The Romanian Regional Public Radio - Context and Insights into the Social Dynamics

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Abstract

In the process of globalization, the regional public radio has an immediate and remote impact in training the public opinion, in identifying the expectations of the audience. Social dynamics and cultural identity become the markers of an increasingly persuasive media discourse. The history of a regional radio (Radio Romania Regional) with emphasis on Radio România Oltenia Craiova is both an argument of the "increase and decrease" of the media impact on the market as well as an eloquent case in this social dynamic. The case study diachronically and synchronically presents the audience value in the area, the regional radio consumer profile and it propounds solutions to ensure the primacy on the broadcasting market. The target is a return to the cultural value of the regional radio while considering it a brand of the region. The essential role of regional radio is to contribute to the preservation of cultural identity in the context of globalization, therefore identifying the area and "the voice" of regional media.

Keywords: regional public radio, audience, promotion, media impact

Introduction

The design, draft and implementation of a strategy for developing a regional station of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society requires respecting and promoting the nature of the public radio, the corporate mission and vision in full respect of professional ethics. It gives the public the most important regional news, persuasively combining the national and local features of the information.

The media products designed, developed and delivered in such a manner, submit to the *corporate vision*: to be the most credible and effective means of informing and training the public, distancing itself from the vision of the rival private stations focused on information and entertainment (on behalf of wide accessibility).

The mission of the public radio is thus supported through all its channels and through the regional and local stations, providing information, cultural, educational products and entertaining for all audiences, aiming to broadcast information promptly and professionally at the national and regional levels. The fundamental values and principles of public radio are thus implemented (SRR vision, mission, values and principles –SRR Activity Report 2007 http://www.srr.ro/RadioRomânia/rapoarte-20), supported at the regional level by the local and regional studios: the credibility, the quality, the independence, the respect for the public, the creativity, the competitiveness and team spirit, the synthetic image projection in the public space is that of an accountable and efficient corporation, within a permanent process to adapt to a dynamic society.

1. Radio România Oltenia-Craiova in the Regional Competitive Environment – in the Present and in Perspective

1.1 The Analysis of the Competitive Environment in Which Radio România Oltenia-Craiova Operates

Regional public radio studios are clusters of interest, that attract the loyalty of an audience eager to receive the regional specifics within the socio-economic, political and cultural areas and the proximity information.

To ensure the placement in the top preferences of the public Radio România Oltenia-Craiova must be a communicative organization in an interactive process with the public space, evolutionary, promoting innovation, dynamic - in order to create the potentiality of communication in public space through information.

Radio Romania Oltenia Craiova is broadcast in the five counties of Oltenia (Dolj, Gorj, Valcea, Olt, Mehedinti), in the neighboring counties (Arges, Teleorman) that have kept the habit of listening to the traditional regional radio station in the South, and in the Romanian communities in Bulgaria and Serbia, as a landmark of cultural identity.

Competition in the media market is fierce for many reasons:

- ➤ the private local television stations and the public territorial television generate interest by using persuading images, creating additional information and attractions. In Oltenia there are as 13 private TV station which broadcast locally, providing proximity information and using specific techniques of live broadcast (reporting the story by phone at the place of the event); the phenomenon is expanding. On 12 November 2012 another television channel, DG 24 Craiova, appeared, attracting the public interest especially by broadcasting sports events;
- the private radio stations compete effectively with their entertainment formats (music or radio programs with a focus on the music/information alternation, giving music a distinct advantage); there are 11 local stations and at least 3 national ones with local editorial offices; the ones the audience most listens to are Europa FM, Pro FM, Kiss FM, Radio Guerilla, Radio Trinitas. A comparative analysis conducted between 2009 and 2012 shows that RROC has lost 50% of the audience in less than three years (Appendix)

A comparison to the impact of private radios (cumulated) illustrates RROC's place on the media market: in 2009, RROC - 45.7%, private radios - 30.7%. In the third wave -2012 RROC had a 23.9% market share, while private stations had a total of 35.6%, therefore RROC had the attention of less than 1/3 of the audience, compared to the half it had in 2009. Annex 1 presents the situation of RROC on the media market in Oltenia – diachronically in 2009-2012 (graphs) and the public radio vs. private radio "mirror" overthe same period (histograms).

