

## **Abstract**

The thesis “*Crisis Communication of a Music Festival*” addresses the crisis communication of the Pohoda music festival organisers during the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, in relation to the postponing of the originally planned live format of the event to the following year and the organization of the online festival Pohoda in the Air as an alternative. The primary aim of the research is to evaluate the efficiency and success of the Pohoda festival organisers’ crisis communication, to examine its weaknesses and strengths, and to compare it with a model of ideal crisis communication that emerges from existing theoretical frameworks. The ambition of the thesis is to also offer practical recommendations for crisis communication of the festival based on research.

The theoretical part of the thesis first looks at the conceptualisation of crisis and crisis communication and the theoretical grounding of the field, drawing primarily on structured models and practical application theories. It then introduces the field of music festivals and live culture. The thesis includes a concise history outline of Slovak music festivals in general and a brief history of the Pohoda festival, followed by a contextualization of the case. Based on the theoretical frameworks explored, a model of ideal crisis communication was developed, defining key principles and strategies of crisis communication. This model is complemented by the use of chaos theory applied in this thesis in situations where these model theories of crisis communication are not applicable.

The practical part is devoted to the case study of the Pohoda festival and is based on qualitative research, using semi-structured interviews with key actors in the case, as well as experts in crisis communication or festival organisation, but also qualitative content analysis of selected available documents, including press releases, media statements and the archive of the festival’s website. It seeks to fill a gap in the perception of music festival crisis communication not only as warning and instructional communication during emergencies, but as a tool to manage a range of complex risks while maintaining a positive relationship with stakeholders. The thesis explores the parameters of applied crisis communication, and the attitudes of organisational team members towards it, framing them based on the principles of theoretical approaches and putting them in context with the experiences of practitioners. It identifies the strengths of the Pohoda festival’s crisis communication, which can serve as a model for other cultural events. It also analyses the weaknesses, primarily in the form of insufficient attention to crisis communication outside the

acute crisis phase, the elimination of which can play a potentially crucial role for successful crisis communication in the dynamic development of complex threats. The thesis highlights the importance of engaging experts in crisis communication, as well as the maintenance of trust between organisers and visitors, and recommends a focus on more proactive crisis preparedness. It advocates for a broader understanding of crisis communication in the context of cultural events and provides methodological recommendations for festival organisers, contributing to the development of effective communication strategies in times of crisis.