo Shemlii, Uapt Ukrainian Refugees co-founder	April	21'39"
	Natalia Turyk and Maryna Skomorokhova: Albufeira's Ukrainian Association	May	28'58"
	Andrey Ivanishchev (Russia) and Maria Ivanishcheva (Ukraine), The city house**	May	32'42"
	Anastasiia Ponomar, Baby Shark Day care co-founder	May	33'
	Mikola Sydor, Poland's Refugee Centre volunteer	May	30'
	Eduardo Alves da Silva, We Help Ukraine volunteer	May	31'33"
	Elvira Gavrilova, solidarity events (concert, auction, fashion show) organizer	May	30'35"
	Lourenço Lucena, job platform for displaced people mentor: Refujob.pt	May	32'28"
	Vadym Petruk, Real Estate Consultants for Ukraine	May	25'40"
	Francisco Proença de Carvalho and Pavlo Sadokha, Rock'n'law Solidarity Music Festival 2022	June	47'
	Dulce Machado and Sandra Rodrigues, Entremundos, Humanitarian Association	June	31'44"

Table 5 reveals that the longer-term interviews are those included in the life stories, artists and media categories, which are always more audio appealing, and emotional contents, especially when the guests are very well-known media public figures.

Table 5 Health, Life Stories, Artists, and Media

Categories	Guests	Language	Month	Duration
Health	Maria Palha, psychologist Be woman	Portuguese	March	18'50"
	Kateryna Ostrovka, psychologist	Ukrainian	March	11'58"
	José Manuel Boavida, Diabetic Protective Association	Bilingual	March	24'20"
	Eugénio Leite, helping hand Foundation President, which helps to integrate war displaced people in Coimbra	Bilingual	May	32"
	Ana Carina Valente, Orange Helmets founder (psychologists who help displaced people)	Bilingual	June	25'10"
	Ruud Tombrock, Human Society International, which provides free veterinary consultations for war displaced pets	Bilingual	June	28'31"
Life stories	Andrey Ivanishchev (Russia) and Maria Ivanishcheva (Ukraine) - Love story in war times*	Bilingual	May	32'42"
	Dima, a four-year-old Ukrainian boy who led the war with his mother Olga and came to Portugal	Bilingual	June	22'29"
	Kate Garashchenko, Ukrainian photographer in Portugal	Bilingual	June	33'20"
	Fedir Mlynchenko, poet and lyricist who sought refuge in Portugal	Bilingual	June	36'09"
Artists and media	Salvador Sobral, Portuguese singer	Portuguese	March	12'
	Kateryna Avdysh, Ukrainian singer	Ukrainian	April	18'39"
	Michelle Andrade, actress and singer from Ukraine	Bilingual	April	20'3"
	Leonid Kolosovskiy, Ukrainian audio-visual director	Bilingual	April	24'47"
	Yevhen Mikhin, Mariupol chronicles documentary author	Bilingual	May	33'
	Viktoria Mushtey, Ukrainian actress working in Portugal	Bilingual	May	29'51"
	Volodymyr Ostapchuk, Ukrainian television presenter	Bilingual	May	36'41"
	Olexiy Travnikov, Ukrainian radio host	Bilingual	June	32'16"

On the health chapter, the number of interviews was higher comparing to life stories, being the longer one with the Helping hand President, who introduced his main foundation goal: helping Ukrainian families who arrive to Coimbra in their integration process (Marques, 2022).

Finally, as we can verify on Table 6, the interviews that scored the highest in the public support category were those carried out with members of Portuguese municipalities or parishes. The longer one was with the Lisbon government councillor, Laurinda Alves, who presented the Municipal Emergency Program "VSI TUT-Todos Aqui", which aimed "to welcome, accompany, integrate and empower Ukrainian refugees", intervening on "accommodation; access to employment; access to education and training; health; mobility; culture; sport; social support" (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2022, para. 2).