In the first wave -2012, RROC had a dramatic "fall" (from 45.7% in 2009 to 29.9% in 2012), the private radios kept almost the same audience, 29.7% (compared to 30.7% in 2009). In the second wave -2012, RROC's audience continued to decline (28.8%), while private stations gained audience (36.1%).

In the third wave -2012, RROC lost more of the audience (23.9%), private radio had 35.6%, while the others had 31.4% - there was an expansion of other means of communication, RROC lost the competition with private radio stations and other media;

local and county newspapers remained the preferred means of communicating the proximity utility information (there are 16 daily newspapers and 26 periodicals, especially cultural ones). Under these conditions of competition on the media market, periodic evaluative analyses are necessary.

1.2. SWOT Analysis of the Organization

The SWOT matrix, as an end result of diagnosing the internal and external environment of the organization, comprises four quadrants: strengths (Strengths), weaknesses (Weaknesses), opportunities (Opportunities) and the threats or vulnerabilities of the environment (Threats). The combinations of the four components / quadrants of the matrix allows us to identify the best type of strategy. SO and ST combinations capitalize on the organization trumps (strengths) while WO and WT reveal the dependence on the regional environment, which is Craiova in the case of the territorial office of Radio România Oltenia-Craiova, extending to a national level in the case of positioning the corporation in the competitive environment.

S - strenghts

- objective information, relevant to all the socioprofessional categories;
- a solid dialogue with the civil society;
- a focus on the citizen's agenda;
- high journalistic and production standards;
- broadcast on the Internet;
- loyal audience;
- Romanian communities across the Danube have keept the tradition of listening to this station;
- credibility and being audience oriented.

O – opportunities

- -increasing the quality and quantity of information; -ongoing partnerships with cultural institutions in the area and the development of complex radio productions with a minimum financial effort;
- -the tendency to strengthen regional identity; -the increasing number of Internet users;
- -awareness;
- -partnerships with regional public radios in neighboring countries and all over the world.

W - weaknesses

- the interim-state of the leadership;
- lack of internal organization communication and lack of transparency in decision making;
- a tendency to minimum resistance;
- the lack of a balanced reward system;
- the attitude of self-improvement and improvement is ignored by the management.
- broadcasting is difficult in peripheral areas of Oltenia, while in others it interferes with Radio Resita, a local public station of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Society.

T - threats

- -the continuous increase of the economic pressure on the organization;
- -changing listening habits;
- -the public perception of the middle-aged and elderly;
- -the loss of audience ratings (from 45% to 23.9%);
- -the fast technical development of the competition; -the emergence of new private radio stations.

All in all, the WO and WT axis in these new conditions (the drastic loss of audience, the increasing impact of modern interactive means, of the internet) shows that the priority target should be to preserve the stability of RROC on the media market.

2. The Increase of Station Ratings and Ensuring a Top Position on the Media Market

The modern radio mainly aims to capture attention, based on the uses and gratifications model, which introduced a "social psychology of the audience, emphasizing the individualization of media usage depending on the rational and emotional needs and expectations of the individual" (Dragan, 2007, vol. I, p. 412). From this perspective, the regional public radio can mantain the existing loyal audience by producing programs and events in the community, and positioning in the public space.

Radio productions should be primarily focused on dynamic live broadcasts using interactivity and appeal to social networks.

Relating to another model of audience, that of "cultural studies", the analysis aims at an active audience that contextualizes social and cultural reception of media products. J. Lull stressed the importance of cultural references and social and political identities in the consumer-perception processes and the ability of the receptors to shape the meanings suggested by the media content (J. Lull, 1999, p.172).

Promoting a persuasive picture of the radio in Oltenia can be achieved by generating community events, producing complex radio programs like "The Radio Caravan", "RROC Galas", participating in the local traditional events (of the communities), debate-shows hosted by the community ("The Audience in Your Home"), themed shows or music programes, "identity card of the town " programs or competitions between towns with personalities originating from these areas (The cycle of shows"Yesterday's and today's Oltenia"), programs with an audience (book launches, art exhibitions opening artists of Oltenia or invited ones, cultural institutions anniversaries - "Radio-Arts Gallery").

