

Public Service Media in the 21st Century

(Focus Group Discussion Interview Guide)

A. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome, introduction, acknowledgement of the sponsor (the Czech Science Foundation)
- Introduction to the discussion topic: public service media; i.e., Czech Television (CT) and Czech Radio (CRo)
- Assurances of anonymity: the discussion is anonymous
- Discussion rules:
 - Clarification of the process for the online discussion: i.e., do not talk over each other; mute the microphone; raise your hand if anyone wants to say anything.
 - Openness and honesty are important.
 - There are no right or wrong answers. We do not expect to reach a consensus. It is useful to us if you disagree. All opinions are valuable.
 - Respect for other opinions
 - Switch off mobile phones

B. Performance + Warm-up (10 minutes)

- Today we are going to talk about the media – some are available for free, some are paid. To get a bit of background, I will start by asking if you currently pay for any media. This could be buying or subscribing to print newspapers or magazines, paying for TV channels, paying for content on the internet (for example, to access online newspapers or magazines, subscribing to Netflix). Please tell us your name and whether you have paid for any media content in the last month, whether newspapers, magazines, subscriptions to a particular website, or films.
 - Go around the table: name + for what he/she pays for

C. Paying for Public Service Media (15 minutes)

- Media content is charged not only in the case of some of the commercial media, but also in the case of public service media. I am referring here to Czech Television and Czech Radio. People who own a television set/radio receiver have to pay a television/radio fee. I would therefore like to ask you how high you think this fee should be. Now, let us imagine that you are a Member of Parliament and you have the power to set the amount of the monthly TV fee (for CT) and radio fee (for CRo) per household for the whole country. Please take a pencil and paper and write CT and CRo next to each other. Think about that for a moment and write down how high this TV and radio fee should be – how much per month do you think households should pay for CT and how much for CRo?

→ *if participants ask about the current level of fees, explain that we are now interested in their idea of the appropriate level.*

Ask everyone to read their proposed sum, then ask the participants in two rounds:

- Those who proposed an amount lower than the current amount (i.e., 135 CZK for CT and 45 CZK for CRo): why?

- Those who proposed an amount higher than the current amount (i.e., 135 CZK for CT and 45 CZK for CRo): why?
- If someone says that he/she does not watch CT/CRo (here or in another question): ask if they consume its content over the internet, either (iVysilani, CRo/CT website...)?

D. The Importance of Public Service Media (15 minutes)

- And now let's move on to another topic. On the one hand, some people claim that they are satisfied with the offer of commercial media and do not need public service media. Other people, on the other hand, claim that public service media are necessary and have relevance even today. So, I would like to ask you, what do you think about that? Let's imagine again that you are a Member of Parliament and there is a vote on whether CT and CRo will be preserved or abolished. How would you vote and why?

E. Expectations (15 minutes)

- Let's now speak about what we expect from the public service media (i.e., CT and CRo) and what the ideal state should look like. Please take a pencil and paper and write down what the public service media should be like, what functions they should fulfil, and what they should do. What are your main expectations from them? Think about the whole program of CT and CRo, not only news and journalism, but also their own production and other programs they broadcast.
 - If the participants mention concepts, such as objectivity, independence, credibility, what exactly do they mean by that?

F. Trust, Skepticism, and Distrust (15 minutes)

- Now I want to ask you about the topic of trust and distrust. Some people trust the public service media fully, others less, and others not at all. How about you? How trustworthy are Czech Television and Czech Radio for you? Please take a pencil and paper, write down "CT" and "CRo" on two separate lines underneath each other, and write numbers from 1 to 5 on each line. Then, 1 is full trust, 5 is no trust at all, and 3 is the middle. Think for a moment and write down a grade for each medium, CT and CRo. I'll ask for your grade and the reasons.
- What grade did you give CT and CRo? Why and what are your reasons?
 - For the trusting participants: if they also say they do not consume the PSM content – why do not they consume it even if they trust it? And what do they consume instead?
 - For the distrusting participants (values 3-5):
 - Would you say that you really distrust CT and CRo (in the sense of: you think they do not tell the truth, do not do journalism the way it should be done), or are you rather cautious because you can never be sure?
 - Can you think of a specific example where CT/CRo disappointed you? What did they do wrong? What was the problem? (Ask for specific reasons.)

- Is there a medium outlet you trust more? How is it better? (We need to distinguish general media skeptics vs. those who are distrustful of CT/CRO specifically).

G. Recommendations (10 minutes)

- We have already evaluated Czech Television and Czech Radio, but I would like to also know what you think they should improve to be more credible in the eyes of the public: what would you recommend them to change, start doing, stop doing? If the CEOs of CT and CRO were sitting here right now, what would you tell them, what would you advise them? What should they improve on, what should they focus on, what should be their priorities to increase their credibility in the eyes of the audience?
 - Especially the younger participants and those who mention that they do not consume the PSM content: what should CT/CRO do to change it?

H. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- Thank you all for your opinions and insights. It is very valuable to us and you have helped us a lot. Is there anything that is important to the debate about public service media that we have not mentioned yet?
- Thank you for your participation!