Table 6 Public and Private Supports (Bilingual)

Categories	Guests	Month	Duration
Public support	António Lopes, Pedrógão Grande mayor – the support for families arriving in the municipality	April	9'24"
	Luís Sousa, and Maria João Tomás, Arroios Parish Council; Alesia Zarama, Our Lady of Nazareth Church	April	26'11"
	Ricardo Marques, Benfica's Parish Council president and Oleksandra Nadiezhkina, displaced by the war	May	39'27"
	Marilene Rodrigues, Miranda do Corvo Municipality Vice-President, Housing Exchange for Displaced People	June	23'31"
	Laurinda Alves, Lisbon government councillor, Vsi Tut - Todos aqui (emergency program for war displaced persons integration)	June	41'23"
	Hugo Aguiar (Speak), João Machado (Ageas), and Roman Barchuk (Galp) about Speak for Ukraine project*	April	32'18"
Private support	Teresa Menezes, HR Office: SONAE Platform for Ukraine	April	27'43"
	Sandra Aparício and Roman Barchuk, GALP job openings	May	26'56"
	Diana Ralha, Lisbon Property Association, on the real estate exchange for displaced people: A house for a cause*	May	38'10"
	Margarida Gonçalves, general coordinator of the Portugal's Hotel Association of Portugal - Jobs for Ukraine fair in the hotel business	June	21'24"

Regarding private support there were fewer interviews, being the longest the one with Diana Ralha, from the Lisbon Property Association, who was invited to display the *House for a Cause* project, aiming to a property exchange among private owners to help address the housing challenges faced by Ukrainian citizens who choose to settle in Portugal (Redação, 2022). If we consider volunteering category as a private support, we can surely conclude that private help was more important than the public one.

It can be argued that, regardless of their length or number, all these segments fulfilled an important social and cultural function by responding to the primary needs of their target audience: the Ukrainian communities arriving in Portugal. They provided reliable news from Ukraine, public announcements, language lessons, mental health guidance, legal support, job opportunities, and information on Portuguese culture. Unlike commercial or

state broadcasters, Rádio Comercial Ukraine was not profit-driven but instead focused on the social inclusion of Ukrainian refugees, a defining characteristic of community radio (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, n.d.).

Bearing all the previous evaluation and answering the first research question — *what are the most recurrent contents or themes of Rádio Comercial Ukraine podcasts?* we may state that psychological support was the most numerous issue (14) concerning the thematic “podcasts”. Regarding the above tables (3 to 6), this study reveals that most of the interviews were about social support (public and private) and/or volunteering initiatives. We may also conclude that there were fewer guests from public entities compared to the ones who talked about volunteering actions. The longer interviews (more than 30 minutes) were about volunteering (five), life stories (two), public support (two), media (two), partners (one), private support (one) and health (one). The shorter interviews (less than 12) were with radio’s partners institutions (two), non-partner entities (one), and public support (one). According to Nuno Castilho de Matos (interview — April 26th, 2022), the longer or shorter time span of the interviews depended on the invited people, not on the conversation main topic, so this study cannot conclude that the interview’s length is directly linked to the importance of its content.

With respect to its formats and categories, the psychological and legal support audio contents, delivered by a single speaker, can be classified within the solo or monologue. The same can be assumed about Portuguese spoken language classes. Considering its categories, psychological support can be catalogued in mental health genre, juridical advice in the legal Issues category, and Portuguese classes in education type. Concerning Radio Comercial Ukraine’s interviews, it seems obvious that they follow the format with the same name, even though their categories may vary, since they deal with different themes and guests: social and juridical support, volunteering, health, life stories, arts, and media.

Addressing the second research question — *are they podcasts or audio extensions of a web radio?* — the answer could be yes, according to Kischinhevsky. In this regard, back in 2017, Kischinhevsky sustained that “content conceived exclusively for the web on commercial broadcasters was rare” (p. 7). Nevertheless, these radio audio contents published on the web would end up “increasing traffic on the internet, driving a new logic of consumption of radio content, which started to be shared on online social networks, tremendously boosting its circulation” (Kischinhevsky, 2017, p. 7). Therefore, this audio sections from the so-called legacy media would be a mere “remediated version of a regular radio programming piece”, that is, “they are mere (sound) copies of the original

broadcast, which is made through the main broadcast medium” (Berry, 2020, p. 69). So according to Berry’s vision, the answer to the question — *are Rádio Comercial Ukraine audio contents podcasts or audio extensions of a web radio?* — the answer would be no since they were not specifically created or edited to be independent or different from the web radio’s offer.