The print media is a good partner in disseminating information about the activities of the public radio and in promoting the daily schedule, offering data which anticipates listening to the station and incites curiosity. It thus covers The neosemiotics of advertising, calling for new multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary methods within advertising semiotics which are now "in question more than ever" (Boutaud, J.-J., 2005, pp.48-49).

Reconfiguring the Internet page is an imperative to increase audience by engaging the users. In Oltenia, one can spot an aspect of tradition and continuity in a new form: the radio has been listened to by amateurs from the very beginning (there is evidence from the Romanians in Timoc about broadcasts from Craiovadating back to 1926), even before the first program of the Romanian public radio. Today the radio in Oltenia is followed on the internet, as one can see from the letters from Spain and Italy (the Romanian communities), Afghanistan, Iraq (from the military in war theaters), Greece, Macedonia (the Romanian communities), and especially from Bulgaria and Serbia, the western areas (from those who want to keep their Romanian cultural identity). Reconfiguring the radio page on the Internet is a factor of social attractiveness, mantaining the loyalty of a certain segment of active listeners. In the same area falls the live video broadcast of the daily program (www.radiocraiova.ro), theimage promotion of the radio and its performers (producers and guests), a manner of visual persuasion.

By developing the annual strategy aiming at measurable, relevant and timed objectives (SMART) structural harmony is created (it avoids the duplication of programs of the same type in the same reference zones, customizing the area-specific sections, schedules etc.).

2.1. The Relationship Between the Demographic Profile of Listeners and Increasing and Diversifying Audience

Keeping the traditional public and catalyzing a new public interest are the two priority targets in mantaining the position on the media market. Psychologists have demonstrated the "power principle of consistency in directing human activity" (Ciardini, 2004, p.83). Leon Festinger, Fritz and Theodore Newcomb Hieder argued in favor of the motivating force of the need for consistency. The impulse to be consistent is a weapon of social influence and this is the momentum the station is counting on in retaining the loyalty of the consumers.

The main strategic directions of the Radio Oltenia Craiova Romania development aims public impact (targets -demographics, and especially psychographics):

- ➤ preservation of the already loyal audience, the 40-60 and over 60 yearsold segment, interested in the proximity information and regional and cultural values;
- ➤ attracting young audiences, 18-25 years old, interested in the labor market, the European integration process and the difficulties of adaptation to the rigors of European integration;
- > attracting public interest in the modern radio topics and formats, the audience that is part of the professional conversion process or is just entering the labor market and the cultivated audience, professionalized, with a high standard of skills and information.

Therefore, there is need to implement strategies to motivate the audience to listen to the programs, taking into account the four audience categories and determining the change in consumer behavior:

- the loyal, constant audience, usually in rural areas;
- ➤ the audience uninterested in the content of programs (the less active public,that needs to be attracted by predicting topics of interest intellectuals and young people aged 18-25);
- > audiences which are active only in a limited number of themes (e.g., village life, music and programs);
- the audience that becomes active only after the media has turned a problem into a current issue.

The immediate effect is diversifying the public profiling which has become loyal to Radio România Oltenia-Craiova and the effect on the long term is turning the passive or circumstantial public into an active one.

The public loyal to the radio in Oltenia is the one that had the habit of listening to this station before 1989, a real boost in loyalty being the broadcast in rural areas. The younger generation is less interested in the generalist profile, being a circumstantial and a generally passive consumer (they listen to it within the family).

In an analysis conducted by the Institute of Craiova on May 31, 2012 using the focus group method (ordered by Radio România Oltenia Craiova) it was shown that the listener profile of this radio station was the following: average age, especially from rural areas, high school graduates, usually persons who stay at home (housewifes, unemployed or elderly individuals), the image of a sober, decent, mature person, who has the following horizon of expectations:

- To be entertaining dynamic music and interesting news;
- To alternate news and educational entertainment programs, with accessible language;
- To change the mood;
- To broadcast spontaneous, interactive programs;

- To have neutral and impartial presenters;
- To disseminate information they cannot find elsewhere;
- To have radiogenic presenters;
- To broadcast relaxing music;
- To hear dynamic music, suitable for the type of program.

