

Research on the socio-economic status of journalists and other media professionals in Montenegro

January 2026





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Introduction

Despite the crucial role that the media play in safeguarding democratic processes, transparency, and the public interest, numerous reports and public debates indicate that journalists work under rather unfavorable conditions, often marked by low and irregular incomes, a lack of clear labor rights, limited access to social and health protection, and the absence of systematic professional support. These challenges are further exacerbated by political and economic pressures, security risks, as well as uneven standards in a digitally transformed media environment, as also recognized in OSCE documents.

The first comprehensive study of these issues in Montenegro was conducted in 2014 with the support of the OSCE Mission. The findings provided an important starting point for analyzing differences between public and private media, gender inequalities, levels of unionization, and overall working conditions. Although the study had a significant impact on public policies and the media sector, it was never systematically updated, despite the fact that the media landscape has changed substantially over the past decade.

Accordingly, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and the Trade Union of Media of Montenegro (SMCG/TUMM) initiated the implementation of a new, comprehensive study which, in light of the Media Strategy 2023–2027, will offer updated and expanded data on the socio-economic status of journalists and other media professionals. The research is part of the project “Journalists and Media in a Safe and Secure Environment” and includes quantitative survey research and qualitative focus groups, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of working conditions, access to rights, feelings of personal security, professional pressures, and perceptions of trade union organization.

The questionnaire used in the research covers a wide range of topics, from types of media and ownership structures, through employment status and wage structure, to issues related to the regularity of payments, compensation for overtime work, infrastructural conditions, access to technology, opportunities for professional development, and assessments of job stability. Special attention is paid to gender equality, compliance with labor legislation, as well as regional and sectoral differences in working practices.

This report represents the result of a consolidated analysis of the collected quantitative and qualitative data. Its aim is to provide reliable, comparable, and statistically grounded information on the working and living conditions of journalists and media workers in Montenegro, and to contribute to evidence-based policymaking, the strengthening of labor rights protection, and the improvement of the broader environment for media freedoms in the country. The findings are intended for state institutions, media outlets, professional and trade union organizations, international partners, and the expert public, and should serve as a relevant basis for future interventions by the OSCE and other actors in the sector.



Methodology

The research on the socio-economic status of journalists and other media professionals in Montenegro was conducted using a mixed-methodological approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This approach enabled the collection of reliable, representative, and in-depth insights into working conditions, professional challenges, and the needs of employees in the media sector.

The quantitative part of the research was carried out through a structured survey conducted between 15 October and 19 November. In total, 261 responses were collected from journalists and media employees in Montenegro.

The survey was implemented across 41 different media outlets, including the public service broadcaster and local public broadcasters, print and online media, radio stations, small digital newsrooms, and specialized platforms.

The sample included journalists and media workers of diverse professional profiles, job positions, and levels of experience. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of closed-ended questions (scales, multiple-choice) and several open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide more detailed comments.

Quantitative data were complemented by qualitative insights obtained through four focus groups, conducted on 18 and 19 November, with a total of 29 participants. The focus groups enabled a deeper understanding of working conditions, professional challenges, pressures, and needs, particularly in areas that are difficult to fully capture through survey instruments.

Focus group participants were evenly selected from different segments of the media sector:

1. Journalists, editors, and producers employed by public broadcasters (RTCG and local public services).
2. Journalists, editors, correspondents, and freelancers from private media outlets.
3. Technical, production, and administrative staff, such as camera operators, sound technicians, editors, graphic designers, web administrators, and other production personnel.
4. Female journalists and media professionals from both the public and private sectors, employed in various positions (from entry-level to managerial), with a particular focus on a gender perspective and experiences of gender-based violence and harassment.

Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes and was conducted using a pre-structured guide, while allowing for open discussion on key topics: working conditions, professional pressures, security, digitalization, gender equality, trade union organization, and perspectives of the profession.

Employment status and working conditions

This chapter provides an overview of the key research findings related to the employment status of journalists in Montenegro and the quality of their working conditions. The aim is to present a broader picture of job stability, financial security, the working environment, and the overall conditions under which journalists perform their work through the analysis of a range of issues.

The questions cover various aspects of employment engagement—from the type and duration of employment, the place where work is performed, and wage structure, to the regularity of payments, salary levels, and employer practices regarding contributions and insurance. Special attention is paid to overtime work, the volume of working hours, the use of annual leave, work obligations during holidays, and access to sick leave.

This section also analyzes journalists' views on the quality of their working space, the availability of modern technology, opportunities for professional development, clarity of communication within newsrooms, and respect for working hours. It further examines the extent to which journalists believe the profession offers stable long-term prospects, as well as their preferences regarding the type of media they would like to work in.

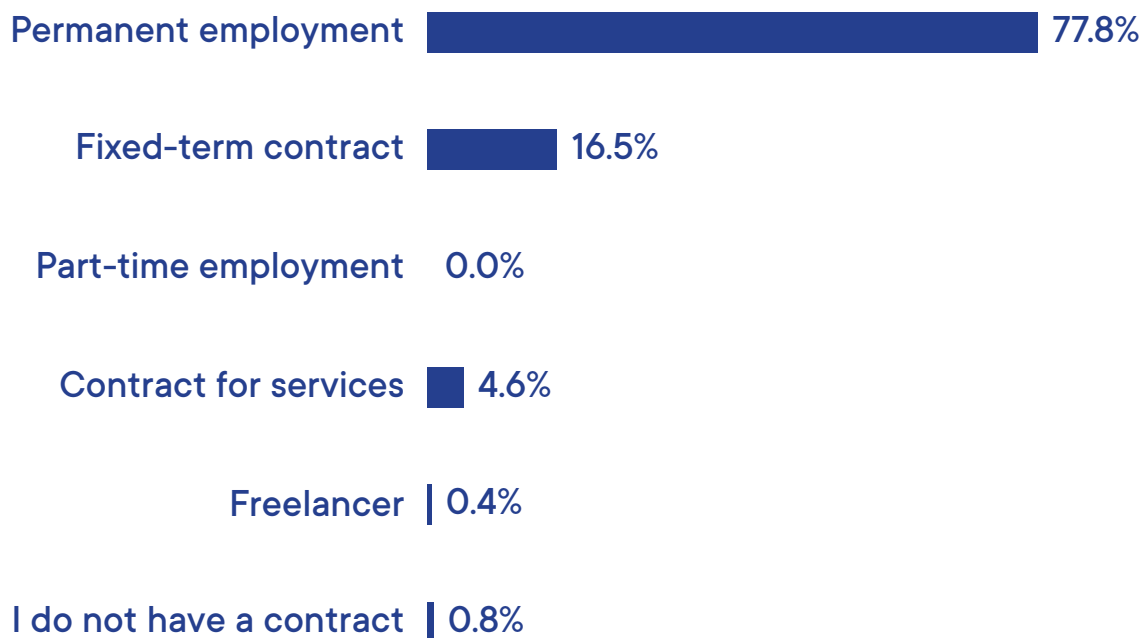
In addition, the chapter addresses perceptions of equal treatment of female and male journalists by employers, editors, colleagues, the public, and professional associations. Finally, it analyzes the priority changes journalists would like to see in their working conditions, providing important insight into their needs and expectations.

The results of the question “What is your current employment status?” show that the largest number of journalists in Montenegro are employed on permanent contracts. As many as 77.8% of respondents report having permanent employment, indicating a relatively high level of formal job security in the media sector. The second-largest group consists of journalists working on fixed-term contracts, accounting for 16.5%. This percentage shows that a significant portion of journalists continue to operate under a status that entails greater uncertainty and limited long-term stability.

The data show that none of the respondents work part-time (0%), indicating that this form of engagement is virtually nonexistent in Montenegrin newsrooms, although it is used as a flexible work model in other sectors. Additionally, 4.6% of journalists work under service contracts, a form of engagement that most often implies occasional work without full labor-law protection and without the benefits associated with standard employment. A very small number of respondents (only 0.4%) state that they work as freelancers.

Overall, the findings indicate that journalism in Montenegro is predominantly based on permanent employment, while flexible and more insecure forms of work are present to a lesser, yet still significant extent. Nevertheless, the presence of journalists without contracts and those with short-term engagements points to segments of the workforce that are more exposed to risks and weaker professional protection.

Graph 1: What is your current employment status?



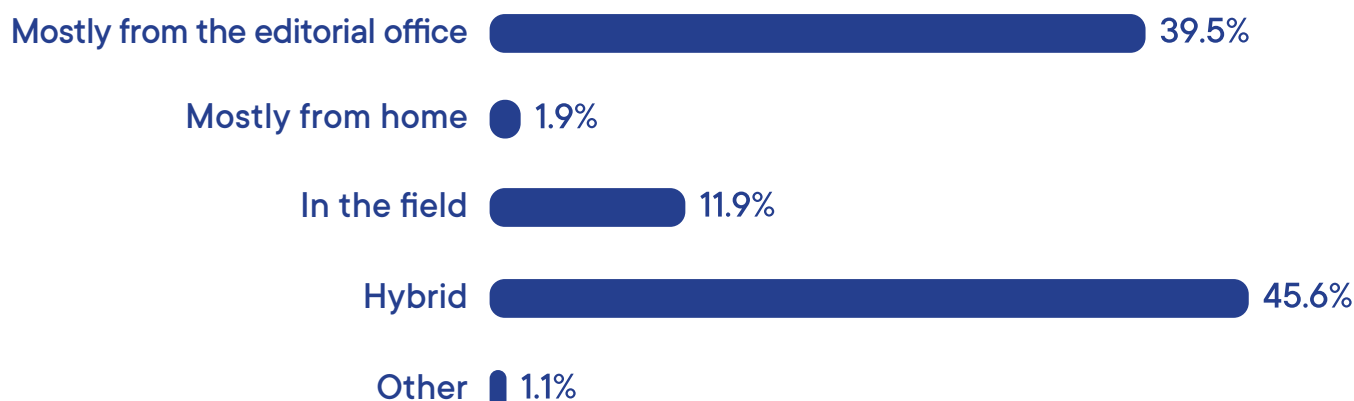
The results show that the work of journalists in Montenegro most often takes place in a combined working arrangement. As many as 45.6% of respondents state that they work in a hybrid mode—partly from the newsroom, partly in the field, and occasionally from home. This finding reflects the dynamic nature of journalistic work and the demands that require flexibility and readiness to work in different environments.

The second-largest group consists of journalists who work mainly from the newsroom (39.5%), indicating that a significant portion of journalistic work remains tied to newsroom premises, especially for tasks that involve content editing, team coordination, or studio/production work. Field-based work is reported by 11.9% of respondents. This percentage is expected given the role of field reporting, but it also shows that most journalists who go into the field do so within a combined model rather than working exclusively on location.

Working mainly from home is very rare, reported by only 1.9% of respondents. The “Other” category accounts for 1.1% of responses and likely includes specific or occasional forms of engagement that do not fit standard working models.

Overall, the findings indicate that journalists in Montenegro most often operate within a flexible, hybrid working arrangement, while exclusively remote work remains marginal. This reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary journalism, as well as the practical demands of a profession that requires constant mobility and availability.

Graph 2: Do you work from home, in the field, from the editorial office, or in a hybrid arrangement?



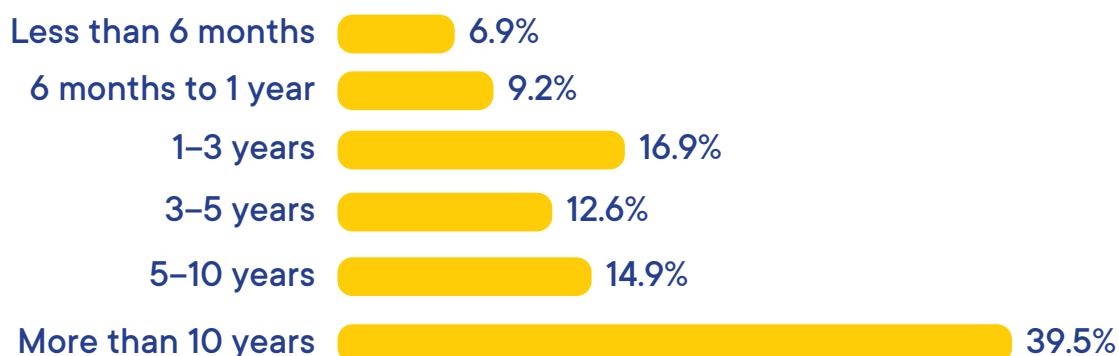
The results show that a significant proportion of journalists in Montenegro have many years of work experience in the same media outlet. The largest group of respondents, **39.5%**, have been working in their current newsroom for more than 10 years. This finding indicates a relatively high level of employee retention and long-term professional ties between journalists and media organizations.

The next largest groups are those with medium-length tenure: **16.9%** of respondents have been working in their current media outlet for between 1 and 3 years, **14.9%** for 5 to 10 years, and **12.6%** for 3 to 5 years. Taken together, these categories show that a substantial number of journalists remain with the same media organization for several years, though not necessarily for more than a decade.

In the category of the shortest tenure, **9.2%** of respondents have been with their current media outlet for between 6 months and 1 year, while **6.9%** have been working there for less than 6 months. This data points to a certain level of workforce turnover, but to a lesser extent compared to long-term engagements.

The presence of journalists who have remained in newsrooms for more than ten years suggests a high level of loyalty, but it may also indicate limited opportunities for mobility within the sector.

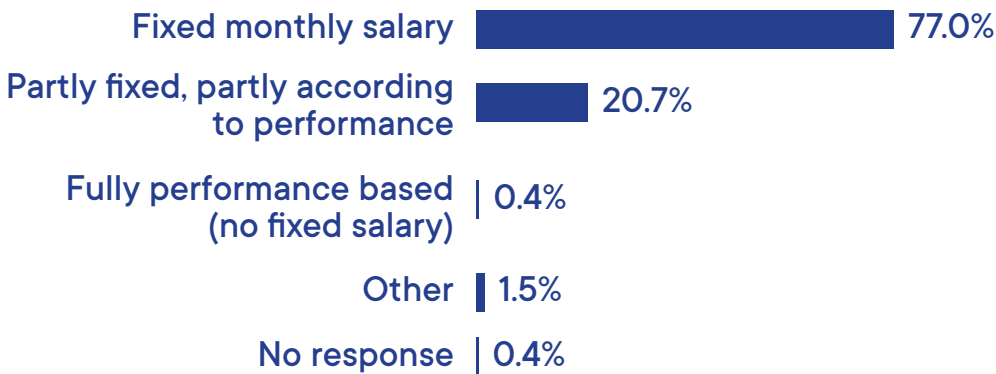
Graph 3: How long have you been working in the current media company?



The results show that the salaries of most journalists in Montenegro are structured as fixed monthly earnings. This model is reported by 77.0% of respondents, indicating that most media outlets rely on a traditional salary calculation system without a variable, performance-based component.

The second most common category is the combined model, in which income is partly fixed and partly performance-based. This form is reported by 20.7% of respondents, suggesting that some newsrooms apply incentive-based pay systems, but that such practices are still significantly less prevalent than standard fixed salaries. A very small percentage of journalists have income entirely based on performance, without a fixed salary—only 0.4% of respondents.

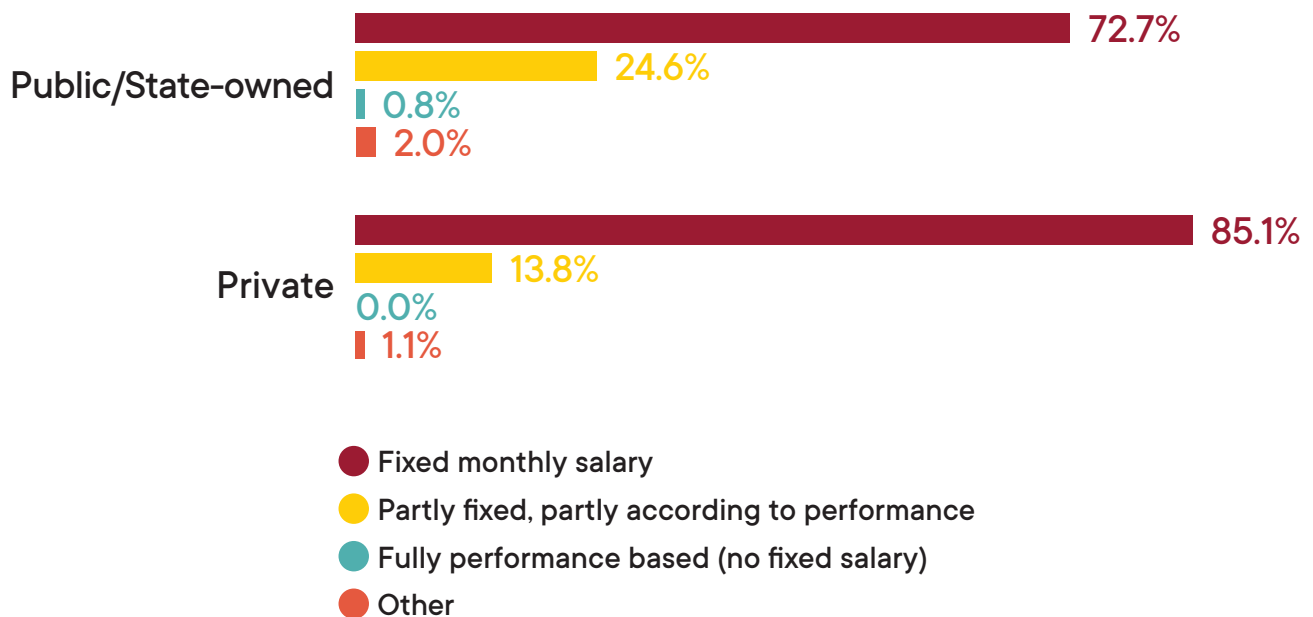
Graph 4: How is your salary structured?



A further review of differences in salary structure between journalists working in public and private media shows that the majority in both sectors receive a fixed salary—reported by 72.5% of journalists working in public media and an even higher share of those working in private media (85.1%). It should be noted that a significantly larger number of journalists employed in public media have a combined salary structure (partly fixed and partly performance-based) compared to journalists working in private media. Specifically, 24.6% of journalists working in public service media in the sample have a combined salary, compared to 13.8% of those working in private media.



Graph 5: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? * How is your salary structured?



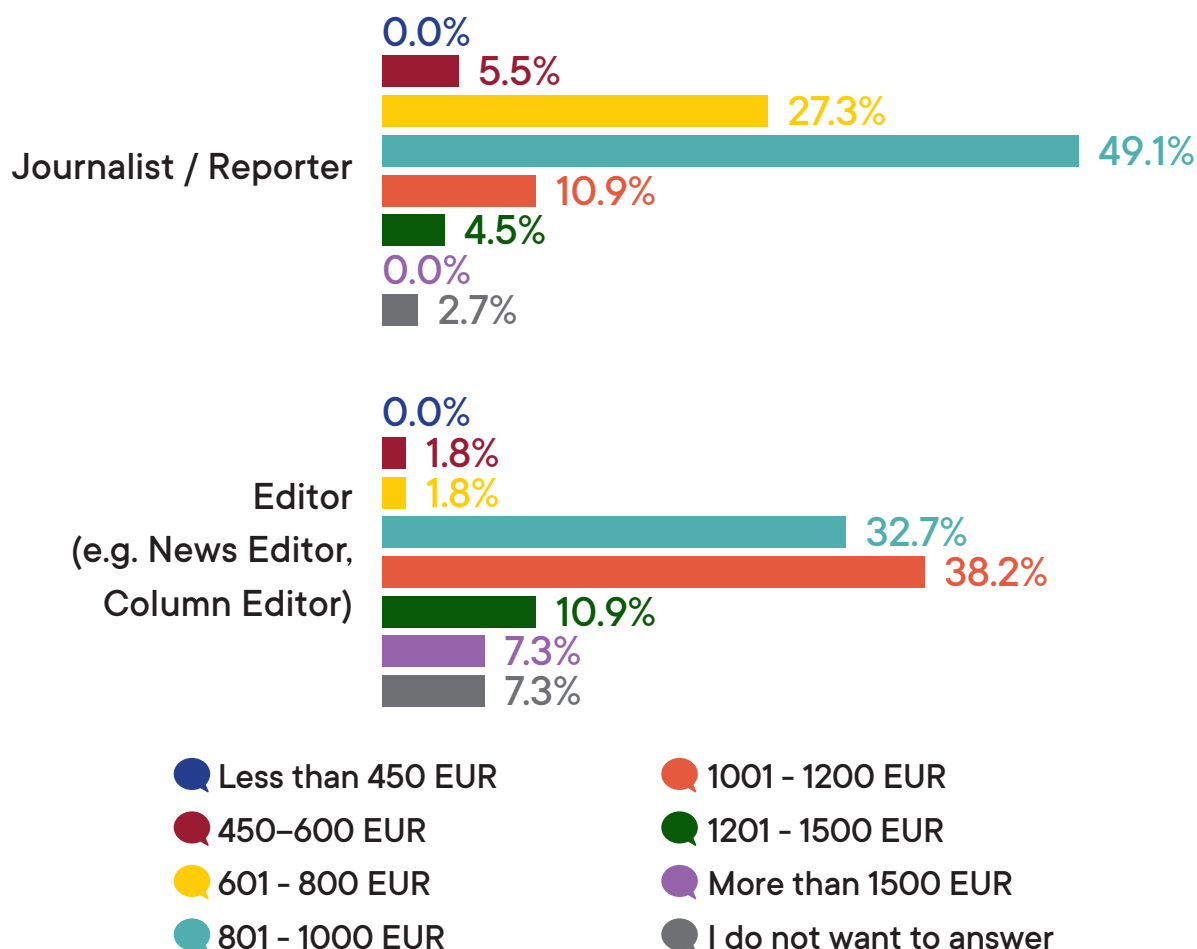
When it comes to salary levels, the largest share of journalists earns an average monthly salary in the range between €801 and €1,000, a category selected by 36.8% of respondents. This finding indicates that most journalists fall within the middle-income bracket, which is likely the most characteristic for the profession in the country.

The second most common group consists of journalists earning between €601 and €800, reported by 29.1% of respondents. This suggests that a significant number of journalists still receive salaries below a level that could be considered adequate given the demands of the job. Salaries between €1,001 and €1,200 are reported by 16.9% of respondents, while 4.6% earn between €1,201 and €1,500.