Recalling what is present on the radio and absent from the podcast — temporality, regular frequency, emission or publication at predetermined times, fixed duration, live broadcasting, and continuous flow — we may consider the audio contents published on the Rádio Comercial webpage as online audio contents, since they are not live, they can be accessed any time as there is no listening schedule. In short, they become available to every listener after the radio broadcasting.

Still, according to Bonini (2015), podcasts should be understood as specifically produced content intended for online distribution. Berry (2006) also states that it is a new medium because it’s not just the result of audio, internet and portable devices combination. The author states that “podcasting is a unique form insofar as it has distinct characteristics that it can play to. Unlike broadcast radio it is moveable, with the listener not being fixed to a timed schedule” (Berry, 2006, p.156).

Within this framework, the audio contents of Rádio Comercial Ukraine cannot be strictly classified as podcasts. They do not present “a constructed identity in opposition to the formatted, corseted radio matrix” (Miranda et al., 2021, p. 7). Nevertheless, such contents may still represent “an option that has proved to be particularly profitable both in entertainment and information” (Miranda et al., 2021, p. 7).

According to Ana Isabel Reis (2018), “the podcast is not just another technology available to radio, it is a medium that is still developing its own identity, not necessarily dependent on or linked to radio” (p. 211). Nonetheless, mentioning Berry’s words, “podcasting and radio are closely intertwined, sharing technologies, techniques and content, but they are increasingly coexisting on divergent and often intersecting paths” (Berry, 2016, p. 23). Therefore, “the podcast can (but does not have to) sound different from the radio” (Berry, 2016, p. 23).

Considering the question — *do Radio Comercial Ukraine Podcasts (also) fulfil a social function?* — this investigation shows that the web radio’s so-called “podcasts” were aimed to give Ukrainian communities a voice, and that its contents showed a significant representation of the target community’s interests, while offering answers to their needs, not only through interviews (Tables 3 to 6), but also through juridical, social, and emotional support (tables 1 and 2). Remembering its scope — a union bridge between geographically distant people (Salvador Ribeiro interview — April

26th, 2022) — Rádio Comercial Ukraine's podcasts carried out a humanitarian mission in a war environment, giving the floor to institutions that wanted to help or welcome them, and it is, therefore, a means of social inclusion: most interviews were about social support, and the longer ones were about volunteering. The fact of their being bilingual also helped to promote (basic) teaching of the Portuguese language.

It is also important to notice that this web radio was non-profit, thus presenting a clear example of solidarity, and providing access to information across borders to a potentially large number of listeners.

5. Conclusion

Rádio Comercial Ukraine "podcasts" functioned as a significant communicative platform for Ukrainian refugees residing in Portugal. They provided access to essential information and support mechanisms, thereby aiming to facilitate processes of adaptation and integration within the host society. The very establishment of this web radio, together with its dedicated online audio segments, serves as tangible evidence of its intended humanitarian purpose.

Beyond its immediate role in addressing the informational needs of displaced individuals, the initiative also operated within a wider institutional context. Specifically, it complemented and reinforced Portuguese humanitarian coordination efforts, as documented in Tables 3, 4, and 6. In this respect, Rádio Comercial Ukraine can be understood not only as a medium of practical assistance, but also as an integral component of broader strategies aimed at promoting social cohesion, refugee integration, and collective resilience.

Operating as a web radio station with associated audio content labelled as "podcasts", it served as an effective communication hub, disseminating information, relaying messages between affected populations, and facilitating interaction with humanitarian organisations and government agencies. In this regard, it aligned with the traditional role of radio as a medium for social integration (Scannell, 1996), as well as an educational platform for the transmission of language, values, and cultural identities (Buckley, 2000; Girard, 1992).