There are two emotional attitudes that may be invoked in the case of public radio: sobriety and prestige. Sobriety has always given the public speech an "authentic expression (...) better seen on the market of rhetorical quotations" (Braud, 2008, p.243). Prestige has an unexpected effect. Instead of creating trust and loyalty, it produces distancing and, in rare cases, the "humble placing in the shadow of its grandeur," adds Philippe Braud referring to the social, political "voices". The public radio has the status of a renown public presence and, as all means of mass communication, is accused of manipulating through words and catalyzing emotions and feelings. To adapt radio programs to the public profile the identification of audiences and their size is necessary:

- >diversifying sociological items age groups, dominant professional groups in the structure of population concerns will be configured;
- ➤ the psychographic profile resulting from future sociological applications, taking into account the commitment to cultural values, witty spirit and tendency to socialize (defining features of the psychological profile of the audience in Oltenia), which become arguments for reshaping programs.

2.2 The Media Impact Analysis of the Regional Radio in the National Context

The analysis of the audience and the comparison of data from different periods (a year, with variables specific to scales set by seasons and in different years in order to view ascending or descending trend) is necessary to design and editorial strategies.

A recent analysis conducted by IMAS - Marketing and Polls SA and GfK Romania - Market Research Institute Ltd. Providesthe data for the summer wave of the Radio Audience Study (during 29 April to 18 August 2013). The segment was probabilistic, stratified comprising 9,437 persons. "The segment included 1,162 settlements 69 of which were towns with over 30,000 inhabitants, 241 settlements with less than 30,000 inhabitants out of the existing 251, 246 of the 468 rural settlements with over 5,000 inhabitants in Romania, and 606 of the 2,393 rural settlements with less than 5,000 inhabitants "(www.audienta-radio.ro/.../Audienta% 20radio% 20 -% 20and% 20Valul% 20v). The settlements in the selected segment were identified by generating random phone numbers for conducting interviews. In the rural areas 100 locations were randomly selected face to face interviews. "Measuring radio ratings was based on the Day After Recall method used by existing international measurement systems and recommended by EBU (European Broadcasting Union) and ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and marketing Research). "Interviewing took place over 15 weeks. The field data collection involved a balanced scheduling of interviews by type of locality and day of the week. The data analysis revealed that the average age of the regional stations listeners is 50, that is 8 years more than that of the radio total. Compared with previous years there was an increase in high social status listeners. An important point is that half of Radio România Regional listeners have a low social status and are predominantly rural.

Over 85% of the listeners have a low or average level of education while 14% have a university degree (wave II, in 2013), 10 points below the percentage of the total of radio listeners in the country. The number of inactive persons is 15 units higher than that of active ones. The number of men is higher than women, but the proportion is constant over the entire period. The average age of listeners in urban areas is 52 years, about 9 years older than the total radio. In 2012 listeners aged over 50 accounted for 56% of total audience, in 2013 this percentage increased to over 60%.

Radio România Regional is mainly listened to in rural areas. This is confirmed by the 80% of average or low education listeners.

Another significant detail in configuring radio programs is the higher percentage (about 10%) of passive individuals, a result generated by the receptors age of over 50.

Radio România Regional listeners are both active and inactive, the inactive rate being of about 10 points higher than the total of listeners in cities.

Radio România Regional listeners are of an average age of about 52, the 2013 wave II data showing a 7.3 years increase compared to the average age of the radio total.

The most significant result, however, is the Radio România Regional listeners' low level of education: over two-thirds have such a level. "In the 2013 first wave the number of the uneducated public increased by about 14 units compared to the previous wave, these persons being 80% of the listeners".

This is a mapping of the regional public radio listener profile Romanian revealing essential aspects which show the preferences for radio programs, the horizon of expectations and especially their media and communicative skills.

The concept of culture consumption can generate an analysis of the media consumption culture, the audiences capitalize on consumption (Ritzer, 2010, p.211) by using design strategies, implementation and broadcasting of radio programs.

3. Managerial and Editorial Strategies for Positioning and Promoting Regional Public Radio in the Competitive Market

Among the general strategies of comfortable positioning on the competitive regional media market (outside perspective) some can provide the primacy in receiving programs and promotional activities:

- ➤ the information dissemination activities regarding *Radio România Regional* media products in an aggressive campaign (specific tactics: public reporting, press conferences, public appearances of personalities within the organization or public space, who support the radio and editorial projects and will generate the indesirable image transfer through the halo effect);
- > organizing events and engaging in social campaigns (tactic: events "staged" for coverage);
- promotional activities (tactics: an active participation in seminars and national and international conventions, thus producing the credibility and competitiveness value).