An overview of salary levels in relation to the registered job position shows that for the largest number of journalists, the monthly salary amounts to between €801 and €1,000 (49.1%), while 27.3% report earnings between €601 and €800. In addition, 10.9% state that their salary ranges from €1,000 to €1,200. None of the journalists in the sample reported earning more than €1,500.

Editors, on the other hand, most often (38.2%) earn salaries in the range of €1,001 to €1,200, while 32.7% report salaries between €801 and €1,000. In addition, 10.9% of editors state that they earn up to €1,500, while 7.3% indicate that their salary exceeds €1,500.

Graph 6: What is your registered job title? * What is your average monthly salary?



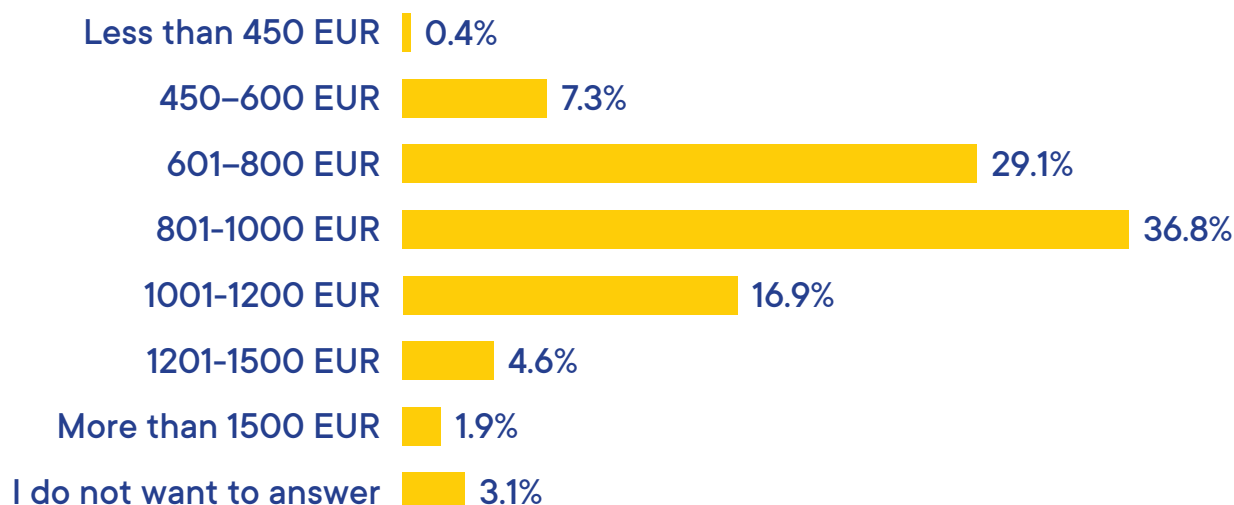
It should be noted that the focus group findings point to widespread dissatisfaction with salary levels. Participants from both the public and private sectors emphasize that the fixed component of pay is most often not aligned with the workload, while bonuses and additional allowances in many newsrooms are either not *предусмотрен* or are not paid. Particularly in private media, examples were recorded of significant income disparities that are not linked to experience or education.



“I think there is no one in Montenegro who is, on average, more poorly paid than journalists.”
(Focus group participant)

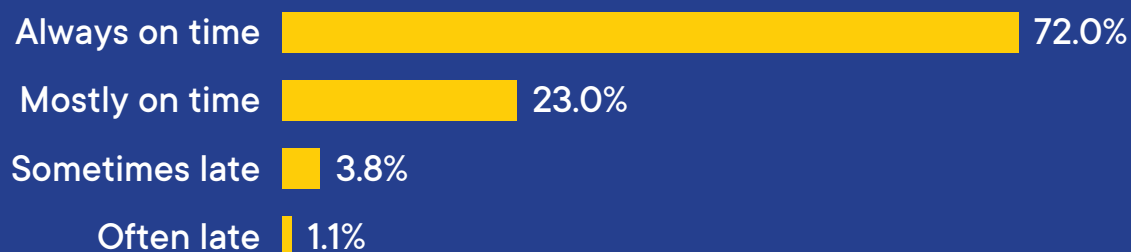
“I have had situations where I waited up to 12 hours in one place just to take a single photograph. Let someone tell me that such ‘working conditions’ exist with such low pay. You won’t find that anywhere else.” (Focus group participant)

Graph 7: What is your average monthly salary?



The results show that the vast majority of journalists in Montenegro receive their salaries on time. As many as 72.0% of respondents report that their pay is always disbursed on time, which is an important indicator of the financial stability of most media outlets. An additional 23.0% of respondents state that their salary is usually paid on time—delays occur, but they are not frequent.

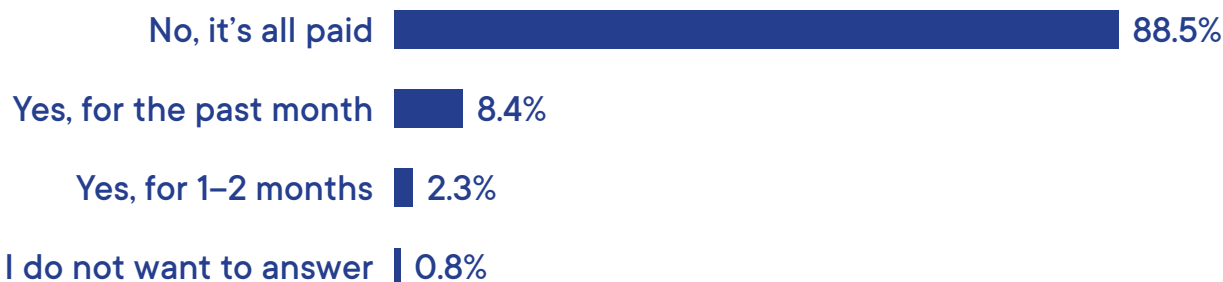
Graph 8: Is your salary paid on time?



In addition to regular payments, the research shows that the vast majority of journalists do not have unpaid salaries. As many as 88.5% of respondents report that they have received all their pay, which is a positive indicator of financial regularity in most of the sector. On the other hand, 8.4% of journalists state that their employer owes them salary for the previous month. An additional 2.3% of respondents report being owed salary for 1–2 months, which already represents a serious form of irregularity and increases financial pressure on employees. A small number of respondents, 0.8%, chose not to disclose whether they have unpaid salaries.

Overall, delays and salary arrears are present but affect a relatively small portion of journalists. Nevertheless, even this smaller segment indicates financial instability in certain media outlets and highlights the need for greater oversight and protective mechanisms.

Graph 9: Does your employer owe you salary for a certain period?



The results show that most journalists in Montenegro received a salary increase over the past year, independent of the state program “Europe Now 2.” Specifically, 57.5% of respondents report that their pay was increased, indicating a positive trend in the sector, likely because of internal decisions, adjustments for inflation, or efforts to retain key personnel.



“Well, it has been increased a bit, for me and some of my colleagues, I know, but it’s really not much. But yes, it has increased somewhat, I won’t deny that...”
(Focus group participant)

On the other hand, 42.1% of respondents state that their salary has not changed over the past year. This result shows that a significant portion of journalists did not experience an increase in earnings, which may indicate limited financial capacity in certain media outlets or stagnation in the reward system. A very small percentage, only 0.4% of respondents, report that their salary decreased over the past year.

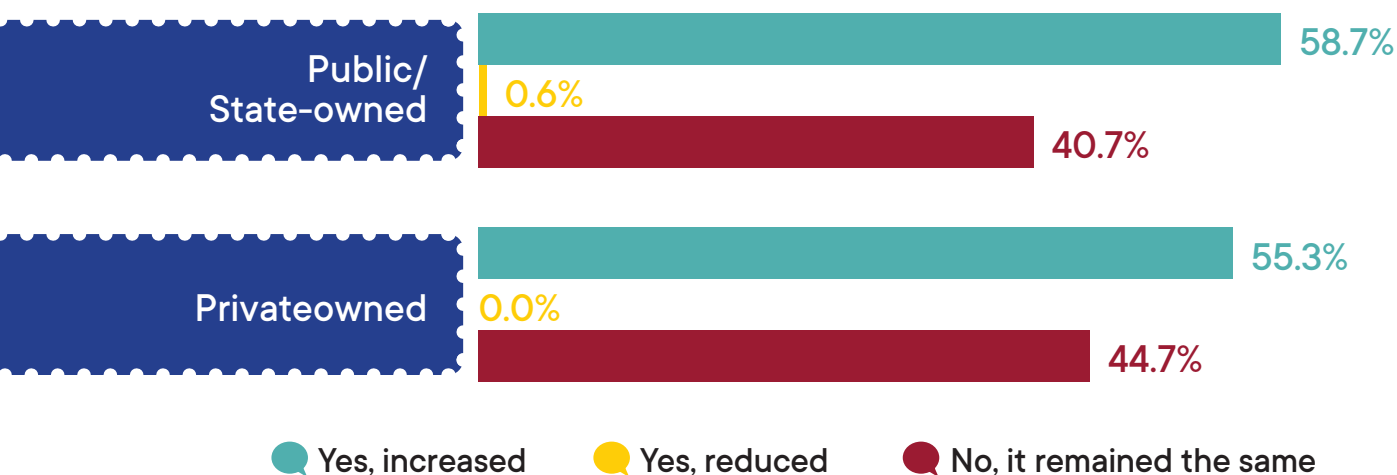
Graph 10: Has your salary increased/decreased in the past year, unrelated to the Europe Now 2 Program?



Among respondents who reported that their salary was increased in the past year (n=150), the largest share (34%) stated that it was increased by 10%, 26.7% reported a 20% increase, and 11.3% indicated a 15% increase.

Looking at the data on salary increases/decreases over the past year, there are no significant differences between journalists working in public and private media outlets. Specifically, 58.7% of journalists in public media report that their salary was increased, 0.6% report a decrease, and 40.7% say it remained the same. Similarly, among journalists in private media, 55.3% report a salary increase over the past year, 44.7% state it remained the same, and none reported a decrease.

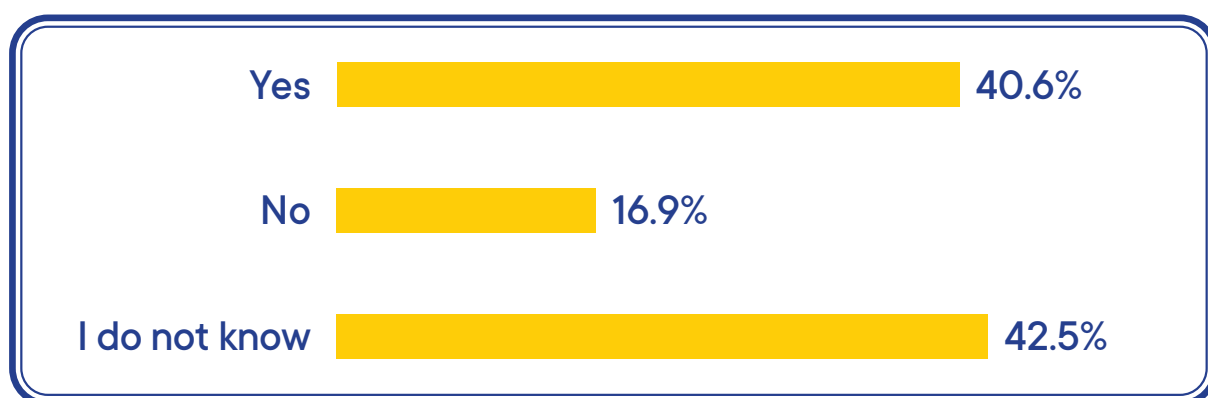
Graph 11: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? * Has your salary increased/decreased in the past year, unrelated to the Europe Now 2 Program?



Regarding pay equality in similar positions, the largest percentage of respondents, 42.5%, stated that they do not know whether their colleagues receive the same salary. This indicates a lack of transparency within media organizations and limited communication about salaries among employees.

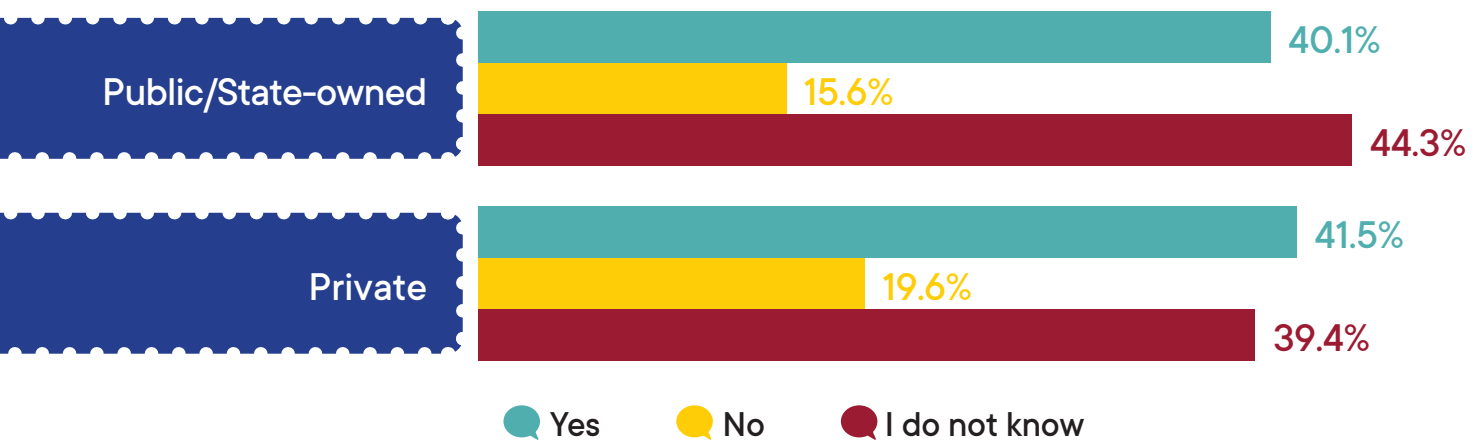
At the same time, 40.6% of respondents believe that colleagues in similar positions receive the same pay as they do, which may point to more standardized salary practices in certain newsrooms. In contrast, 16.9% of respondents report that their colleagues do not receive the same pay, even though they hold similar positions. This finding raises questions about inconsistencies, informal arrangements, or differences in individual negotiations.

Graph 12: To your knowledge, do your colleagues in similar positions receive the same salary as you?



Analyzing this question in relation to the ownership status of the media outlet where they work, we can conclude that a nearly equal percentage of journalists in public/state and private media believe that their colleagues in similar positions receive the same salary—40.1% in the public sector and 41.5% in the private sector. In both sectors, between 15% and 20% of respondents believe that salaries are not equal, further highlighting the perception of inconsistencies in pay practices.

Graph 13: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? * To your knowledge, do your col-leagues in similar positions receive the same salary as you?

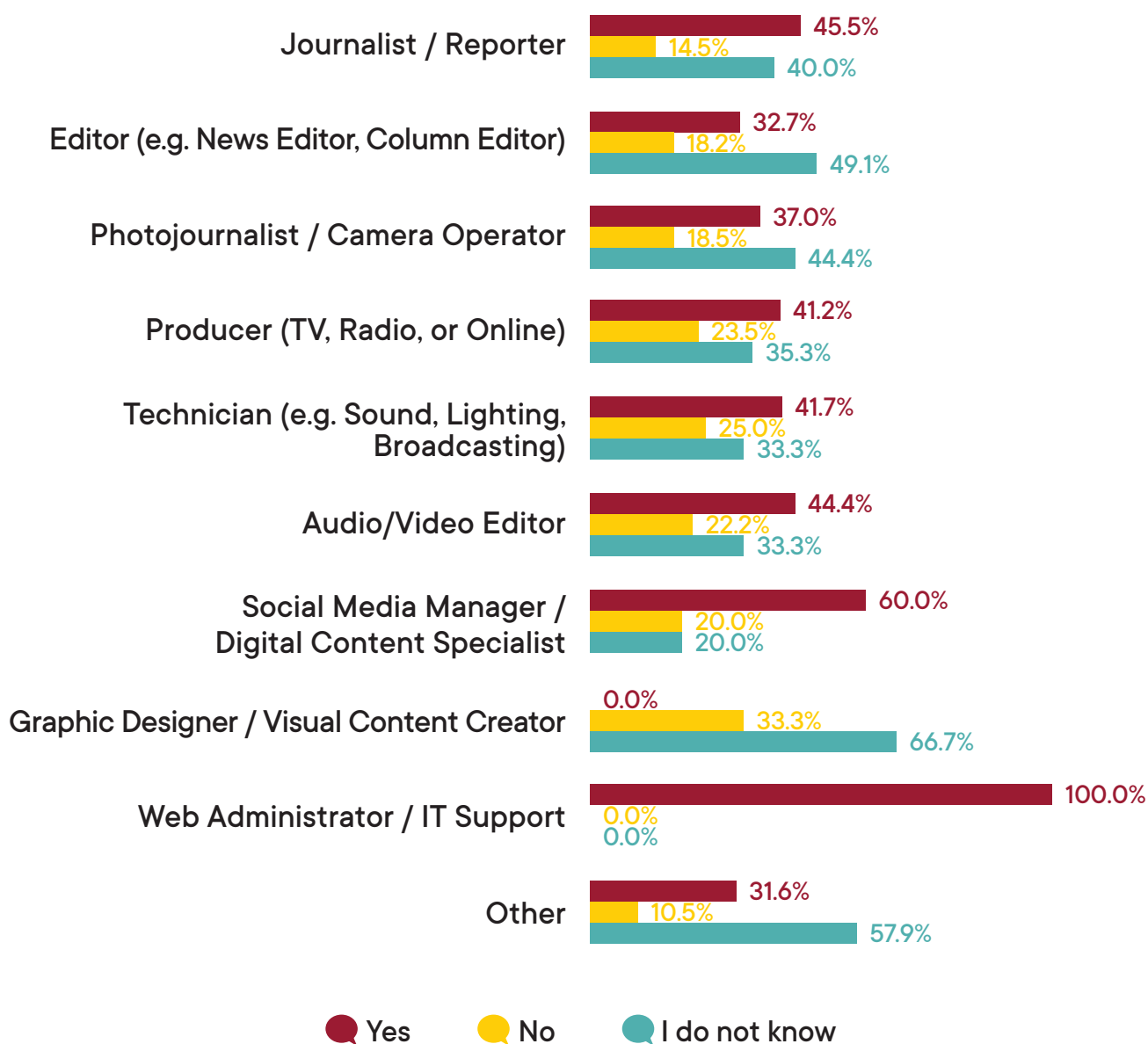


Additionally, the highest percentage of those who believe that colleagues in the same positions receive equal pay is found among web administrators (100%). High perceptions of pay equality are also reported by managers (60%) and journalists/reporters (45.5%), but in these groups there is also a significant share of respondents who “don’t know” (40%), indicating a lack of transparency. The greatest uncertainty is observed among graphic designers, where as many as 66.7% do not know whether pay differences exist, and only one-third believe salaries are equal. Photojournalists and editors also show high levels of uncertainty on this issue (44.4% and 49.1%, respectively).

The overall conclusion is that perceptions of equal pay vary significantly by position, and in most occupations, there is a high level of employee unawareness, indicating a lack of clear communication about salary structures within media organizations.



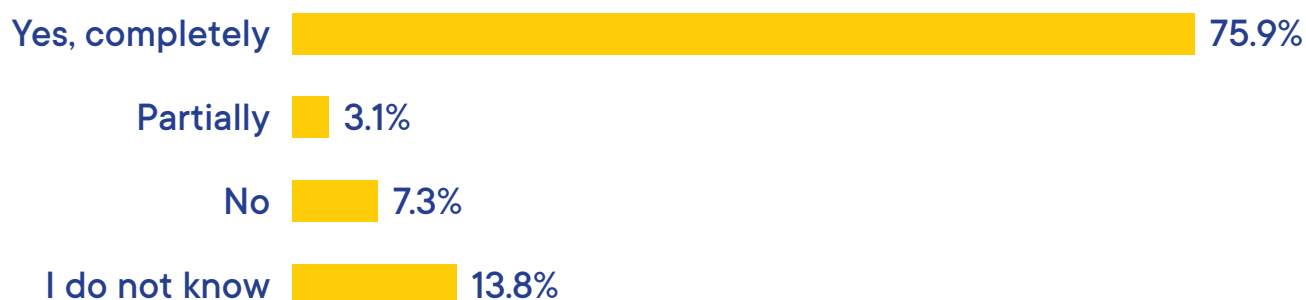
Graph 14: What is your registered job title? * To your knowledge, do your colleagues in similar positions receive the same salary as you?



The results show that most journalists report that their employer regularly pays contributions for social and health insurance. As many as 75.9% of respondents state that contributions are fully paid, which represents a positive indicator of formally regulated employment relationships and compliance with legal obligations.

Overall, although most journalists have their contributions properly paid, there is a concerning portion of employees working under irregular conditions. This underscores the need for stronger oversight and better education of employees regarding their rights.

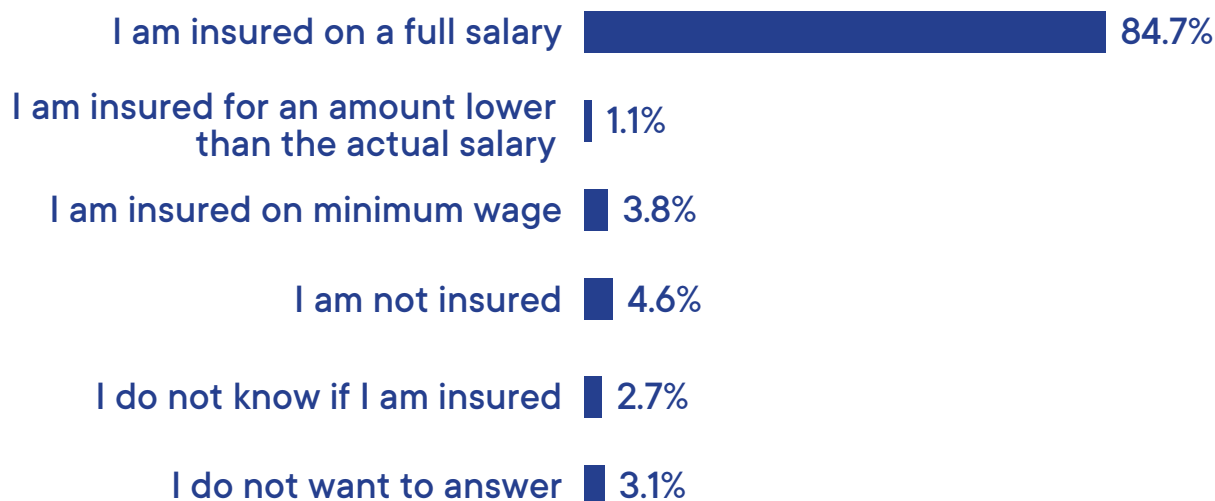
Graph 15: Does your employer pay you contributions for social and health insurance?