Although not a news-dedicated outlet, this Portuguese station provided timely and relevant updates through a dedicated journalistic section hosted by Irineu Teixeira. These segments helped to contextualise the ongoing conflict and report on international humanitarian responses, thereby keeping refugees informed of both global and local developments.

The psychological support segment (Table 1) offered emotional assistance by addressing prevalent issues such as panic, stress, sadness, isolation, and cultural shock. This content provided practical mental health guidance and encouragement during a period of heightened vulnerability, thereby contributing to the emotional resilience of its audience.

Similarly, the juridical support section (Table 2) was instrumental in promoting social integration. It presented accessible information on legal rights, relevant legislation, and administrative procedures, while also serving as a link between refugees and legal aid services. This included guidance on employment rights, taxation, social security, health coverage, and welfare entitlements — critical areas for those navigating a new sociopolitical landscape (Table 2).

The inclusion of Portuguese language lessons reflected the radio's educational and integrative aims. By equipping refugees with basic language skills, these sessions facilitated communication with both service providers and the broader society. Language acquisition not only helps individuals articulate their needs but also fosters cultural understanding and social cohesion. In this way, the language component of the station acted as a tool to bridge cultural divides and promote a greater sense of belonging.

The morning talk show, especially its interviews with guests sharing personal narratives (all of them converted into online audio version, analysed in the present text), reinforced the station and podcast's concern of building connections among listeners facing similar challenges. Interviews with representatives of volunteering organisations (Table 4) provided valuable information about services and opportunities available to refugees, including legal aid, health care, employment, and community engagement. By featuring Ukrainian artists and media professionals (Table 5), the station also nurtured cultural proximity and emotional solidarity among listeners who had been forcibly separated from their homeland.

Despite being distributed in podcast format, the Rádio Comercial Ukraine's audio content does not conform to the conventions of native podcasting. The interviews, psychological support segments, juridical content, and language lessons were all replicated directly from the web radio's live broadcasts, without editorial adaptation for independent consumption. As such, they retain the formal features of radio — such as repeated naming of guests and time-bound referencing — which are typically absent in purpose-built podcasts. Furthermore, their distribution was limited to the Rádio Comercial website and app, lacking the platform diversity and editorial independence that define the podcasting medium.

In summary, although Rádio Comercial Ukraine's content may not fully meet the technical standards of native podcasting, its humanitarian efforts and the relevance of its content to its intended audience were highly significant. It is worth noting that Rádio Comercial Ucrânia is part of Rádio Comercial, a private, profit-oriented broadcaster. Unlike the parent station, however, it offered an accessible, bilingual, and non-commercial platform that met both informational and emotional needs, helping to

promote integration and foster a sense of community among Ukrainian refugees in Portugal.

Its legacy lies not in the medium but in the social function it fulfilled — bridging language, cultural, and institutional gaps in a time of urgent human need. In other words, it aimed to contribute to the social inclusion of refugees in Portugal, embodying both journalistic responsibility and civic solidarity in a time of crisis.

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Notes

- 1 Although the audio files hosted on the Rádio Comercial website are programmes broadcasted live or recorded for broadcast, they are recognised as podcasts, even though they were not created exclusively for this purpose. Therefore, from now on, for ease of reference, we will refer to these online audio files as podcasts.
- 2 A pop-up radio is a temporary station, often set up with the intention of showcasing a specific event like a big musical festival and tend to have a short shelf life.
- 3 Portuguese Catholic church official organization for social charity, set up by the Portuguese Episcopal Conference.
- 4 Portuguese initiative to combine efforts to help Ukraine and Ukrainians on a single platform.
- 5 A digital contract support tool, which has more than 150 job offers.
- 6 Humanitarian aid movement in support of Ukraine based in an Instagram page with the same name.
- 7 Association that helps refugees with accommodation, employment, psychological and medical support, economic and legal support, as well as social integration.

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