The external organizational communication is vital in exploiting the potential of the organization through partnership with a third party - international and national legal entities (public or private). Specific activities include:

- > ongoing partnerships with the local and county administration, as well as music and theater institutions in the region. Artistic productions can be made with a minimum financial effort from the radio, the other expenses being borne by the partners; it will thus promote the image of the partner institutions, as well as that of the regional radio, aggressively disseminating information by activating all the means of mass communication;
- > creating community events in partnership with local and county institutions, which would benefit from the image promotion, while the radio productions would have no expenses for locations, related staff (such as "The Audience in Your Home" an interactive program carried out in the Office of the County Council President or "ROC Summer" a show which promotes tourism, in partnership with the rest and treatment resorts in the region).

Consequently, the most persuasive means of public communication is produced, with social and cultural "voices" as partners, that identify the issues and propose real topics in the social and cultural agenda. It is a double benefit of image and public interest transfer in the public space.

These institutional visibility activities will enable employees in all the departments of the radio, thus empowering staff and giving them the satisfaction of belonging to a positive organization.

3.1 Strengthening and Increasing the Role of the Radio România Oltenia-Craiova Territorial Studio in the Legislative Framework of Romania

According to Law 41/1994 the overall activity of the public radio is under the imperative of accurate, unbiased, professional apprising in order to provide proximity information and thematic programs that contribute to the educating and enlightening the active and passive public. For the sake of brief presentation and argument space we select a few items from the legal text that direct editorial management (Law no. 41/1994 on the organization and operation of SRR and SRTV, subsequently amended and supplemented. media.tvrinfo.ro/media-tvr/other/201206/legea-41_14173300.pdf, Law no. 8/1966 on copyright and related rights, amended and supplemented - legislatie.resurse-pentru-democratie.org/8_1996.php, The Audiovisual Law no. 504/2002, with subsequent amendments - www.cna.ro/-Legea-audiovizualului-si-Codul-.html, The CNA Decision no. 220 of 24 February 2011 on the Regulation of Audiovisual Content Code-www.cna.ro/DECIZIE-Nr-220-din-24-februarie.html):

Law Article The direction of the editorial management "Art 3 (1) The Romanian Society of Broadcasting and the The radio is a space for freedom of speech, therefore debate and entertainment programs can gather viewpoints Romanian Television Society shall ensure, by their entire and aspects defining for the proposed theme, contributing activity, the pluralism, free expression of ideas and opinions, freedom to communicate information and the to the explanation and illustration of community values. correct apprising of the public." The public radio is the most persuasive, inexpensive and convenient medium of communication, by which public - Art 4 (1) The Romanian Society of Broadcasting and the Romanian Television Society, as the public services information and the cultural corpus are transmitted; these of achieving the overall objectives of information, are necessary to enhance and even form the listeners' education, entertainment, are required to present sociouniverse of cultural values, with the same objective of political and domestic and international economic reception: finding patterns in a world of unprecedented realities in an objective, unbiased manner (...) " dynamics in an era of globalization. The share of musical sequences must follow the direction of priority positioning the identity elements through national creations, knowing from personal "Art 7 (1) The Romanian Society of Broadcasting and the Romanian Television Society will promote and experience that radios in Italy, France, Canada, Spain, air encourage the dissemination of Romanian audiovisual national creations up to 80%, while creations from Europe and U.S only have an informative and synchronizing role. creations." - "Article 7 (2) No later than four years after the sanction Musical illustrations, music and cultural programs have to of this Law, The Romanian Society of Broadcasting and be reconfigured for the purposes of the law, even if the the Romanian Television Society will reserve a major media market stubbornly promotes Anglo-Saxon musical percentage of their air time to European creations, creations. excluding sports broadcasts, games, advertising and Restorative old Romanian pop music shows or portrait teletext services. programs for Romanian performers and composers, (3) At least 30% of the European broadcast creations will depending on the type of music should be placed in the be Romanian, including the the creations specific to key-schedule thus increasing respect for national values and creating the comparison frame with the music national minorities. (4) At least 35% of Romanian creations of will be broadcast by competing stations. cultural creations. " It is absolutely mandatory to "open up" towards the direct - "Chapter II, Article 15 (m) organizing exchanges of programe producers and correspondents with radio and experience, dealing with the conditions of production and television organizations in other countries, allowing a airing of radio programs in other countries, a confrontation direct mutual information on the realities in Romania and between different mentalities, adjusting to technologies and modern ways of exposure to the radio in the concerned countries." messages. There are a few reasons why the radio management must support and facilitate this type of experience, if possible, not for the same emplyees. The Radio Sound Archive is a national treasure that - Chapter II, Article 15 (n) specifies that broadcasters are compelled to "preserve and archive audiovisual records must be preserved to provide arguments for the value of the Romanian culture in the context of the world heritage. and documents of interest to the national heritage", aided by all the employees under the coordination of the Therefore, at Radio România Oltenia-Craiova all live broadcasts must be monitored and all valuable sequences management. must recovered from recordings: interviews with personalities, "hot" testimonies from community events on which the community history will be restored at a certain time. An important management task - business development by - "Article 32 (4) Autonomous functional units referred to attracting funds. Given economic and financial crisis, in para. (1) are secondary credit release authorities and have the right to conduct its own revenues to support and generating its own revenues from advertising, donations develop the business." and sponsorships is feasible. As part of persuading partners, the reputation and credibility of the public radio,