A similar picture emerges regarding insurance status. The largest percentage of respondents, 84.7%, report that they are insured based on their full salary. A smaller share (1.1%) states that they are insured on an amount lower than their actual salary, and 3.8% say they are insured at the minimum wage. Both cases indicate irregularities and undeclared work, especially if actual salaries exceed the minimum wage. Concerningly, 4.6% of respondents report that they are not insured at all, while 2.7% do not know their insurance status. An additional 3.1% of respondents chose not to answer.

This data indicates that most journalists have proper insurance based on their full salary, but they also reveal the presence of irregularities and a significant portion of employees without adequate coverage. These findings point to the need for stronger oversight and greater transparency in the system of contribution payments and insurance regulation.

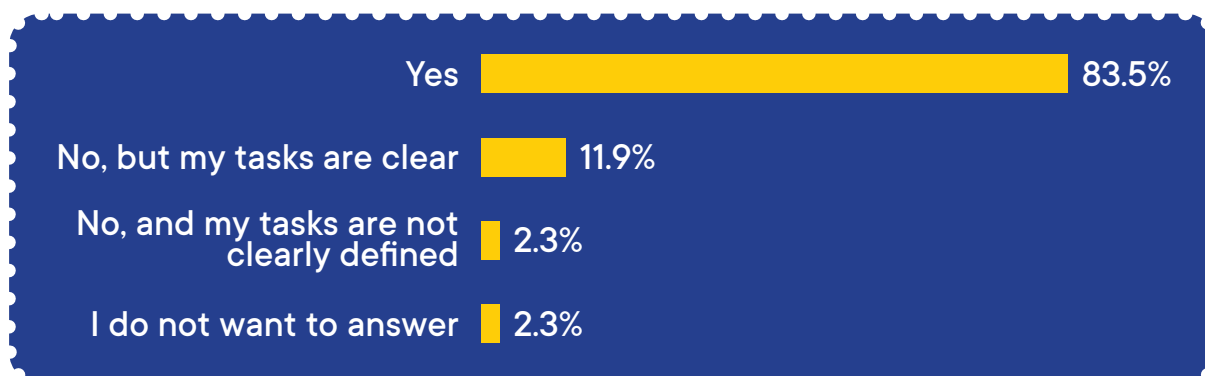
Graph 16: What is your insurance status?



The results show that most journalists work in media outlets that have established official regulations and clearly defined job descriptions. As many as 83.5% of respondents report that such documents exist, indicating a relatively high level of institutional organization and formalization of work procedures.

A smaller portion of respondents (11.9%) state that their newsroom does not have official regulations, but that their tasks are clearly defined. This group likely operates based on verbal agreements or established practices.

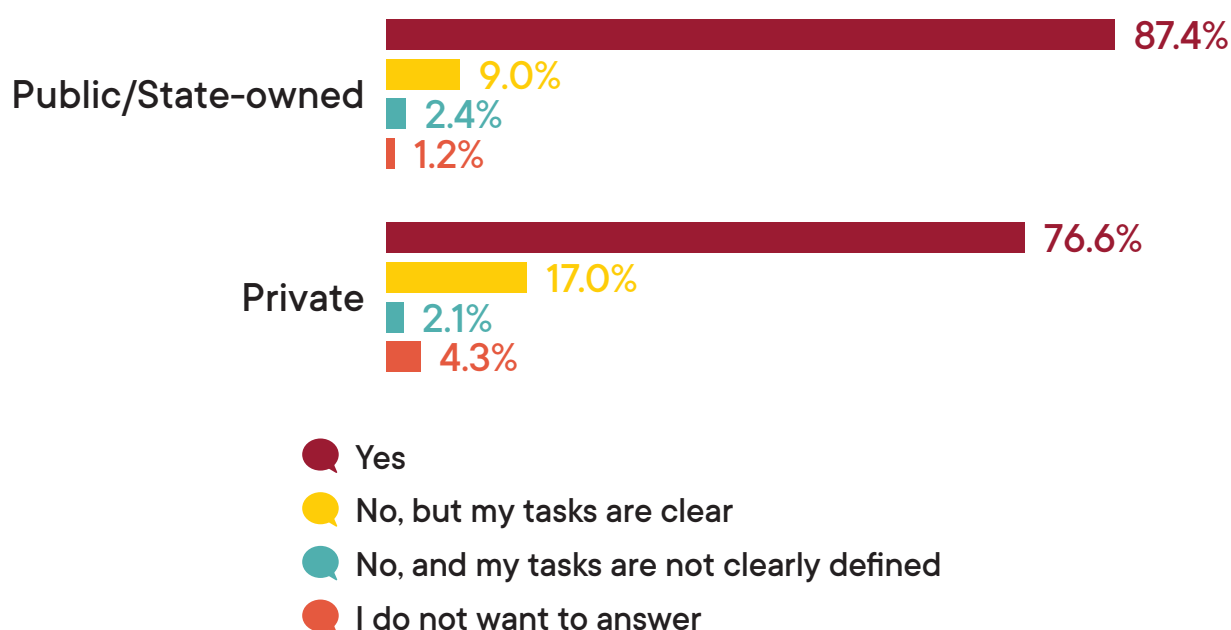
Graph 17: Are there official regulations or job descriptions in the media you work in?



Looking at the data on the relationship between media ownership and the existence of official regulations or job descriptions, we observe that in public media, as many as 87.4% of employees report that official regulations or clearly defined work duties exist. In contrast, in private media, this percentage is somewhat lower, at 76.6%.

At the same time, in private media a much higher share of employees report that regulations do not exist but that their tasks are clear (17% compared to 9% in the public sector). This suggests that private media rely more on informal work organization. In both sectors, a small percentage of respondents believe that tasks are not clearly defined (around 2%), while the share of those who chose not to answer is slightly higher in private media.

Graph 18: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? *Are there official regulations or job descriptions in the media you work in?



Most journalists work within a standard eight-hour workday. The largest share of respondents, 56.7%, report working 6–8 hours per day. However, 28.0% of respondents state that they work on average 8–10 hours daily, and 3.4% work more than 10 hours. These data indicate a frequent need for extended work hours and a potential risk of overload and burnout.

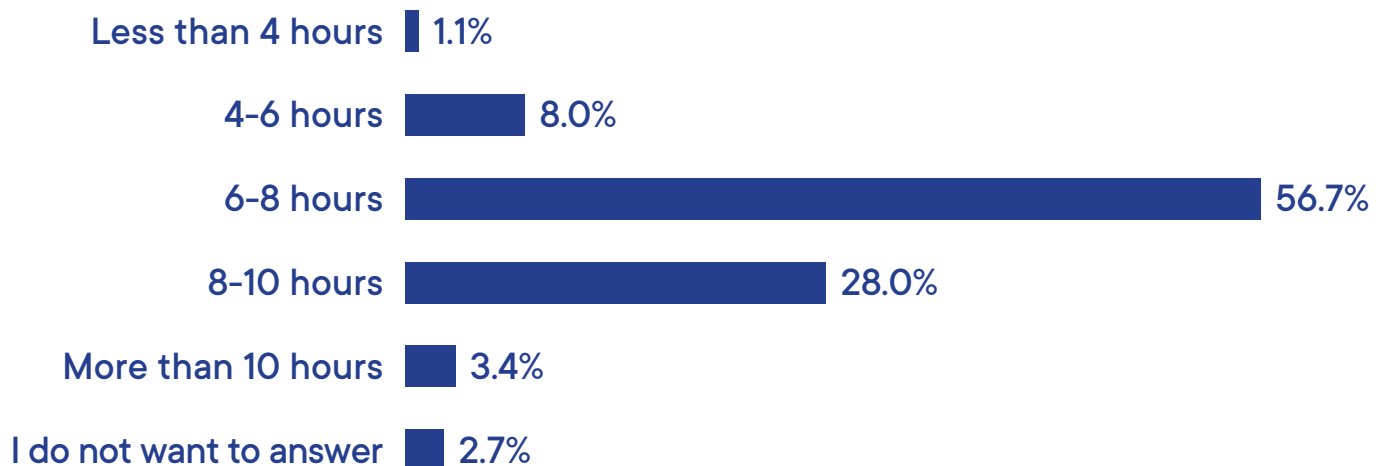
“There’s no set working hours; when something happens, we’re out in the field, and colleagues are in the control room.” (Focus group participant)



“They call us – something is happening, and we immediately have to go there.” (Focus group participant)

At the other end of the scale are those who work less than 4 hours (1.1%) or 4–6 hours per day (8.0%). These cases likely relate to freelance engagements or specific positions. An additional 2.7% of respondents chose not to disclose how many hours they work daily. Overall, journalism is confirmed as a profession characterized by high dynamism and frequent extended working hours.

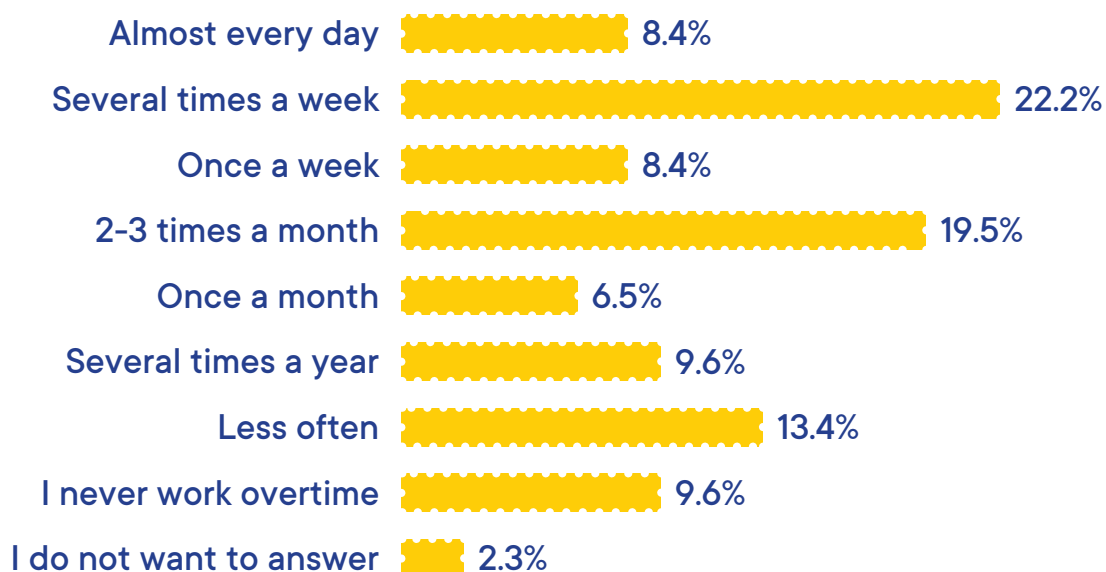
Graph 19: How many hours a day do you work on average?



Overtime work is a very common occurrence. The largest share of respondents, 22.2%, report working overtime several times a week. Another 19.5% work overtime 2–3 times per month, 8.4% once a week, and the same percentage (8.4%) almost every day. Smaller shares report overtime once a month (6.5%) or a few times a year (9.6%), while 13.4% say they work overtime “rarely.” Only 9.6% of respondents state that they never work overtime, and 2.3% chose not to answer. These data indicate that most journalists work overtime at least several times a month, with a significant portion doing so several times a week.

It should also be noted that qualitative findings indicate that overtime is one of the main sources of stress. Focus group participants, especially from the public service, report that heavy workloads often affect their private lives, while female journalists highlight the additional challenge of balancing parental responsibilities. The lack of systematic training for work in high-risk situations and the absence of psychological support further amplify feelings of exhaustion and the risk of burnout.

Graph 20: How often do you work overtime?



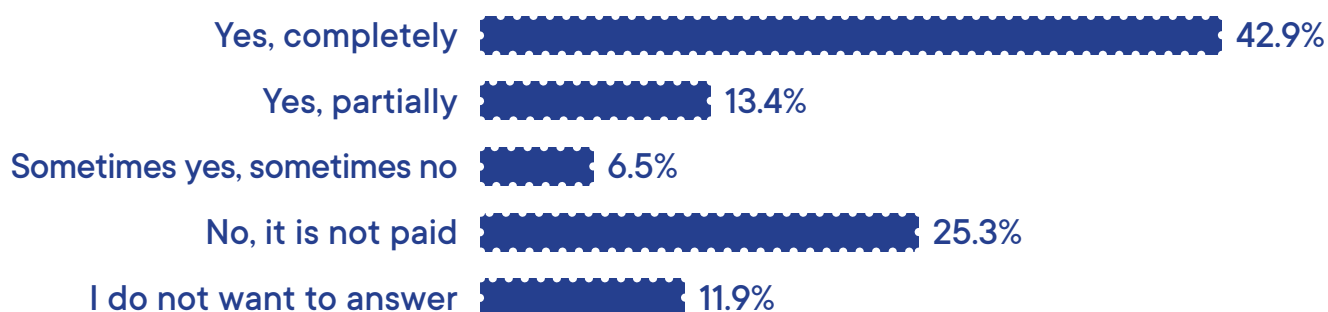
Although common, media employees report that overtime work is not consistently paid, indicating significant differences in practice among media outlets. The largest share of respondents, 42.9%, state that their overtime work is fully compensated, which represents a positive and legally compliant practice by employers who recognize the additional effort of their staff.

“It is assumed that we are on call and will go into the field whenever needed.”
(Focus group participant)

However, 13.4% of respondents report that their overtime is only partially paid, suggesting that extra hours are not fully compensated or are paid only in certain cases. Such practices may result from inconsistent internal policies or unclear rules regarding overtime work.

A concerning finding is that 25.3% of journalists say that overtime is not paid at all. Additionally, 11.9% of respondents chose not to answer this question, which may indicate the sensitivity of the topic or fear of repercussions, especially in newsrooms where overtime work is neither formally recognized nor compensated.

Graph 21: Are you paid for overtime work?

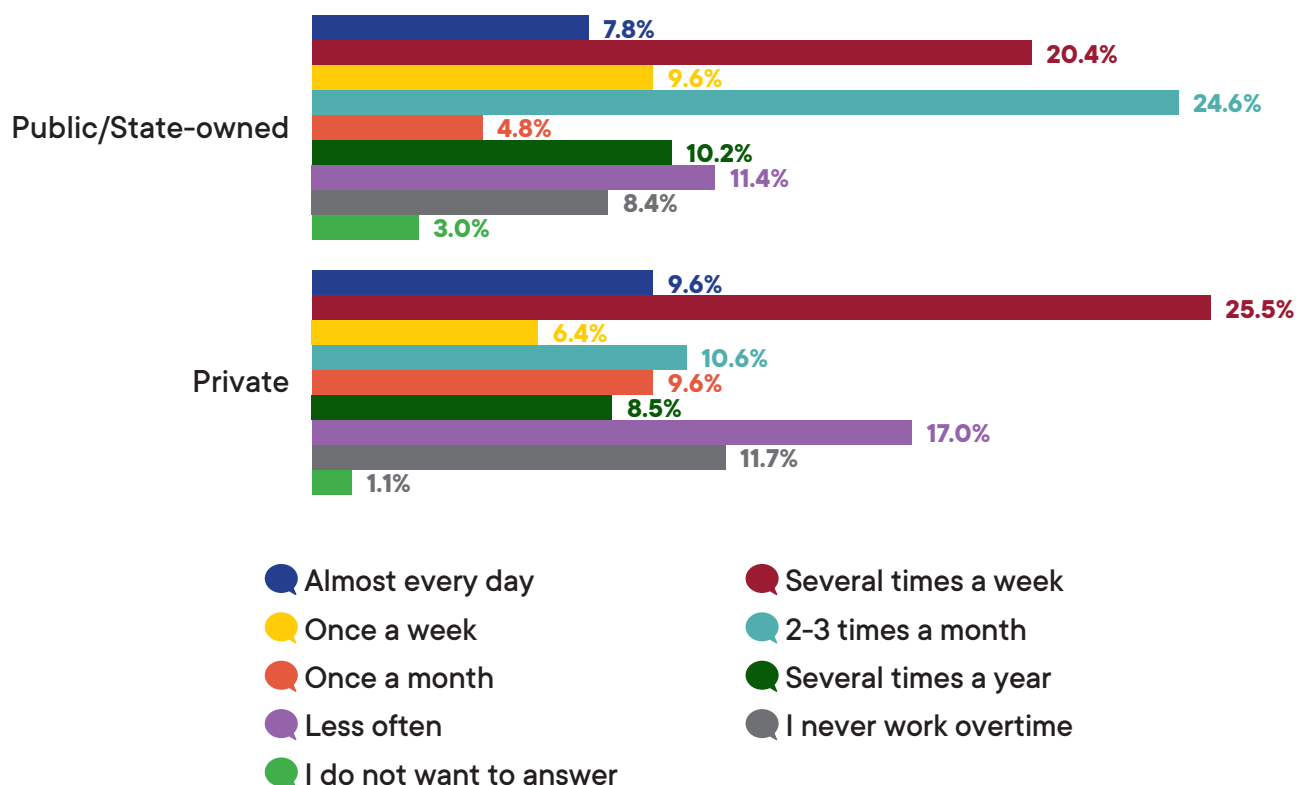


Looking at the data on the relationship between media ownership type and the frequency of overtime work, certain differences between the public/state and private sectors can be observed.

Overtime is more pronounced in private media: 9.6% of journalists work overtime almost every day, and as many as 25.5% several times a week. In contrast, in public/state media these figures are lower (7.8% and 20.4%). The private sector also shows a smaller share of those who never work overtime (11.7% compared to 8.4% in the public sector), further indicating a higher workload.

On the other hand, the public/state sector has the highest percentage of employees who work overtime only occasionally—particularly 2–3 times per month (24.6%), which is more than double compared to the private sector (10.6%). This suggests that overtime hours in public media are more often occasional, rather than intense and continuous.

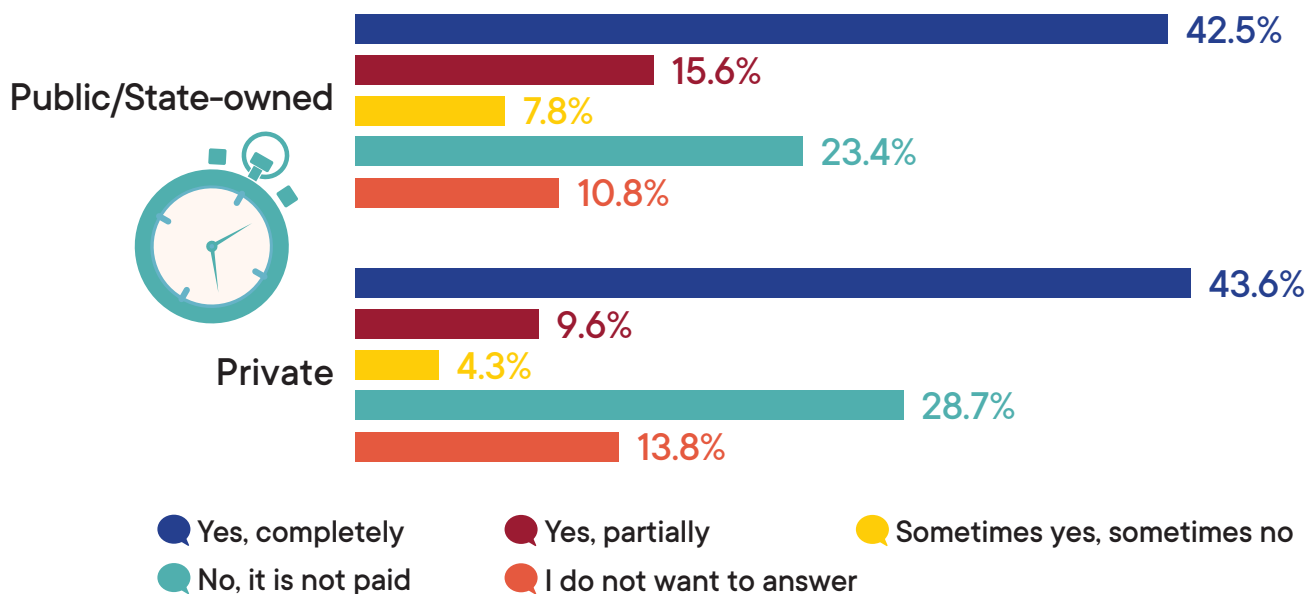
Graph 22: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? *
How often do you work overtime?



Looking at the data on the relationship between media ownership type and whether overtime is paid, patterns in the public/state and private sectors are very similar, with a few important differences.

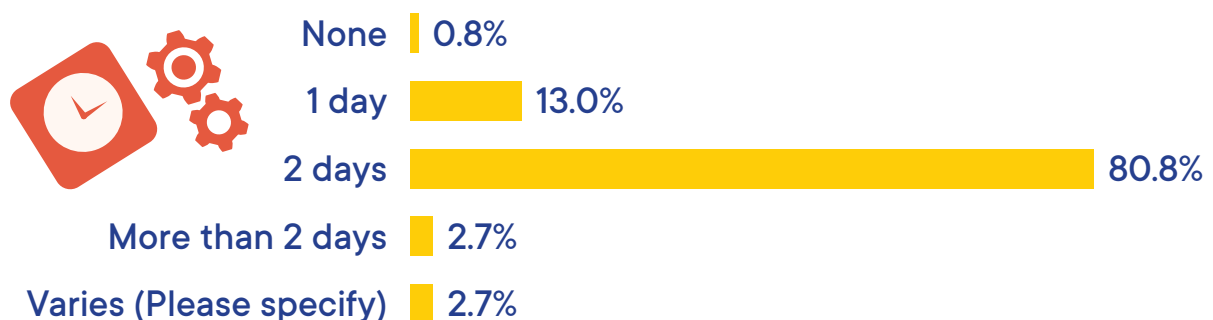
In both sectors, roughly the same percentage of employees report that their overtime is fully paid—42.5% in public media and 43.6% in private media. This shows that nearly half of journalists, regardless of media type, have clear and proper compensation for overtime work. Differences appear in partial compensation: the public sector reports partial payment significantly more often (15.6% compared to 9.6%), while in the private sector a higher share claims that overtime is not paid at all (28.7% compared to 23.4%). This suggests that private media more frequently operate without formal mechanisms for overtime compensation.

Graph 23: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for? * Are you paid for overtime work?



When it comes to days off, 80.8% of journalists report having two days off per week, while 13% state that they have only one. An additional 2.7% say they have more than two days off, and 2.7% report that the number of days off varies. Particularly concerning is that 0.8% of journalists indicate that they do not have any days off on a weekly basis.

Graph 24: How many days off do you have per week?



Furthermore, regarding annual leave, 94.6% of journalists report having regular annual leave, while 3.1% state that they do not. Among those who have annual leave, almost all respondents (97.6%) say that they use it.

Graph 25 : Do you have regular annual leave?



Graph 26 : Do you use it?



When asked how many days their annual leave typically lasts, the largest share of respondents (71%) said it lasts between 20 and 30 days, while 15.6% reported a duration of 1 to 20 days. Additionally, 10.8% stated that their leave lasts between 30 and 40 days, and the remaining 2.7% said it lasts less than 10 days.

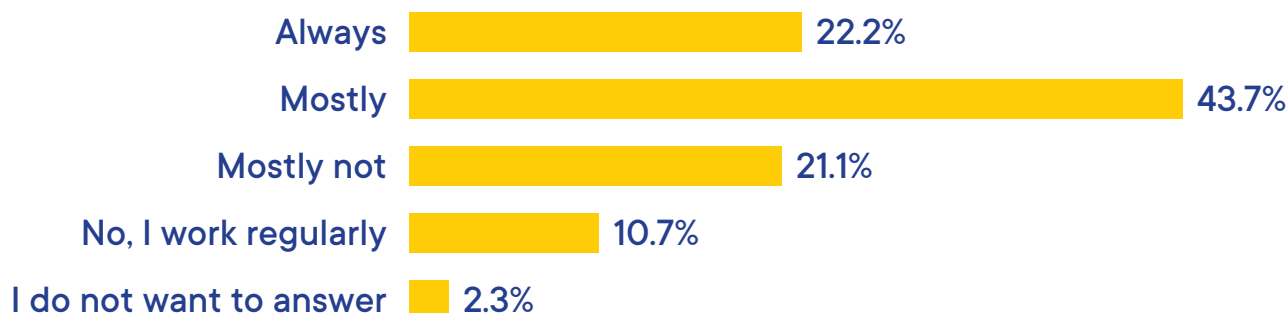
The results also show that most journalists in Montenegro are not completely free during national and religious holidays, which is expected given the nature of media work. The largest share of respondents, 43.7%, report that they are mostly free, but not always. This indicates a flexible, yet partially demanding schedule during holidays. Furthermore, 22.2% of respondents say they are always free during holidays, representing a relatively small but important segment of the workforce that has a clearly regulated and stable work system in their newsrooms. This shows that some media outlets respect holidays as regular days off, even in a profession that often requires continuous availability.

At the same time, 21.1% of respondents report that they are mostly not free during holidays, while 10.7% state that they work as usual, just like any other day. These findings indicate that a significant portion of journalists spends holidays working, often due to the need to monitor current events and inform the public without interruption.

Overall, the results confirm that many journalists in Montenegro work at least occasionally, or even regularly, during holidays. This situation reflects the unique nature of the profession, where public information continues even on holidays, and highlights the need for adequate compensation and regulation of work on nationally significant days.

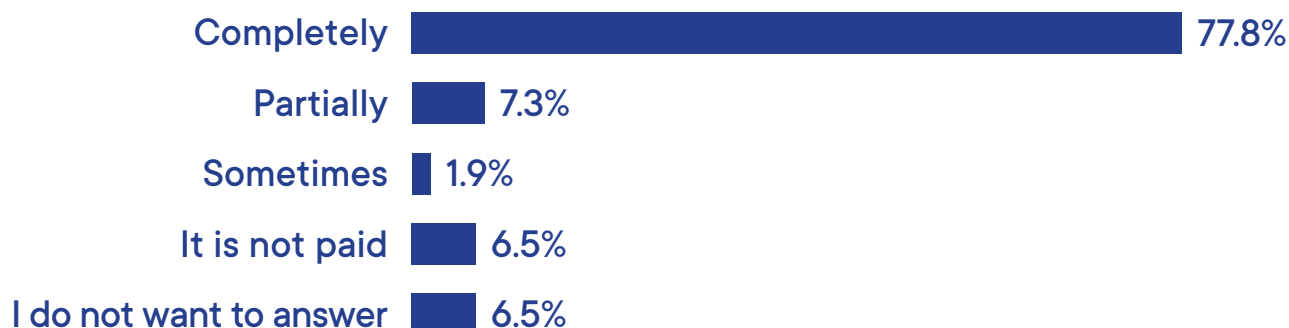


Graph 27: Do you get days off during national and religious holidays?



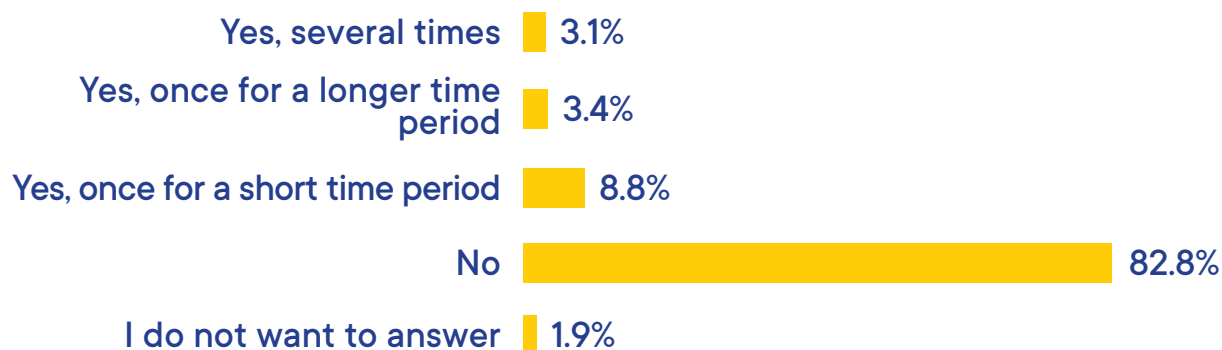
The results show that work during national and religious holidays is, in most cases, additionally paid, indicating compliance with legal obligations within most media outlets. The largest share of respondents, 77.8%, report that work during holidays is fully compensated, representing a positive trend and confirming that many employers respect regulations concerning work on nationally significant days. Furthermore, 7.3% of respondents state that their holiday work is only partially paid, suggesting that compensation exists but not to the full extent required by law. Such practices can lead to inequalities among employees and inconsistent application of labor rights. A smaller share of journalists, 1.9%, report that holiday work is sometimes additionally paid, indicating inconsistency in employer practices and case-by-case decisions regarding compensation.

Graph 28: Is work during holidays paid extra?



Regarding sick leave, the results show that most journalists in Montenegro did not take any sick leave during the past year. As many as 82.8% of respondents report that they did not use sick leave at all, which may indicate good health among employees, but could also reflect possible pressure to work despite health issues which is a common occurrence in professions with high workloads.

Graph 29: Have you been on sick leave during the last year?



Most journalists believe they have adequate access to modern technological tools necessary for their work. As many as 47.5% of respondents completely agree, and an additional 29.9% mostly agree with this statement. This indicates that most newsrooms provide basic and modern equipment, such as computers, stable internet, and relevant software. A smaller portion of respondents (9.2%) take a neutral stance, while a total of 8.8% disagree to some extent (1.4% completely, 4.8% mostly), suggesting that some media outlets still face technological shortcomings. As a particular issue, photographers highlighted that they rarely receive equipment from their media organizations and often must purchase it themselves.



“At any given moment when I am in the field, I have €4,000–5,000 worth of equipment with me. Fortunately, I now have one of the two cameras I use provided by the newsroom. I bought the other myself. I know my fellow photographers buy all their own equipment. That is how it has been for most of my career. These cameras and lenses are very expensive.” (Focus group participant)

Most journalists assess that their workspace meets basic conditions for safe and quality work, though to a slightly lesser extent than access to equipment. A total of 37.5% completely agree with this statement, and 33.3% mostly agree.

Regarding working hours, 40.2% of respondents completely agree, and 26.8% mostly agree that working hours are clearly defined and respected in practice. However, a significant segment (16.1%) takes a neutral stance, which may indicate variability in work duties or insufficient formalization. An additional 11.9% disagree to some extent, suggesting that in some newsrooms there are issues with overtime, undefined shifts, or unrealistic expectations regarding availability.

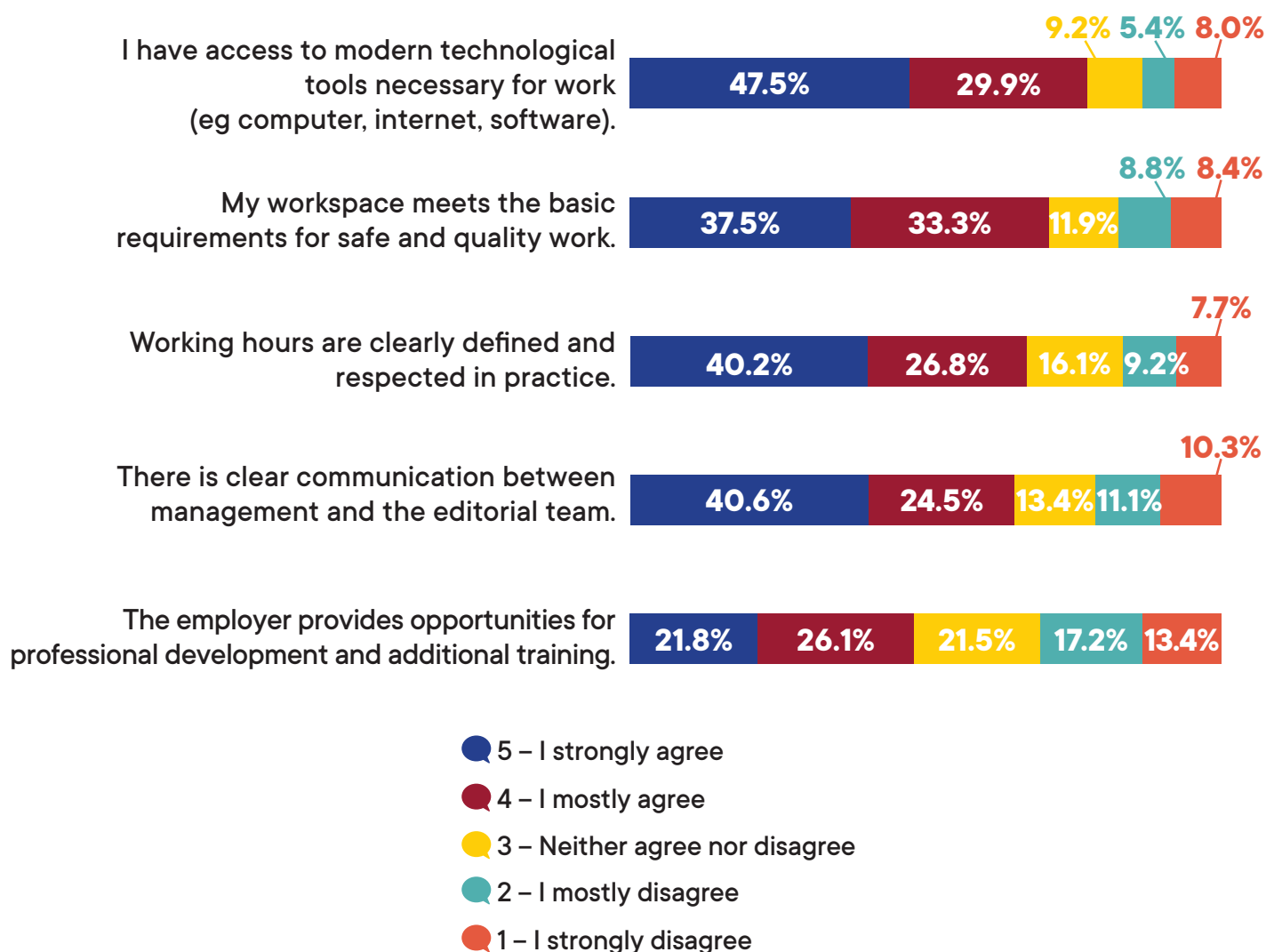
Communication within newsrooms shows a relatively positive trend: 40.6% of journalists completely agree, and 24.5% mostly agree that there is clear communication between management and the editorial team.

The lowest-rated statement relates to opportunities for professional development. Only 21.8% of respondents completely agree, while 26.1% mostly agree, totaling 47.9%. At the same time, a significant portion of journalists feel that such opportunities are inadequate: 17.2% mostly disagree, and 13.4% completely disagree. An additional 21.5% are neutral. This distribution of responses indicates that training and professional development remain one of the least developed areas in Montenegro’s media sector.



“There are a lot of problems, but there are also opportunities, let’s be realistic. The problem is that we are so overwhelmed with work that we don’t feel like going to training. That’s bad.” (Focus group participant)

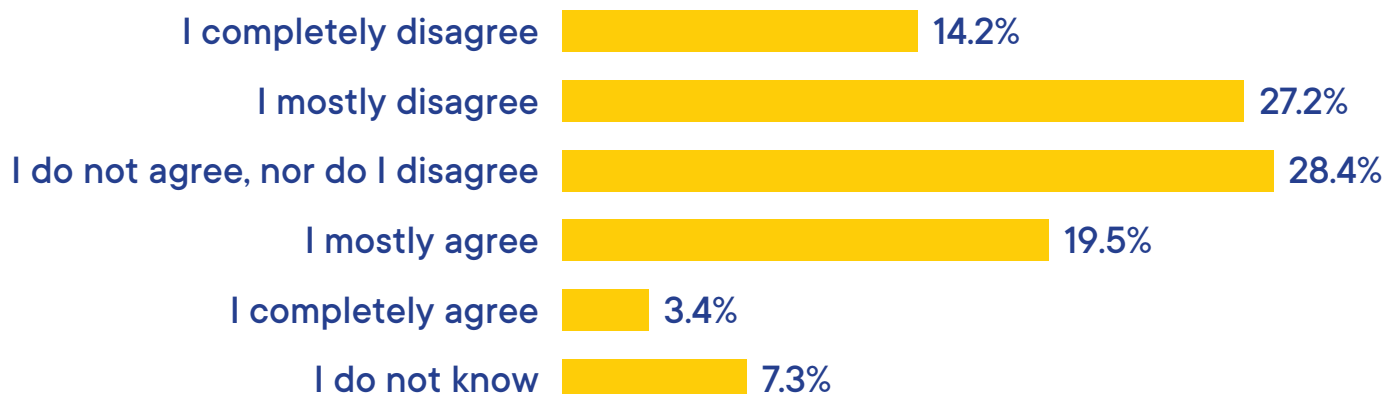
Graph 30: Please rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) how much you agree with the following statements:



The results show that the overall level of confidence in the stability and long-term prospects of employment in journalism in Montenegro is relatively low. The largest share of respondents, 28.4%, takes a neutral stance, suggesting that a significant number of journalists are uncertain about the profession's outlook and cannot make a clear judgment on its long-term stability.

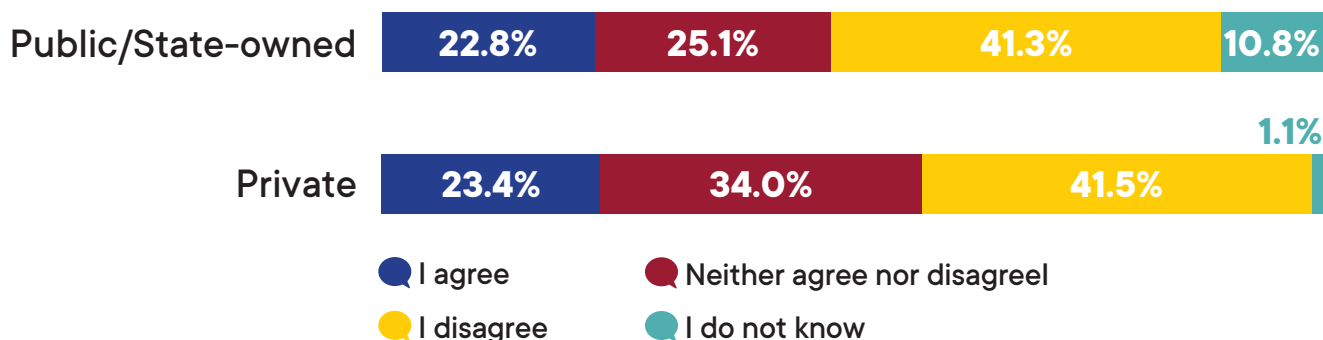
Concerningly, 27.2% of respondents mostly disagree, and an additional 14.2% completely disagree with the statement that journalism provides stable and long-term employment prospects. Altogether, more than 41% of journalists hold a negative perception of the profession's stability, signaling strong concerns about insecure contracts, low salaries, heavy workloads, and uncertain media business models.

Graph 31: Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement: “I believe that journalism in Montenegro offers stable and long-term employment prospects.”



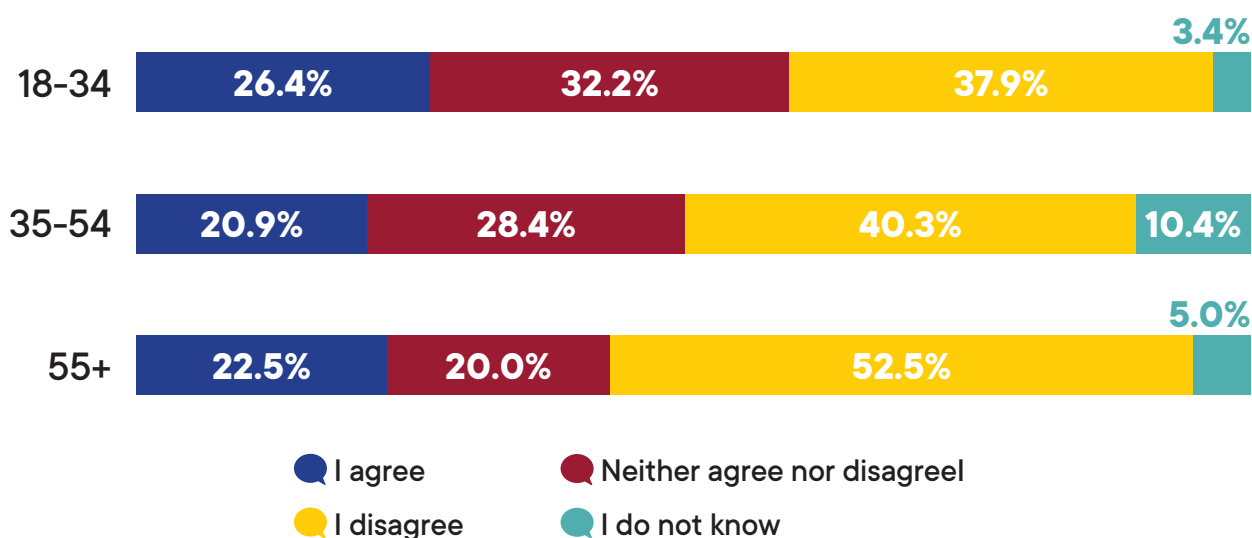
In both types of media, skepticism dominates regarding the statement that journalism in Montenegro provides stable and long-term employment prospects. Slightly more than 40% of employees in public/state and private media report that they disagree with this statement, while the share of those who agree is relatively low (22.8% in public media and 23.4% in private media). A neutral stance is somewhat more common in private media (34.0%) than in public media (25.1%), indicating greater uncertainty among employees in the private sector. Overall, the response pattern suggests that, regardless of media ownership, employees perceive journalism as a profession with limited stability and modest long-term employment prospects.

Graph 32: Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement: “I believe that journalism in Montenegro offers stable and long-term employment prospects.” * What is the ownership status of the media company you work for?



In all age groups, the prevailing belief is that journalism in Montenegro does not provide stable and long-term employment prospects, with negative attitudes increasing with age. The youngest respondents (18–34) show a slightly higher level of optimism, as around 26% agree with the statement, while this percentage decreases in older age groups. At the same time, the share of those who disagree rises with age, reaching its peak in the 55+ group, where as many as 52.5% of respondents believe that journalism does not offer long-term stability. The 35–54 age group shows the highest level of uncertainty (“don’t know” – 10.4%), which may indicate greater insecurity during the mid-career stage. This pattern suggests that perceptions of instability in the profession increase with longer experience in the sector.

Graph 33: Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement: “I believe that journalism in Montenegro offers stable and long-term employment prospects.” * Age

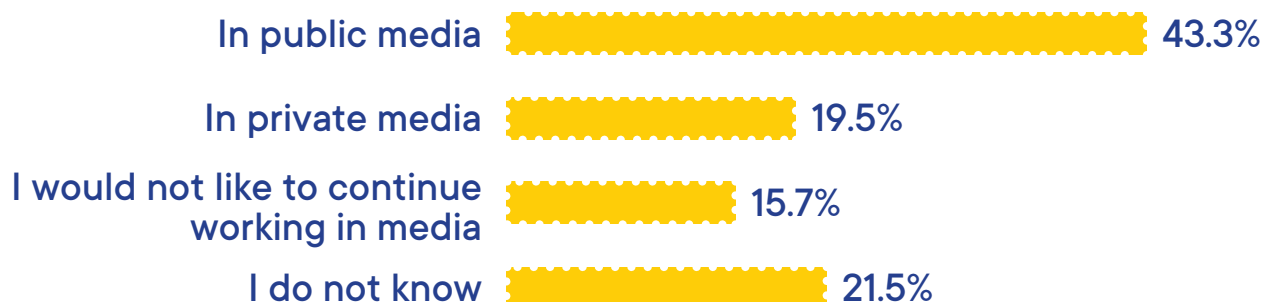


The results show that the largest share of journalists in Montenegro prefer working in public media. As many as 43.3% of respondents state that they would rather work for the public broadcaster or other public media institutions. This indicates a perception of public media as more stable, secure, and likely better organized in terms of working conditions, salaries, and long-term employment.

The second-largest group prefers working in private media, representing 19.5% of respondents. This suggests that some journalists see private media as offering greater professional challenges, faster career advancement, or more opportunities for creative and investigative work.

A significant number (15.7%) report that they would no longer want to work in the media at all. This is particularly important, as it reflects high levels of dissatisfaction with the profession, burnout, and a perception of limited career development prospects in the sector.