significant.

the respect it enjoys in the community is extremely

3.2. Suggesting an Action Plan to Strengthen and Increase the Role of the Radio Oltenia Craiova Romania Territorial Studio

The action plan is based on the management strategy and is targets the formulation and achieving of immediate impact targets:

- ➤ information (creating the public image of the studio by disseminating information about the organization and radio productions);
- rititude (changing the public attitude towards the organization, the programs, becoming more responsive to the studio's involvement in community events);
- ➤ behavior (reinforcing positive behavior or change behavior positively towards the Romanian Society of Radiobroadcasting in general). Target: Radio Romania Oltenia Craiova to be perceived as a brand in the region.

In order to support such situations we propose the following:

- ➤ the involvement in community projects and their impact on programs;
- resuming the "Radio-Arts Galas" cycle, which is already considered a cultural space, a place where the radio produces events;
- ➤ producing a complex program "Yesterday's and today's Oltenia" show in different formats (a settlement identity card, competitions between settlements, folklore themed shows, pop music, vaudeville), editions of "A portrait in parallel mirrors" (a portrait-program featuring great artists born in Oltenia);
- ➤ "Yesterday's and today's Oltenia Galas" resuming public performances on big stages of Oltenia and Muntenia (at the request of the Arges and Teleorman counties) at the end of the year with the most significant moments of the year;
- ➤ Introducing "RROC Galas" to award the most beloved personalities, actors and singers who had been invited at the radio that year, as well as radio collaborators.

These complex programs can be made with a minimum financial effort, with a small number of technical and editorial staff and have a great impact on the public, they generate public image, establish the direct contact with listeners, produce media events in the community, become the sentimental archive of the listener who becames a co-participant in the event.

The media effects are immediate and remote, the most significant being the increased dialogue with civil society, the supremacy of information, persuading the public that the programs of the regional stationof Radio România Oltenia Craiova is the product of utility information and has an educational-cultural target.

The projective perspective corresponds to an inside perspective based on analysis on organizational principles, the most important in a development strategy being the following:

- ➤ the principle of flexibility (the operative adaptation of the organizational structure to the exogenous and endogenous conditions of the studio);
- ➤ the principle of the effectiveness and efficiency of the organizational structure (comparing the efforts required by operating the studio, with its effects, and achieving efficiency, that is, how effective the structure is, its function in relation to the contribution of each member).

The essential role of regional radio is to help preserve the cultural identity in the context of globalization, therefore it identifies an area and "the voice" of regional media (Rusu - Păsărin, 2012, p.25)

Conclusions

Radio România Oltenia-Craiova will be able to achieve its priority objective- the top position on the media market of oltenia with moderate costs and an aggressive public image campaign By respecting the values, creating an appropriate climate for the institutional communication, a consistent editorial and managerial development strategy can be implemented - the lasting effect on the media market is strengthening the Radio România Oltenia-Craiova brand.

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Appendix

Radio România Oltenia-Craiova Audiences

Comparative Assessment