Graph 34: Where would you rather work?



The analysis of responses from respondents who indicated a preference for working in public media shows that journalists predominantly choose them due to a high level of job security. The most frequently mentioned elements of security include stable and regular funding, job stability, timely salary payments, and respect for labor rights such as sick leave, vacation, and working hours. The second important category of reasons relates to better working conditions and organization. Journalists note that public media are generally more professionally organized, have clearer work rules, and experience less pressure compared to private media. It is also noted that public media have greater access to resources, larger editorial teams, and better technical infrastructure, which facilitates daily work.

The third group of reasons concerns opportunities for professional advancement and development. Participants believe that public media offer more opportunities for growth and more stable career paths, as well as work that is more predictable and less risky in the long term. A significant portion of responses also emphasizes the social role of public media and the responsibility to inform the public objectively, impartially, and in line with professional standards. For some journalists, this is a key motivation, as they perceive public media services as institutions that operate in the interest of citizens rather than commercial or political centers of power.

A smaller number of responses relate to personal experiences of long-term work in the public sector, as well as preferences linked to specific content (e.g., sports programs), technical aspects (better signal coverage), or personal affinity for the public broadcaster.



“I think there’s much less work in public media, they always have plenty of staff, just look at RTCG. In private media, there are fewer people, so you have to cover everything; the workload is less divided, and everyone jumps in wherever needed.” (Focus group participant)

On the other hand, responses from those who prefer working in private media show that journalistic freedom and editorial independence are key motivations for their choice. Many note that private media provide greater autonomy in selecting topics, more freedom in content management, and less political influence, while public media are seen as overly controlled by the state or the current government.

Another significant theme is the opportunity for professional expression and creativity. Respondents emphasize that private media provide more space for independent work, creative expression, content creation, and development of original ideas. They view work in the private sector as more flexible, less formalistic, and less burdened by administrative procedures.

Greater opportunities for advancement and a more visible merit-based system are also highlighted. Many believe that private media offer more chances for professional growth and achieving better results, and some mention better financial conditions compared to the public sector.

Some respondents note loyalty to private media due to long-term experience in the sector, either as employees or media founders. For them, the private sector represents an established professional environment they trust.

It should be noted that negative views of public media are clearly expressed: respondents describe them as bureaucratic, politically dependent, with rigid rules and limited space for independent journalism.

The most common reason respondents cite for leaving the media sector is a combination of low pay and high stress levels. They emphasize that journalism in Montenegro is underpaid, that salaries are disproportionate to the workload, responsibilities, and working conditions, and that the media sector is among the least valued in terms of compensation and benefits. The second dominant reason concerns difficult and often insecure working conditions. Respondents mention excessive workloads, lack of defined working hours, poor conditions in the field, irregular or precarious employment, and the absence of collective agreements. Particular attention is drawn to the physically demanding work of camera operators and reporters, as well as the lack of protection—including the fact that journalists do not have the status of official public employees. The third group of reasons relates to diminished professionalism and political control within the media sector. Many respondents note that newsrooms are burdened by party influence, political loyalty, poor management, unprofessional superiors, and a lack of editorial independence. According to their assessments, such an environment leads to a decline in journalism quality, erosion of the profession's credibility, and a loss of job meaning.

A fourth significant theme is the lack of career prospects and advancement opportunities. Respondents emphasize that the media sector does not offer stable career paths, that competencies and experience are undervalued, and that promotions are often tied to political or personal favoritism rather than quality or work performance. This contributes to demotivation and burnout, especially among those with long careers. Some respondents also mention personal reasons, such as the desire for a change, interest in other professions, or plans to start their own business. Many describe fatigue and exhaustion after years of work in a demanding and poorly rewarded environment.

Next, respondents were asked whether they believe male and female journalists are treated equally by different actors. The largest share, 65.5%, believe that men and women are treated the same by editors. This indicates a relatively high level of gender equality in editorial processes. However, 6.9% believe men are treated more favorably, while 6.1% think women hold an advantage. A significant portion (17.6%) is unsure, which may point to a lack of transparency in editorial decision-making.

A similar pattern appears in relationships among colleagues: 65.1% of respondents believe collegial relations are gender-balanced. Still, 5.7% think men are treated better, while 10.0% believe women receive more favorable treatment. Another 15.3% cannot assess, indicating that experiences vary across newsrooms.

Most respondents (64.8%) feel that employers treat men and women equally. However, 9.6% believe men are favored, while 4.6% report that women are treated better. With 17.2% unsure, these findings suggest that formal workplace gender equality exists, but it is not a universal experience for all journalists.

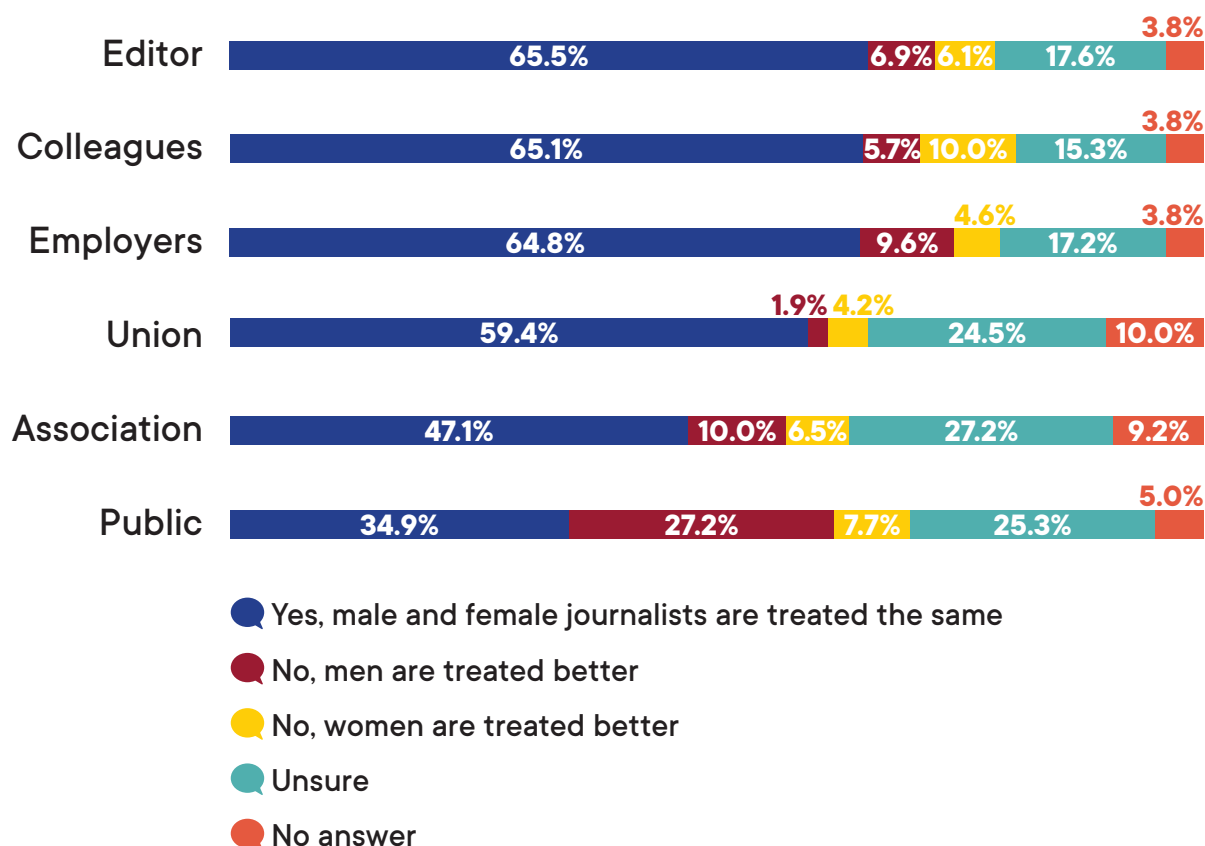
Regarding trade unions, 59.4% of respondents believe treatment is not gender-based. However, 19.4% are unsure, 6.2% think men are treated better, and 24.5% believe women receive better treatment. This notable deviation from other categories may reflect the perception that unions are more attuned to challenges faced by women journalists.

For professional associations, perceptions of gender equality are slightly lower—only 47.1% believe both genders are treated equally. Ten percent think men are treated better, while 6.5% believe women hold an advantage. A very high percentage (27.2%) are unsure, which may indicate limited visibility of associations' work or limited contact between journalists and these organizations.

The highest perceived inequality appears in the public's treatment of journalists. Only 34.9% believe the public treats male and female journalists equally. Meanwhile, 27.2% think men are treated better, 7.7% think women are favored, and 25.3% are unsure. This reflects gender stereotypes present in society, online spaces, and audience commentary.



Graph 35 : Would you say that male and female journalists are treated the same by:



The results clearly show that the overwhelmingly most important priority for journalists in Montenegro is the increase and stabilization of salaries. This option was chosen by 62.1% of respondents, strongly confirming that financial working conditions are the key challenge in the profession. This finding aligns with earlier results indicating widespread dissatisfaction with low pay and its misalignment with the demands of the job.

The second most desired change, though with a much smaller percentage, relates to better protection from political or commercial pressures, selected by 9.2% of respondents. This indicates that, alongside economic insecurity, external pressures significantly challenge journalists' professional integrity.

Graph 36: What change would you most like to see regarding your working conditions? (Please indicate the option you would put first):

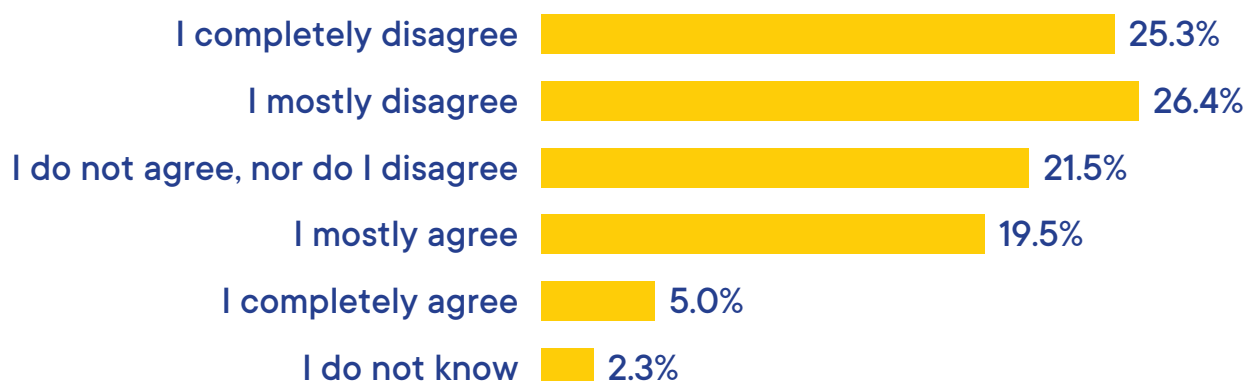


The study participants are divided on the statement that journalism is still considered a respected and socially valuable profession in Montenegro. Overall, 51.7% of respondents (26.4% who mostly disagree and 25.3% who completely disagree) believe that the profession does not enjoy the level of social prestige it should.



“Long ago, people respected journalists; they delivered the news and reported what was happening. Today, everyone knows everything through social media, news appears there first before anywhere else. That’s why journalists are increasingly less respected.”
(Focus group participant)

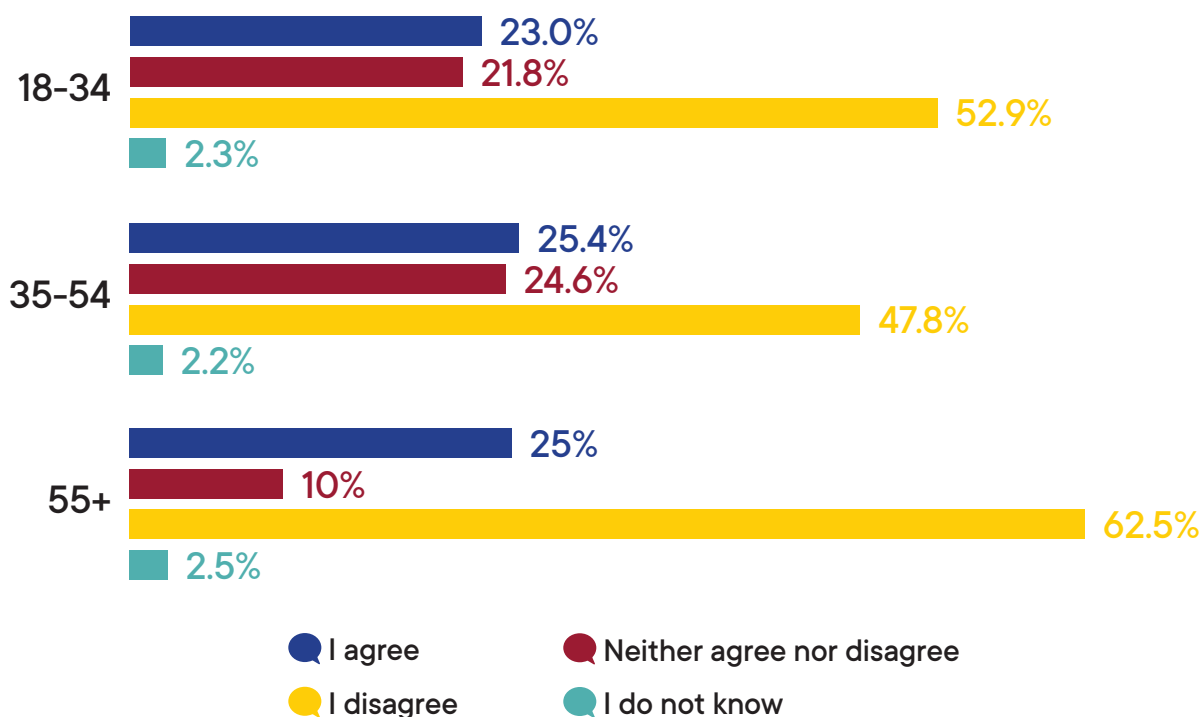
Graph 37: Rate to what extent you agree with the following statement: "I believe that journalism in Montenegro offers stable and long-term employment prospects."



The perception of journalism's social prestige in Montenegro does not differ significantly between men and women: in both groups, the prevailing belief is that journalism is no longer considered a highly respected and socially valuable profession.

Furthermore, the data clearly show that across all age groups, the dominant belief is that journalism is no longer a valued and socially esteemed profession in Montenegro, although the intensity of this perception varies by generation. Among the youngest respondents, more than half (52.9%) disagree with the statement, indicating that young journalists already recognize the low social status of the profession at the start of their careers.

Graph 38: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Journalism is still considered a respected and socially valuable profession in Montenegro." * Age



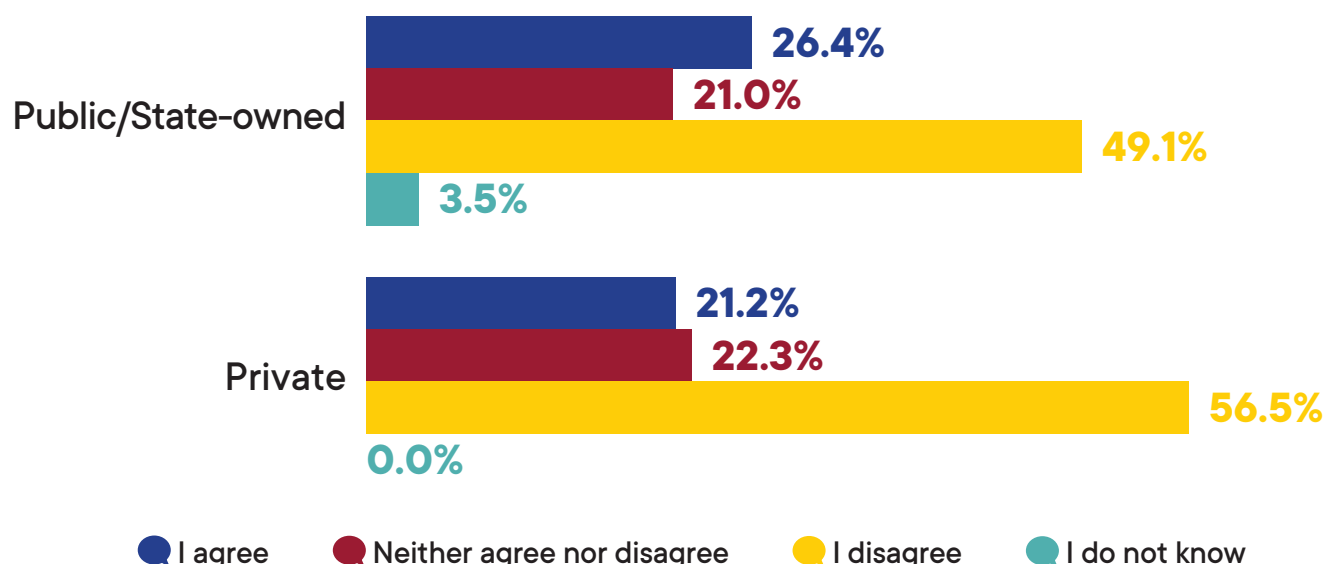
The data show that, regardless of whether they work in public/state or private media, most respondents believe that journalism is no longer perceived as a highly respected and socially valued profession in Montenegro. However, differences between the sectors exist, suggesting a slightly more optimistic view in public media.

In public media, almost half of respondents (49.1%) disagree with the statement that journalism is still valued. Notably, this sector shows a higher level of positive responses than private media: 26.4% of employees agree with the statement, the highest proportion among the groups. These results indicate that, although negative perceptions prevail, employees in public media are somewhat more likely to believe in the preserved social significance of the profession, likely due to the institutional role and traditionally greater public trust in this sector.

In private media, skepticism is even stronger: as many as 56.5% of respondents disagree that journalism still enjoys social prestige, a noticeably higher percentage than in the public sector. The share of those who agree is only 21.2%, while a similar proportion (22.3%) is neutral.

These findings suggest that employees in private newsrooms hold a more critical view of the profession's social perception, likely due to greater exposure to market pressures, less secure working conditions, and political or commercial influences that affect the media's reputation.

*Graph 39: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Journalism is still considered a respected and socially valuable profession in Montenegro." * What is the ownership status of the media company you work for?*



The findings of this chapter present a complex picture of the employment status and working conditions of journalists in Montenegro. On one hand, most journalists have formally regulated employment relationships—predominantly permanent contracts, regular salaries, and properly paid contributions and insurance based on full wages. Most work in newsrooms with official regulations, clearly defined job descriptions, adequate technical equipment, and relatively stable, timely salary payments.

On the other hand, the data reveal a range of structural weaknesses: a significant volume of overtime work, which is often unpaid or inconsistently compensated; some journalists working without contracts or without paid contributions; low and sometimes stagnant salaries, with the majority earning between €600 and €1,000; limited opportunities for professional development; and a strong perception that the profession does not offer stable or long-term prospects.

Although most journalists perceive newsroom relationships and the treatment of men and women as largely equitable, the perception of the profession's social prestige is predominantly negative. Journalism is seen as an undervalued occupation, exposed to political and commercial pressures, financially insufficiently rewarded, and burdened with high work intensity.

As their key priorities, journalists highlight the need for salary increases and stabilization, stronger protection against pressures, greater editorial independence, better union and professional support, and the development of mechanisms for continuous professional training.



Safety and editorial pressure

This chapter covers an analysis of the level of physical and psychological safety of journalists in Montenegro, as well as an overview of the various forms of pressure and harassment they face in their work. Journalism, as a profession of public interest, often carries a high degree of risk, whether through direct threats, online attacks, or more subtle forms of professional pressure. In this context, it is particularly important to understand to what extent journalists feel protected and supported in their work environment.

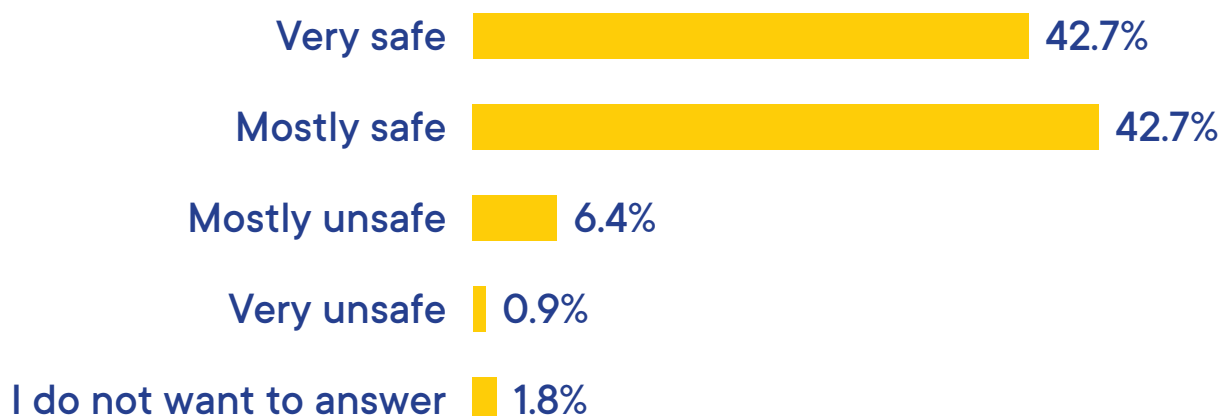
By analyzing questions about the subjective sense of safety, both physical and psychological, the study aims to assess how journalists encounter conditions that may affect their personal security and mental health. Additionally, the research examines the frequency and types of threats or harassment, including verbal attacks, online harassment, physical threats, and other forms of undesirable behavior, with the option for respondents to describe experiences not covered by the provided categories.

A special focus is placed on editorial independence as one of the key principles of professional journalism. This section investigates the extent to which journalists believe they work autonomously, without external influence from media owners, advertisers, or political actors, as well as their perception of which media sector allows the greatest degree of editorial freedom.

The analysis also considers journalists' experiences with pressures to alter or adjust content, as well as the identities of the actors most frequently applying such pressures. These findings provide important insight into the level of professional autonomy, as well as factors that may compromise the objectivity and integrity of journalistic work.

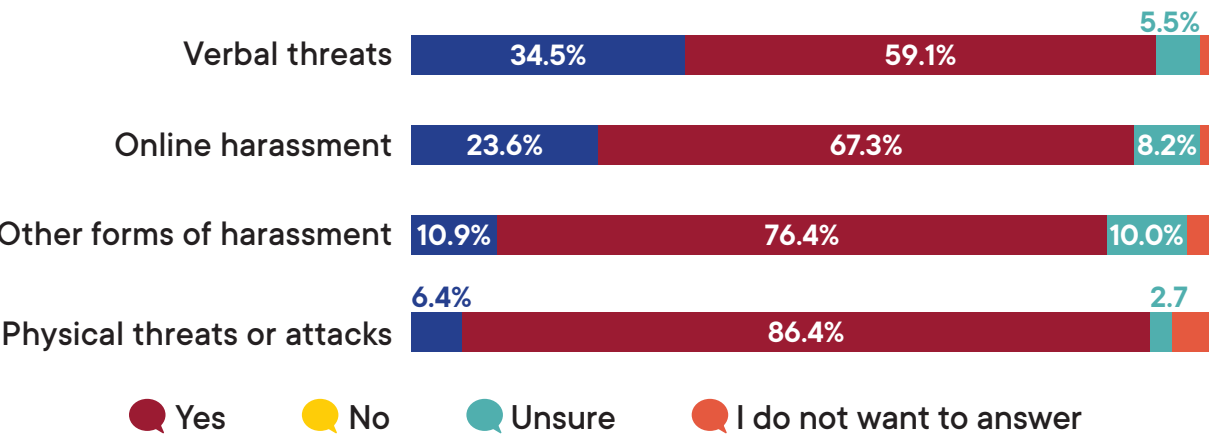
The survey results show a very high subjective sense of physical and psychological safety among employees. Overall, approximately 91% of respondents report feeling very or mostly safe at work, indicating a stable and predictable work environment in most newsrooms. However, around 7% of respondents report feeling mostly or very unsafe, representing a smaller but relevant segment that may point to specific work-related challenges.

Graph 40: How safe do you feel at work (physically and mentally)?



When it comes to experiences with threats and harassment, the data indicate that certain forms of undesirable behavior are present in journalists' work experiences. The most frequently reported situations are verbal threats (34.5%) and online harassment (23.6%), which aligns with global trends of increased pressure on journalists in digital environments. Less common, but still relevant, forms of undesirable behavior include other types of harassment (10.9%) and physical threats or attacks (6.4%). Although most respondents have not experienced such incidents, the high share of negative responses for physical threats (86.4%) and other forms of harassment (76.4%) indicates that such incidents are relatively rare. However, the proportion of respondents who were unsure of their answer, particularly regarding other forms of harassment (10%) and online attacks (8.2%), suggests that the boundaries between criticism, pressure, and harassment are not always clear, or that procedures for reporting such situations are insufficiently defined.

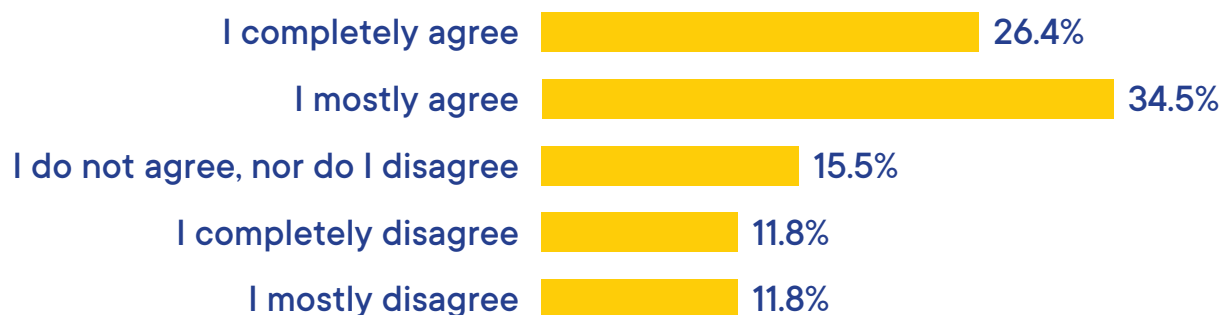
Graph 41: Have you ever experienced any of the following:



The perception of editorial independence also represents an important part of the analysis. About 60.9% of respondents state that they work without external interference from owners, advertisers, or political actors, indicating predominantly positive assessments of professional autonomy. However, 11.8% of respondents completely, and the same proportion mostly, believe that editorial processes are not free from external influence. This finding highlights the existence of a smaller but significant segment of employees who experience limitations in their professional work. A neutral stance, reported by 15.5% of respondents, may point to occasional, difficult-to-identify, or situational pressures that do not occur constantly but are sometimes perceived within editorial processes.

It should be noted that self-assessments of autonomy can be influenced by professional norms and discomfort in acknowledging situations of censorship or self-censorship, which is a common pattern in studies of this kind. Therefore, these results should be interpreted within a broader context.

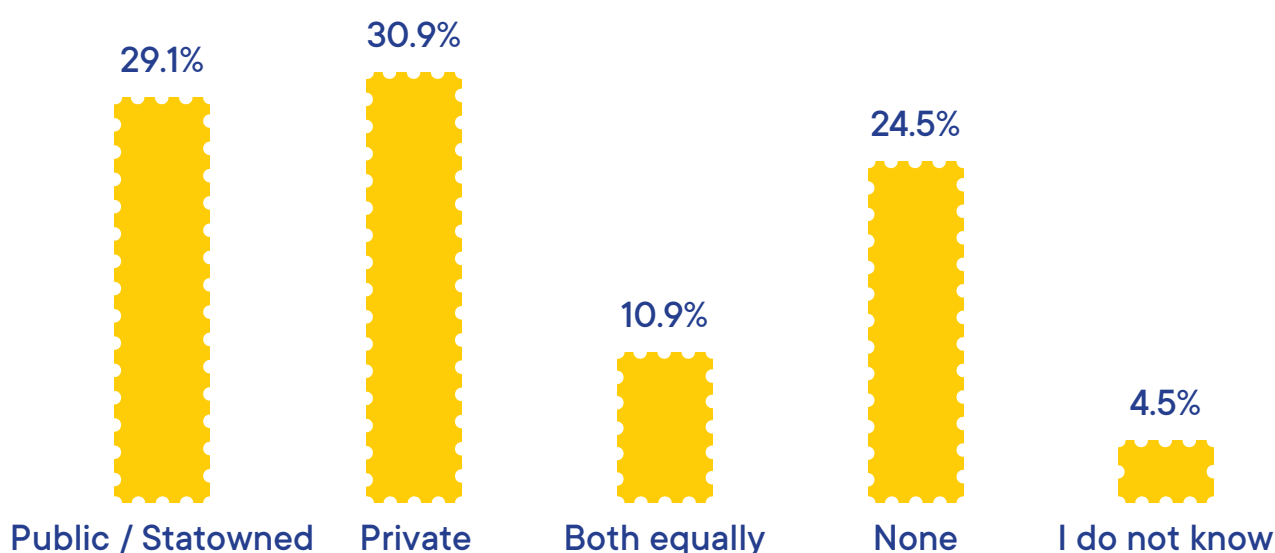
Graph 42: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: “I have full editorial independence in my work, without interference from owners, advertisers or political actors.”



Perceptions of which media sector offers greater editorial independence show some variation among respondents. Findings from the previous chapter indicate that respondents somewhat more often perceive private media as providing greater editorial autonomy. When journalists were directly asked to evaluate which media sector provides higher editorial independence, a slightly larger share of respondents (30.9%) considered the private sector to offer greater independence, compared to 29.1% who indicated that the public sector provides more independence. These data suggest that journalists' experiences and perceptions continue to vary significantly. Additionally, 24.5% of respondents believe that neither sector ensures real editorial autonomy, reflecting a broader reserved trust in the overall conditions for media freedom.

It is also important to note that journalists sometimes hesitate to directly acknowledge pressures, censorship, or self-censorship, which may lead to more optimistic self-assessments.

Graph 43 : In your opinion, which media sector provides greater editorial independence?



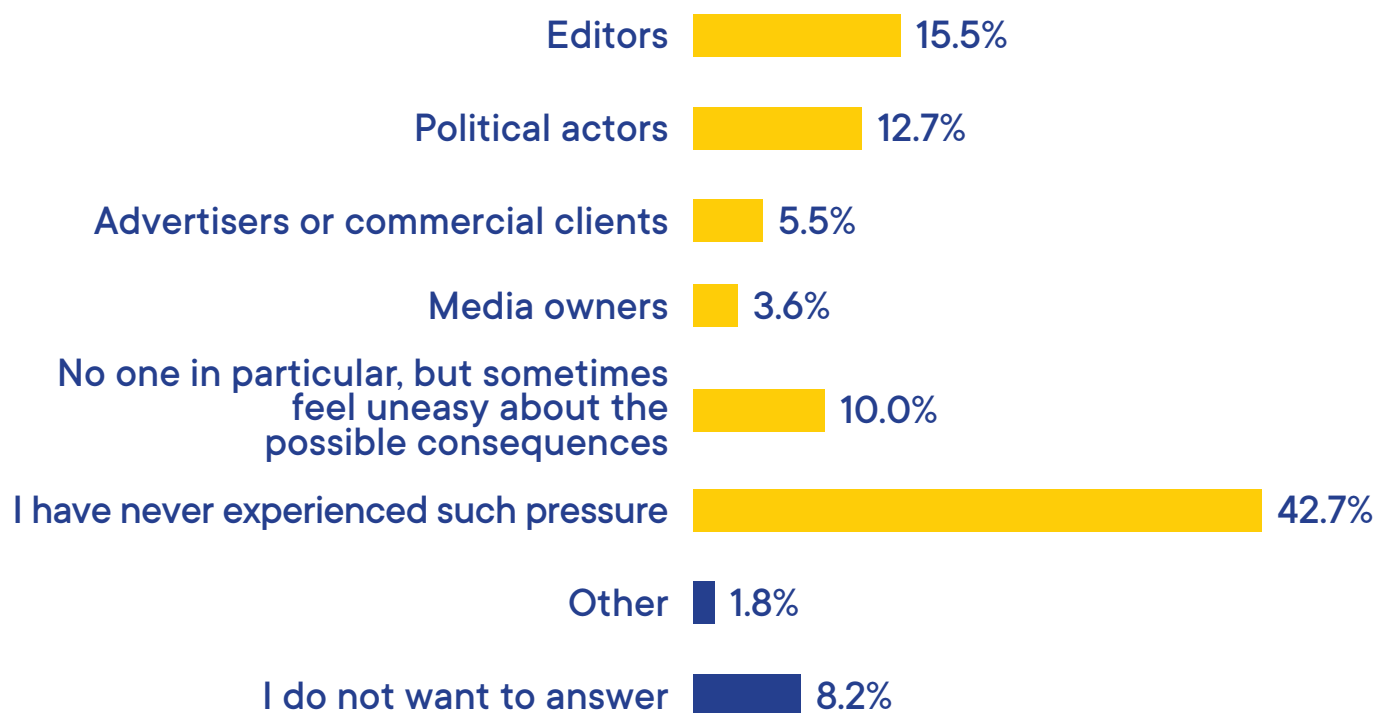
Finally, the analysis of pressures in media content creation shows that 42.7% of respondents have never experienced a request to alter or adjust content, which is an encouraging indicator. However, among those who have faced such experiences, the most common sources of pressure are editors (15.5%) and political actors (12.7%). Less frequent but still present sources include advertisers and commercial clients (5.5%) as well as media owners (3.6%). A significant portion of respondents (10%) report that there is no specific person exerting pressure, but they occasionally feel discomfort due to potential consequences, indicating the presence of indirect pressures and self-censorship. A smaller number of respondents (1.8%) mention other forms of pressure, while 8.2% declined to answer, which is expected given the sensitivity of the topic and potential implications of reporting such experiences.

In this context, it is important to note that the focus groups highlight a strong difference in the perception of pressures between public and private media. While participants from the public service emphasize high editorial autonomy, journalists from private media often report institutional obstacles, limited access to information, and targeting of journalists. Advertisers in certain media exert significant influence on content visibility, which directly affects editorial independence.

These differences between the quantitative data and the findings from the focus groups indicate the multi-layered nature of pressures — some are visible and explicit, while others are hidden, situational, or internalized through mechanisms of self-censorship. At the same time, it is possible that some respondents avoid openly acknowledging pressures due to professional norms, concern for reputation, or fear of negative consequences.



Graph 44 : If you have ever experienced pressure to change or adapt content, who most often exerted that pressure?



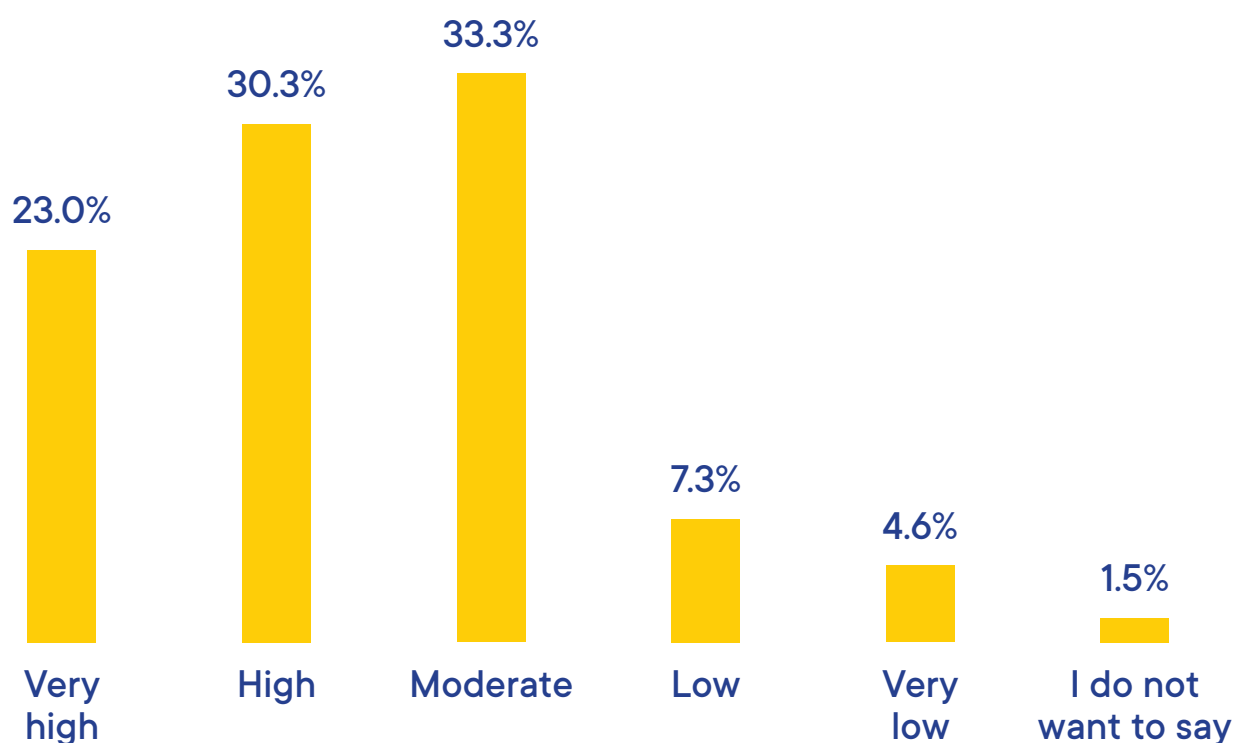
The results show that most journalists in Montenegro feel safe in their workplace, but experiences with verbal threats and online harassment indicate that risks still exist, particularly in the digital environment. While most respondents believe they work without external interference, some journalists still recognize political and editorial pressures, indicating that editorial independence is not equally protected in all newsrooms. Individual cases of indirect pressures and self-censorship further highlight the complexity of the professional environment. Overall, the findings suggest that, despite a generally positive picture, there is room to improve journalist protection and strengthen mechanisms that ensure free and independent work.

Psychological well-being and workplace burnout

In this segment of the analysis, we focused on the psychological well-being of employees in the media sector, with a particular emphasis on stress levels, the presence of burnout, and the perception of psychological safety in the workplace. Through a series of questions, respondents' subjective experiences of stress and emotional exhaustion were examined, as well as their views on psychological pressure and the ability to openly discuss mental health within the newsroom. Additionally, perceptions of external pressures to which journalists are exposed—including political and economic influences—were analyzed, along with assessments of the support provided by newsrooms in situations of threats, attacks, or other forms of pressure. This section also considers experiences of workplace mobbing as an indicator of serious violations of professional and psychological integrity. Together, these data provide a comprehensive insight into the emotional and psychological challenges faced by media professionals, highlighting key factors that affect their well-being, motivation, and long-term sustainability in the profession.

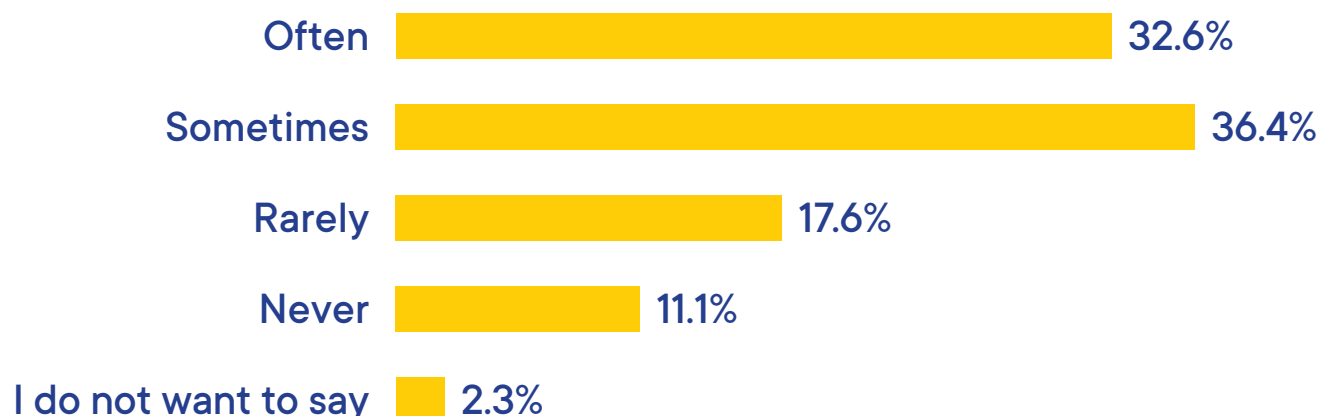
The results show that a significant portion of respondents experience high levels of workplace stress. More than half of the participants (53.3%) rate their stress levels as high or very high, with 30.3% reporting “high” stress and 23.0% reporting “very high” stress. An additional 33.3% describe their stress as “moderate,” indicating that most employees encounter some level of emotional strain daily. This distribution of responses suggests that stress is widespread in the media sector and is likely associated with the nature of the job, tight deadlines, continuous pressures, and exposure to demanding content.

Graph 45 : How would you rate the general level of stress at work that you feel?



Regarding burnout, the findings indicate that most respondents experience emotional exhaustion to some degree. Overall, 69% of employees report feeling burnout “often” (32.6%) or “occasionally” (36.4%).

Graph 46: Do you have a feeling of burnout or emotional exhaustion?



The data show that burnout is not experienced equally across all age groups. The youngest group (18–34) most frequently reports feelings of burnout, with 32.2% indicating they experience it “often,” while this percentage is 35.8% in the middle-aged group (35–54) and 22.5% in the oldest group (55+). A similar pattern is observed for the “occasionally” responses: the middle-aged group leads with 47.5%, the young 29.9%, and the oldest 22.6%.

It is important to note that many focus group participants stated that their professional availability is constant, even outside working hours, during weekends and holidays.

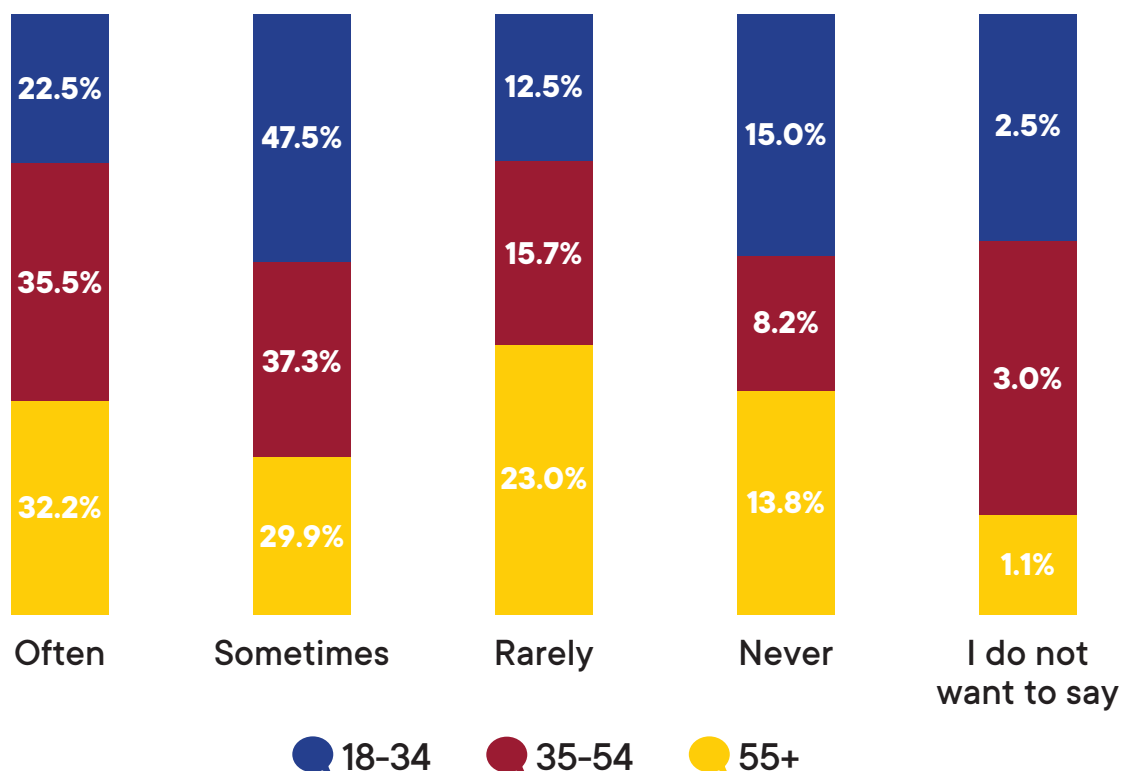


***“There are no holidays here; we work on December 31st and January 1st—I’ve spent so many New Year’s Eves in the control room. But that’s the job; the program doesn’t stop. It’s the same for other colleagues; I’m not the only one.”
(Focus group participant)***

The lack of clear boundaries between work and private life increases stress and prevents adequate recovery, leading to feelings of emotional and physical exhaustion. Due to the combination of professional obligations, overtime, and family responsibilities, female journalists in the focus groups describe higher levels of psychological pressure. Additionally, they are more exposed to online attacks, which increases the risk of stress and burnout.

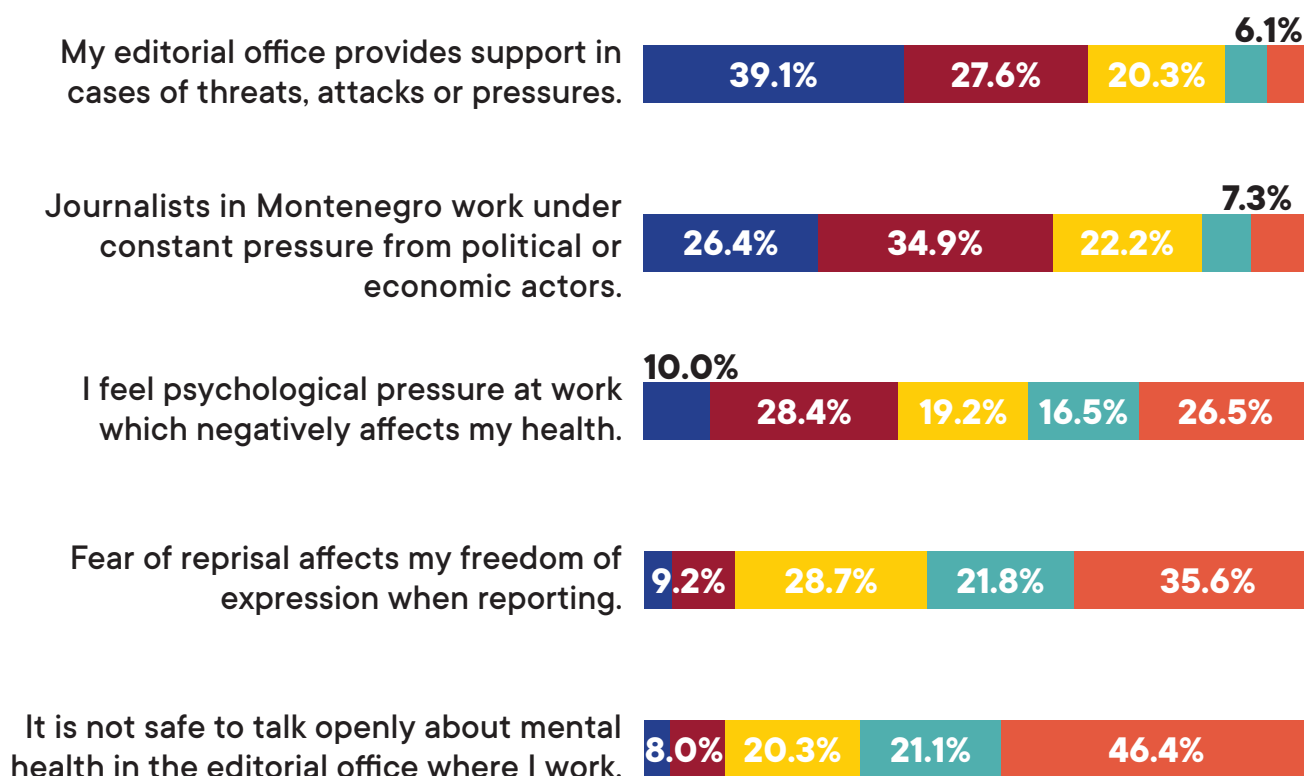
Furthermore, participants emphasized that none of the newsrooms mentioned provide institutionalized psychological support, debriefing after traumatic events, or systems for monitoring mental health. The absence of professional assistance allows stress to accumulate and remain unresolved.

Graph 47 : Do you have a feeling of burnout or emotional exhaustion? * Age



Findings on psychological safety and the perception of professional pressures reveal a complex picture of the work environment in the media. About two-thirds of respondents (39.1% “completely” and 27.6% “mostly” agree) believe that their newsroom provides adequate support in situations of threats, attacks, or pressures, which is a positive outcome. At the same time, most respondents believe that journalists in Montenegro work under constant external pressures from political or economic actors, with a total of 61.3% agreeing with this statement to some degree (26.4% “completely,” 34.9% “mostly”). Concerningly, nearly half of the respondents (38.4%) report feeling psychological pressure that negatively affects their health, while an additional 19.2% are neutral, which may indicate hidden or unrecognized stress. Furthermore, the results show that the issue of mental health in newsrooms remains sensitive, as 46.4% of respondents feel it is not safe to openly discuss mental health difficulties, pointing to the presence of stigma and an insufficient culture of support.

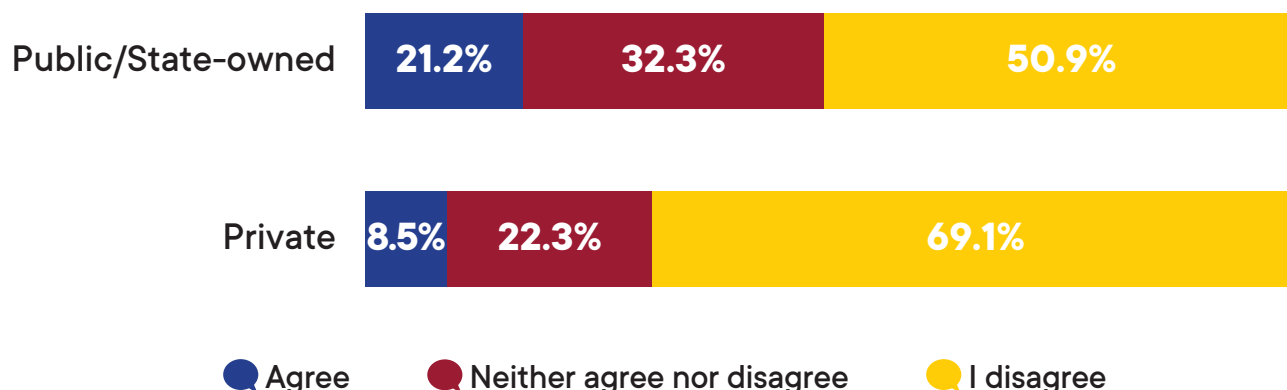
Graph 48 : Please rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) how much you agree with the following statements:



- 5 – Strongly agree
- 4 – Mostly agree
- 3 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 – Mostly disagree
- 1 – Strongly disagree

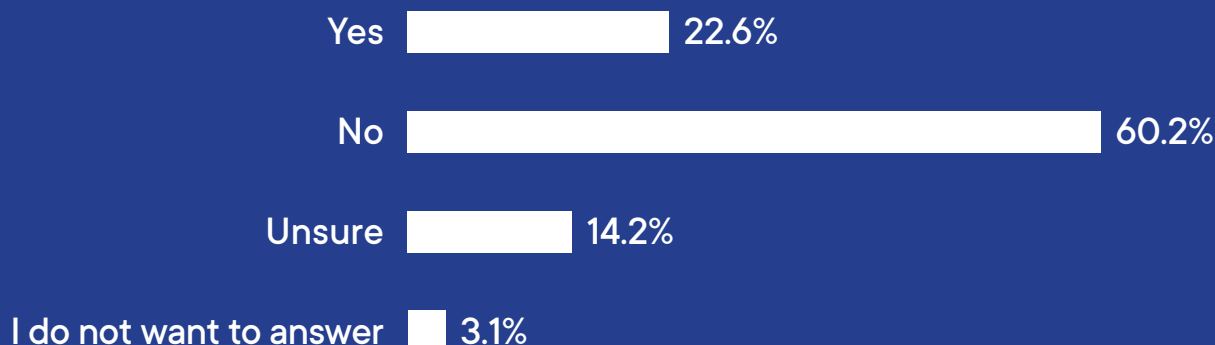
A particularly notable finding concerns fear of retaliation as a factor affecting freedom of expression. In private media, as many as 69.1% of respondents believe that fear influences their freedom of expression, while only 8.5% take a positive view on this matter, and 22.3% are undecided. This pattern indicates a high vulnerability in the private sector, likely linked to political pressures, market uncertainty, and dependence on advertisers. In state/public media, the picture is somewhat more balanced but still concerning: 50.9% of respondents report that fear affects their freedom of expression, 16.8% agree with the statement, while 32.3% remain neutral.

Graph 49: Fear of reprisal affects my freedom of expression when reporting. * What is the ownership status of the media company you work for?



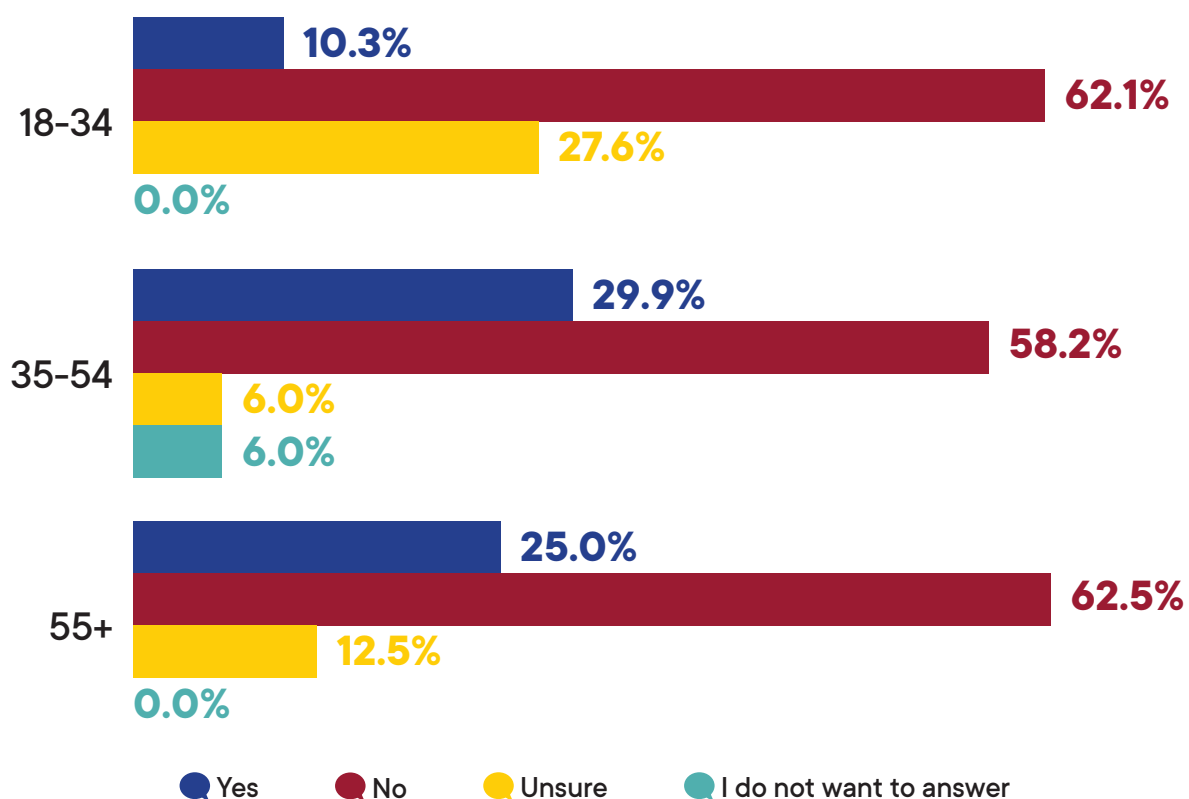
Regarding workplace bullying (mobbing), the data show that most respondents (60.2%) have not experienced bullying at work. However, it is concerning that more than one-fifth of respondents (22.6%) report that they have, indicating serious challenges in organizational culture and workplace relationships within the media sector.

Graph 50 : Would you say that you have ever been a victim of workplace bullying?



The results show that workplace bullying occurs across all age groups, but not to the same extent. In the youngest group (18–34), 10.3% of respondents report having experienced bullying, while more than a quarter of young people (27.6%) are unsure if they have experienced it. In the middle age group (35–54), 29.9% of respondents report experiencing bullying, which is the highest rate among all age categories. In the oldest group (55+), 25% report having experienced workplace bullying.

Graph 51: Would you say that you have ever been a victim of workplace bullying? * Age



Overall, the findings indicate that stress, emotional exhaustion, and various forms of psychological pressure are widespread among journalists, with younger and middle-aged workers being the most exposed to burnout and workplace bullying. Despite the presence of some level of institutional support, the combination of external political pressures, fear of retaliation, and insufficiently open communication about mental health points to a significant need for improvement in the work environment and psychological protection systems within media organizations.

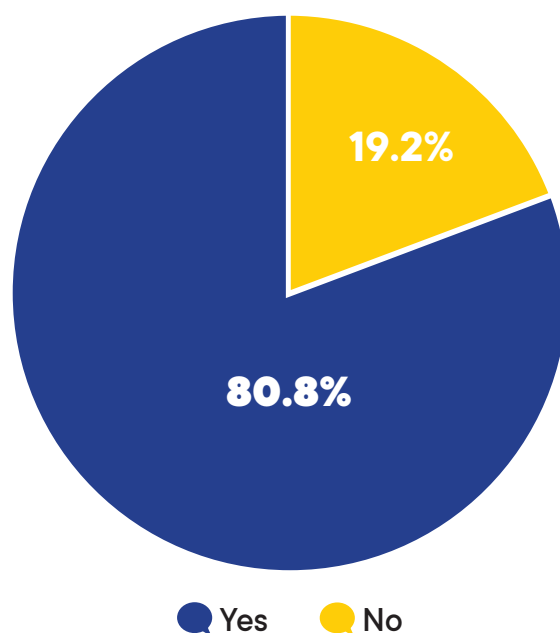


Professional associations and trade union membership

The research also analyzed the extent to which media professionals are involved in professional associations and trade unions, the reasons for joining or not joining, and how respondents assess the support these organizations provide. Special attention was given to the level of satisfaction with existing organizational models, the perception of their effectiveness in representing labor and professional rights, as well as awareness of the work of the Commission for Monitoring Investigations of Attacks on Journalists as an important institutional protection mechanism. These findings provide a better understanding of how much journalists recognize the importance of collective protection and professional solidarity in the modern media environment.

The data indicate that the vast majority of media professionals are not members of any professional association. As many as 80.8% of respondents report not being members, while only 19.2% belong to some professional association. This structure suggests that professional organization in Montenegro is not sufficiently developed, and that employees often lack motivation, trust, or a clear perception of the benefits of membership.

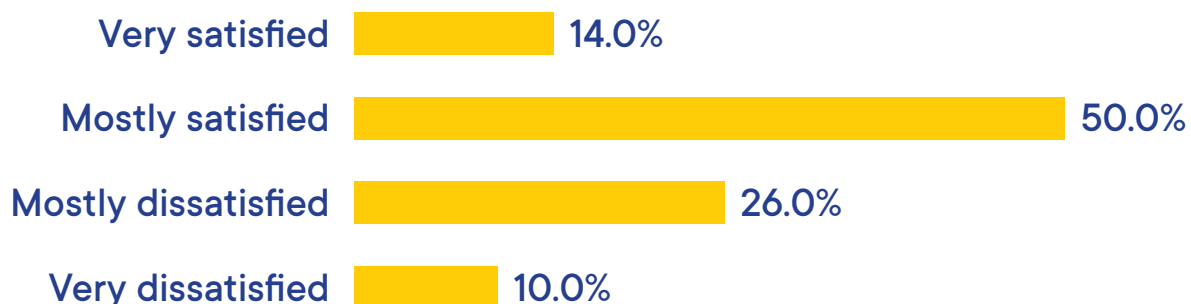
Graph 52: Are you a member of a professional association?



Among those who are members of professional associations, there is a relatively high level of satisfaction. Overall, 64% of respondents report being “very” or “mostly” satisfied with the support provided by the associations, with the majority being most-ly satisfied (50%). At the same time, 36% of members express dissatisfaction, including 26% who are mostly dissatisfied and 10% who are very dissatisfied. These findings indicate that, while associations hold recognized value for part of their membership, there are clear needs to strengthen capacities, improve services, and better engage with members.

It should be noted that among respondents who reported being members of certain professional associations, 42.7% indicated the Society of Professional Journalists of Montenegro, 46.4% the Association of Journalists of Montenegro, and 10.7% the Association of Sports Journalists.

Graph 53 : How satisfied are you with the support provided by your association?



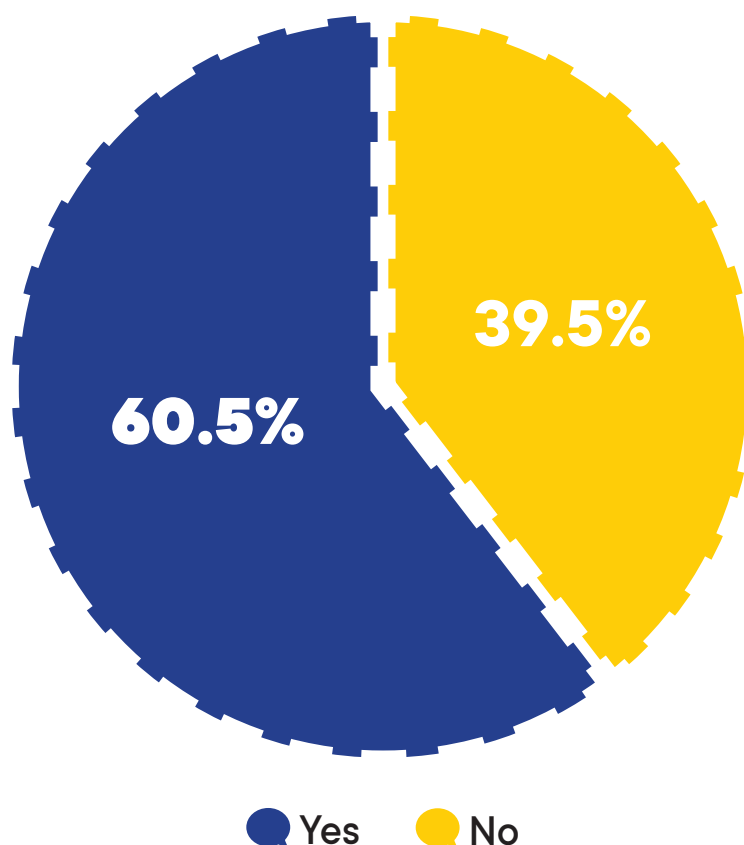
The reasons why respondents are not members of professional associations are very diverse. The largest share (28.7%) cites lack of interest, suggesting that many employees do not see concrete benefits in organizing. An additional 15.7% of respondents report that they were never invited to join an association, indicating low proactivity and limited visibility of associations in the sector. Lack of time (14.6%) and insufficient information about procedures, the role of the association, and how to become a member (11.5%) reflect organizational and communication challenges.

Graph 54 : Why are you not a member? (Multiple answers possible)



Regarding trade union organization, the results show a slightly higher, but still in-sufficient, level of participation. Most respondents (60.5%) are not union members, while 39.5% report being unionized. This data indicates limited union representation in the sector, even though media workers face insecure working conditions, pressures, and a lack of adequate institutional protection.

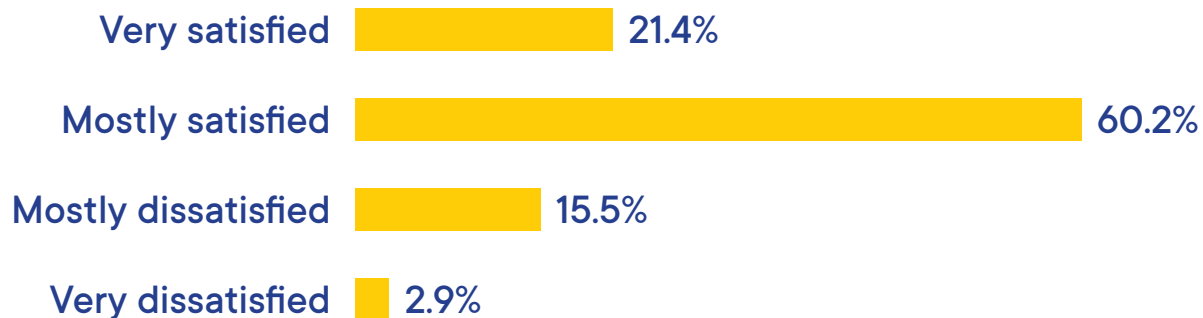
Graph 55: Are you a member of a trade union?



Among unionized workers, there is a high level of satisfaction with the support provided by the union. Overall, 81.6% report being “very” or “mostly” satisfied, with the largest share falling into the “mostly satisfied” category (60.2%). However, 18.4% of members express dissatisfaction, indicating room for improvement in representation, communication, and access to union activities. These findings confirm that unions have a stable reputation among their members, but their role in the sector remains insufficiently valued.

Among journalists who reported being union members, 41.6% belong to the Media Union of Montenegro, 27.3% are members of unions at their local media outlets, 13% are members of the RTCG Employees’ Union, 10.4% are members of the Union of Montenegro’s Trade Unions, and 7.8% are members of the union at the media house Pobjeda.

Graph 56 : How satisfied are you with the support provided by the trade union?



The data shows that the reasons for not joining a union include a combination of disinterest, distrust, lack of information, and lack of incentives to join.

The most common reason is disinterest with a total of 35.6% of respondents report that they are not interested in union organization. Other significant reasons stem from the lack of proactivity by the unions where 19.4% of respondents say that no one invited them to join, while 13.3% state that they are not familiar with the membership procedure or what unions offer.

There is also a perception of negative aspects of union activity: some respondents believe that people join unions for personal gain (5.7%), while others point to a lack of solidarity (6.6%) and political divisions (4.7%).



Graph 57: Why are you not a member? (Multiple answers possible)



The data shows that among media professionals, there is a prevailing belief that unions and professional associations only partially protect journalists' rights and working conditions, as reported by more than half (55.6%) of respondents. This response suggests that while there is a recognized level of benefit, there is also a clear awareness of the limitations of these organizations.

Additionally, qualitative insights indicate a deeply rooted lack of professional solidarity, especially in private media, where journalists express fear of losing their jobs. Local unions are described as weakly active and insufficiently independent, while the Media Union of Montenegro is most frequently highlighted as an organization that provides genuine legal and psychological support.

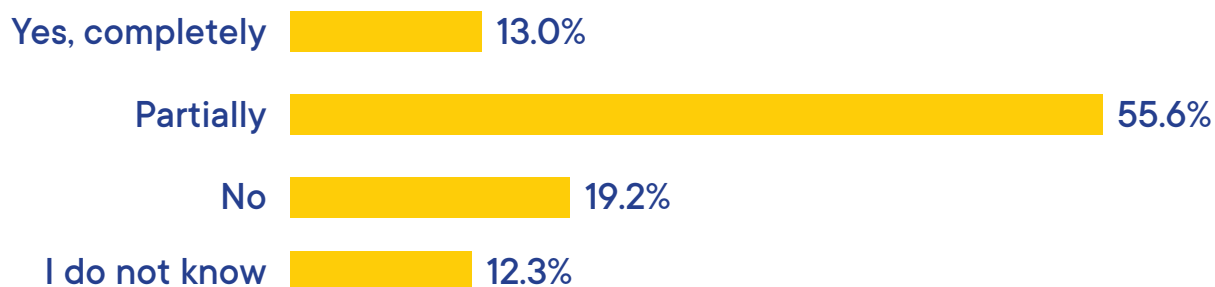
From what I know, only the Media Union is actually doing something. We all think they could do better, but I believe they are the only ones making an effort. I don't see any reason why all media employees shouldn't be members. As far as I know, they're now working on a proposal for a new law." (Focus group participant)



“In the Media Union, they work, fight, and make an effort. They don't need to give us money; their role is to fight so that our working conditions improve. And it seems to me that they are doing that.” (Focus group participant)

Overall, the data suggest that trade unions and professional associations are perceived as partially useful but insufficiently effective, highlighting the need to strengthen their influence, capacity, and visibility in order to ensure a more consistent and robust role in protecting journalists.

Graph 58: Do you believe that trade unions and professional associations effectively protect the rights of journalists and their working conditions?



The data show that the Monitoring Commission for Investigations of Attacks on Journalists is recognized among media workers, but awareness is superficial and insufficiently grounded.

The majority of respondents (52.9%) report having heard of the Commission, indicating that the institution is relatively visible in the public space. However, a quarter of respondents (25.7%) say they “have heard of it but don’t know much about it,” highlighting a significant lack of information about its role, results, and mechanisms of action. Additionally, 21.5% of respondents have not heard of the Commission at all.

Graph 59: Have you heard about the Commission for Monitoring Investigations of Attacks on Journalists?



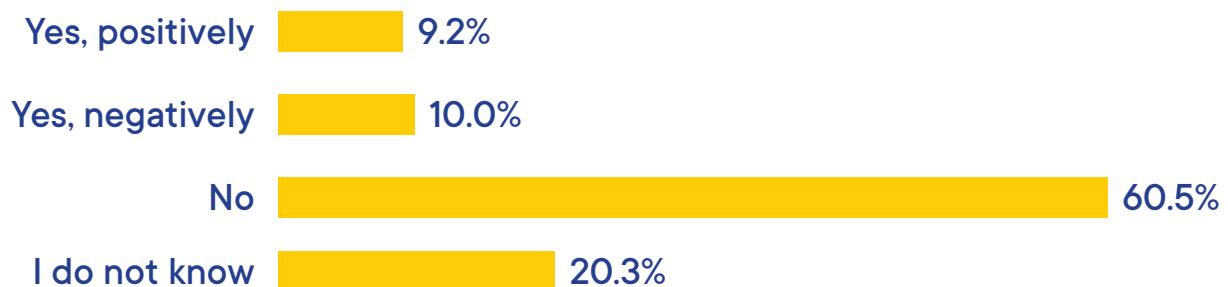
The findings of this chapter show that professional and union organization among journalists in Montenegro remains underdeveloped. While members of these organizations generally express satisfaction with the support they receive, the overall level of trust in their ability to effectively protect labor rights and professional standards remains moderate. Awareness of institutional mechanisms, such as the Monitoring Commission for Investigations of Attacks on Journalists, is also limited, suggesting a need for greater transparency and more active communication with the media community.

Gender, Youth, and Regional Perspectives

This part of the research is dedicated to analyzing journalists' experiences through the lens of gender, generational, and regional differences, with the aim of determining whether and to what extent these factors shape professional conditions, access to resources, and perception of support in the media sector. The focus is on whether women, young journalists, and journalists from different regions face specific challenges, limitations, or types of pressure that affect their professional position, psychological well-being, and opportunities for advancement. Particular consideration is given to topics such as access to protection mechanisms, exposure to stress and burnout, perception of workplace safety, and differences in experiences of pressure, attacks, or discrimination. By including these perspectives, the research provides deeper insight into structural inequalities and points to the need for targeted measures that would contribute to creating a more inclusive, fairer, and safer professional environment for all media workers, regardless of gender, age, or geographical affiliation.

The results shown in the following graph indicate that the majority of respondents do not believe that their gender affects their professional opportunities or the way they are treated at work. As many as 60.5% of participants stated that gender has no impact. At the same time, nearly one in five respondents, or 19.2%, believe that gender does affect professional opportunities or treatment - with 9.2% experiencing this impact as positive and 10.0% as negative.

Graph 60: Do you think your gender affects your professional opportunities or treatment?



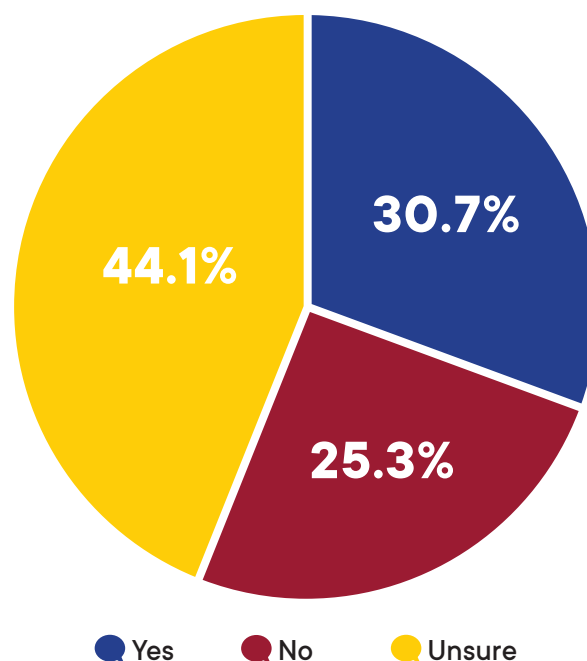
Across all gender categories, the prevailing belief is that gender does not affect professional opportunities or treatment (around 60% of men and 59.4% of women). However, women much more frequently than men recognize the negative impact of gender: 14.3% of women, compared to 5.5% of men, believe that their gender negatively affects their professional position. A very small percentage of respondents in both groups recognize the positive impact of gender (around 9%). Respondents who identified in the “other” category mostly chose the “don’t know” answer, which probably reflects the small number in this group and lack of experience on which they could assess the impact of gender. Overall, these findings show that most employees do not directly recognize gender inequality, but women still notice negative gender patterns in their professional environment much more frequently.

Examining the relationship between age and perception of gender’s impact on professional opportunities reveals a clear pattern across all age groups. Namely, the youngest group of respondents (18–34) most often believes that gender has a positive impact (12.6%), while older groups give this answer less frequently, dropping to 5% in the 55+ category. At the same time, the perception of gender’s negative impact is most pronounced among middle-aged respondents (35–44: 13.3%), while it is lower in other groups, ranging between 8% and 10%.

The most important finding is that in all age groups, the majority of respondents believe that gender has no impact on their professional opportunities, and this view is most prevalent in the oldest group (55+ — 67.5%).

The data shown in Graph 61 also indicate a significant degree of uncertainty regarding the existence of internal policies or procedures for protection against discrimination. The largest percentage of respondents, 44.1%, state that they are not sure whether such mechanisms exist. Only 30.7% believe that internal protection policies and procedures exist in their organization, while 25.3% state that they do not exist. Less than one-third of employees, therefore, have a clear perception of institutional protection mechanisms.

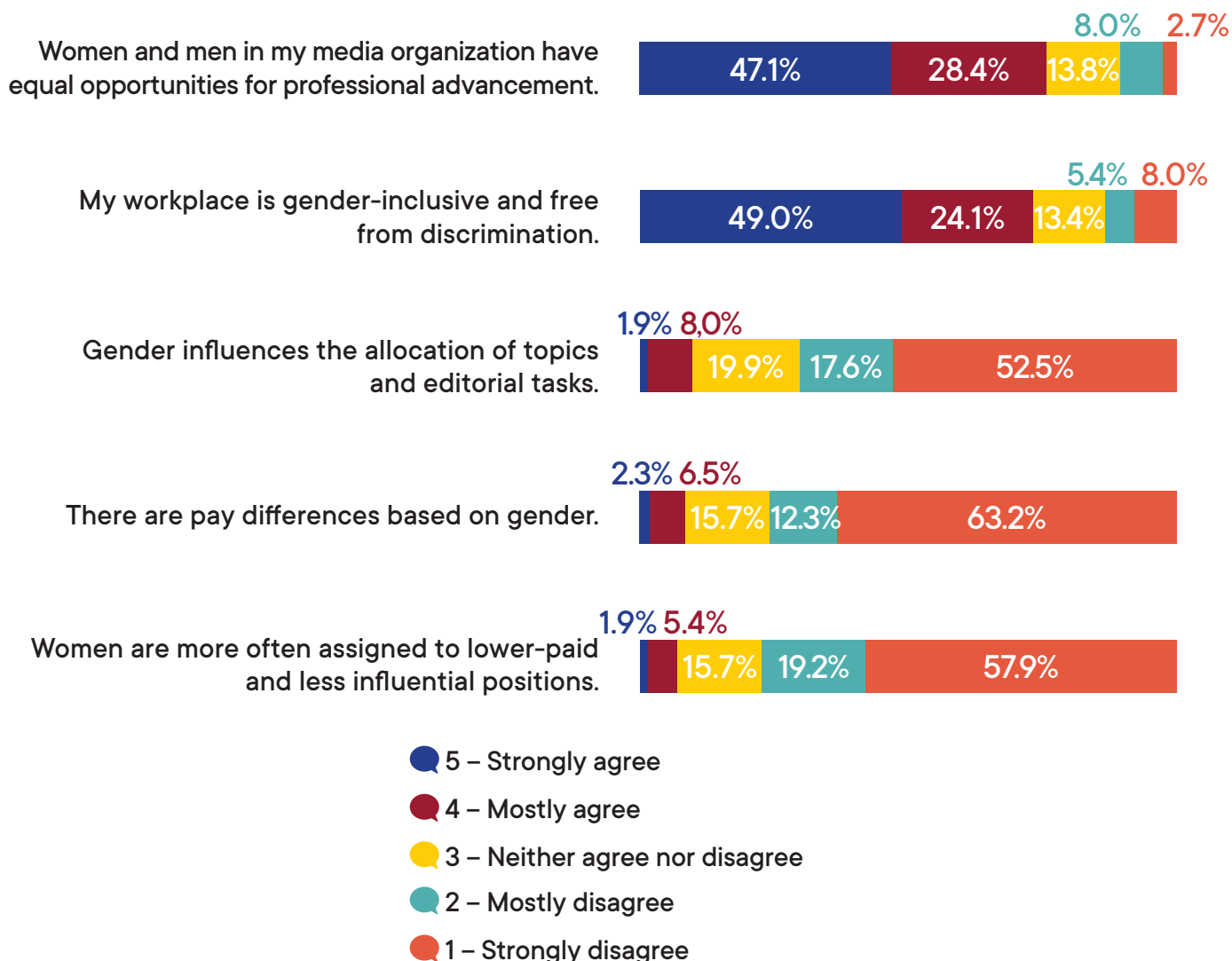
Graph 61: Are there internal policies or procedures to protect against discrimination in your workplace?



The perception of equal opportunities for professional advancement is largely positive. A total of 47.1% of respondents strongly agree, and an additional 28.4% mostly agree with the statement that women and men in their media agencies have equal conditions for advancement. Thus, 75.5% of respondents view their work environment as fairly equal in this regard, while a minority expresses doubt or disagreement. Similarly, the perception of gender inclusivity and absence of discrimination is also high: 49% of respondents strongly agree, and 24.1% mostly agree that their work environment is inclusive and without discrimination. At the same time, the presence of neutral and negative responses indicates that individual experiences of discrimination or inequality still exist, although they do not shape the dominant picture.

When it comes to the distribution of topics and editorial tasks, the largest percentage, 52.5%, strongly disagrees with the statement that gender affects the type of tasks assigned, while 17.6% are neutral. However, about 30% of respondents (the sum of those who partially or strongly agree) state that they notice certain differences, which shows that experiences are not completely homogeneous. Similarly, the perception of gender-based wage differences is mostly negative in most cases: 63.2% of respondents strongly disagree, and 12.3% mostly disagree with the statement that there are differences in earnings. The perception that women are more often assigned to lower-paid and less influential positions is also predominantly negative: 57.9% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement. However, the existence of a smaller but consistent segment that recognizes such patterns indicates the need for deeper qualitative insights and organizational analyses.

Graph 62: Please rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) how much you agree with the following statements:



Examining the relationship between age and perception of equal opportunities for professional advancement, we see that respondents in all age groups generally believe that women and men have equal chances. The youngest (18–34) and oldest respondents (55+) most often strongly agree with this statement, while middle age groups (35–44 and 45–54) also predominantly express agreement. In all categories, dissatisfaction or perception of inequality is very low.

When it comes to gender-based wage differences, the data show a clear tendency: most respondents do not believe that such differences exist.

Regarding the assignment of women to lower-paid and less influential positions, the findings also indicate that most respondents do not recognize such a pattern. All age segments predominantly respond that they disagree with this statement, with denial being most pronounced in the oldest group (55+).

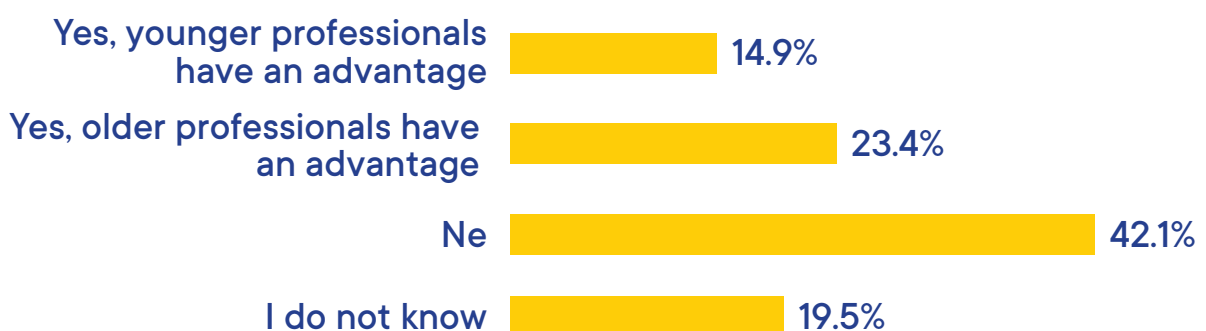
Furthermore, examining the data on gender's impact on the distribution of topics and editorial tasks, we note that respondents of all age groups generally believe that gender does not play a significant role in who gets which tasks. The youngest (18–34) and the 35–44 age group most often express disagreement with the statement that gender affects work distribution, with about 57–59% of them stating that they “strongly” or “mostly” disagree with that statement. The oldest group (55+) predominantly denies the existence of gender influence on the distribution of editorial tasks, where 55% state that they “strongly disagree”.

When it comes to the perception of the gender inclusivity of the work environment, a positive attitude dominates across all age groups, with a trend that older respondents express even stronger belief in inclusivity. Among respondents aged 18–34 and 35–44, about 70% “mostly” or “strongly” agree that the work environment is gender inclusive and without discrimination. The 45–54 age group shows a slightly higher level of indecision (22%), but even in this group, the perception of inclusivity prevails. The oldest respondents (55+) most firmly express belief in a gender-equal environment, with as many as 65% strongly sharing this view.

Focus groups with female journalists indicate specific challenges that women face: sexualized comments on social networks, difficulty balancing private and professional obligations, and chronic overtime engagement. Although many participants believe that women are well represented even in leadership positions, experiences show that gender factors still shape work stress and the world of work in the media.

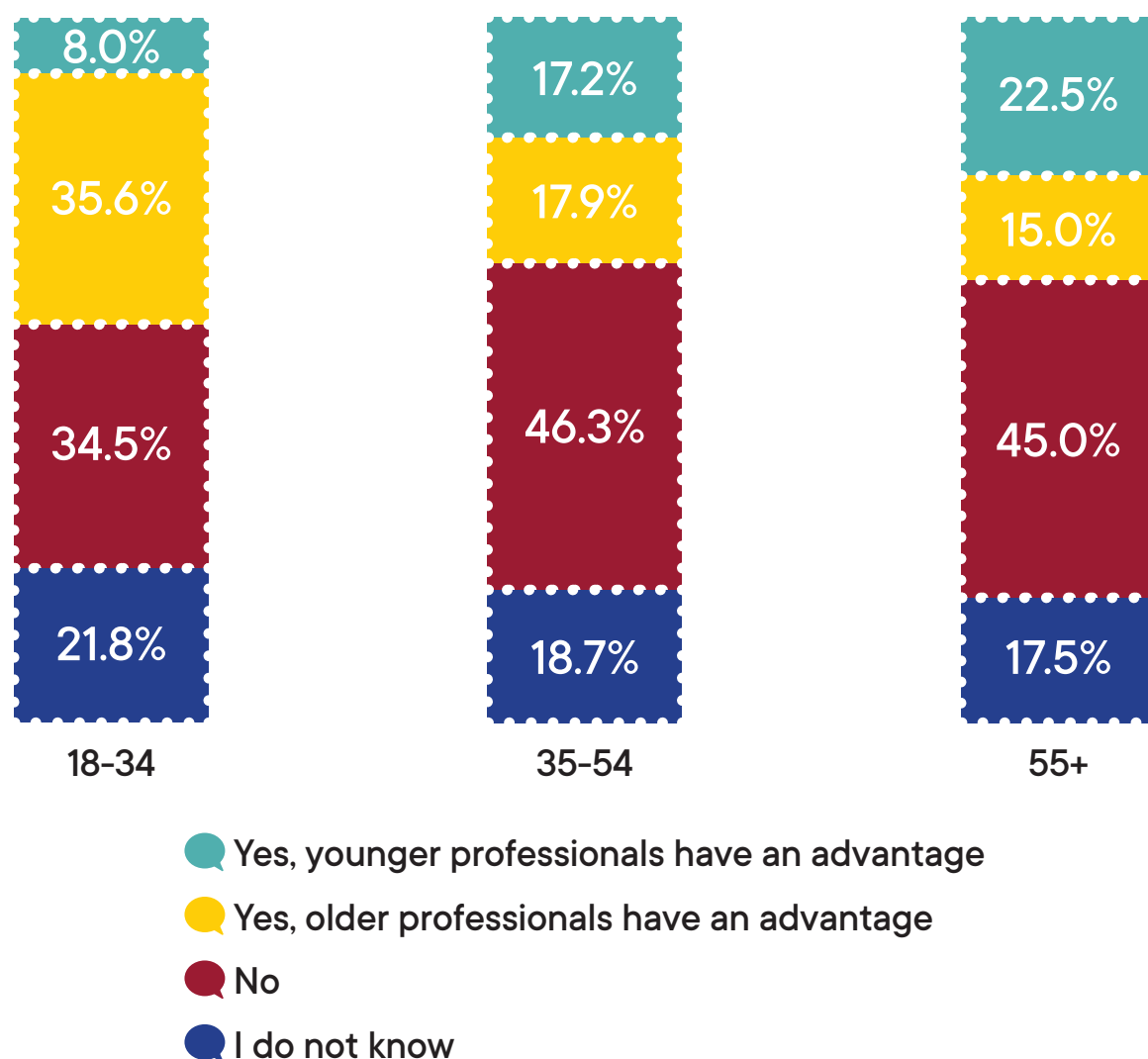
When it comes to age aspects, the results show that 42.1% of respondents believe that age does not affect professional opportunities or treatment in their organization. This finding suggests that a significant portion of employees view the work environment as relatively neutral in terms of age, meaning they experience opportunities and treatment as related to individual competencies rather than years of life. However, 23.4% of respondents believe that older professionals have an advantage, while 14.9% state that younger ones are in a more favorable position. An additional 19.5% are not sure, which indicates a certain degree of ambiguity regarding advancement processes and task distribution.

Graph 63 : Do you think age affects professional opportunities or treatment in your organization?



Detailed analysis shows that the perception of age's impact varies between generations. The youngest group of respondents (18–34) most often believe that older professionals have an advantage (35.6%), probably due to less experience and the feeling that existing structures are already formed. In the middle age group (35–54), this feeling decreases (17.9%) and the belief that age does not affect at all increases (46.3%). The oldest group (55+) most recognizes the advantage of younger colleagues (22.5%), which may reflect the perception of rapid technological and organizational changes that more often favor younger staff.

Graph 64 : Do you think age affects professional opportunities or treatment in your organization? * Age



Young journalists' perceptions of career opportunities further illuminate this picture. Regarding the statement that young journalists in Montenegro have equal opportunities for advancement, 41.8% of respondents agree to some extent (15.7% strongly, 26.1% mostly), while 31.4% take a neutral stance. At the same time, 31.4% (16.1% mostly, 15.3% strongly disagree) question the equality of opportunities. These findings indicate that, although certain chances exist, they are not clear, accessible, or consistent enough for most young professionals to feel equally included.

The perception of long-term career prospects in the media sector is predominantly skeptical. Only 35.7% of respondents agree with the statement that media offer good long-term prospects. The picture is even less favorable when it comes to salaries and initial conditions for young people: although 35.2% agree that salaries are fair and conditions decent, 45.9% disagree. Similarly, 34.5% of respondents believe there is sufficient mentorship and support for young people, while 41% take a negative stance (19.5% mostly, 21.5% strongly disagree).

Graph 65 : Please rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) how much you agree with the following statements:

Young journalists in Montenegro are given equal opportunities for advancement. 15.7% 26.1% 26.8% 16.1% 15.3%

The media sector provides long-term career prospects for young professionals. 11.9% 23.8% 24.1% 18.8% 21.5%

Entry-level positions in journalism offer fair pay and decent working conditions. 10.7% 24.5% 18.8% 20.7% 25.3%

There is sufficient mentorship and support for young professionals in the media. 10.7% 23.8% 24.5% 19.5% 21.5%

5 – Strongly agree

4 – Mostly agree

3 – Neither agree nor disagree

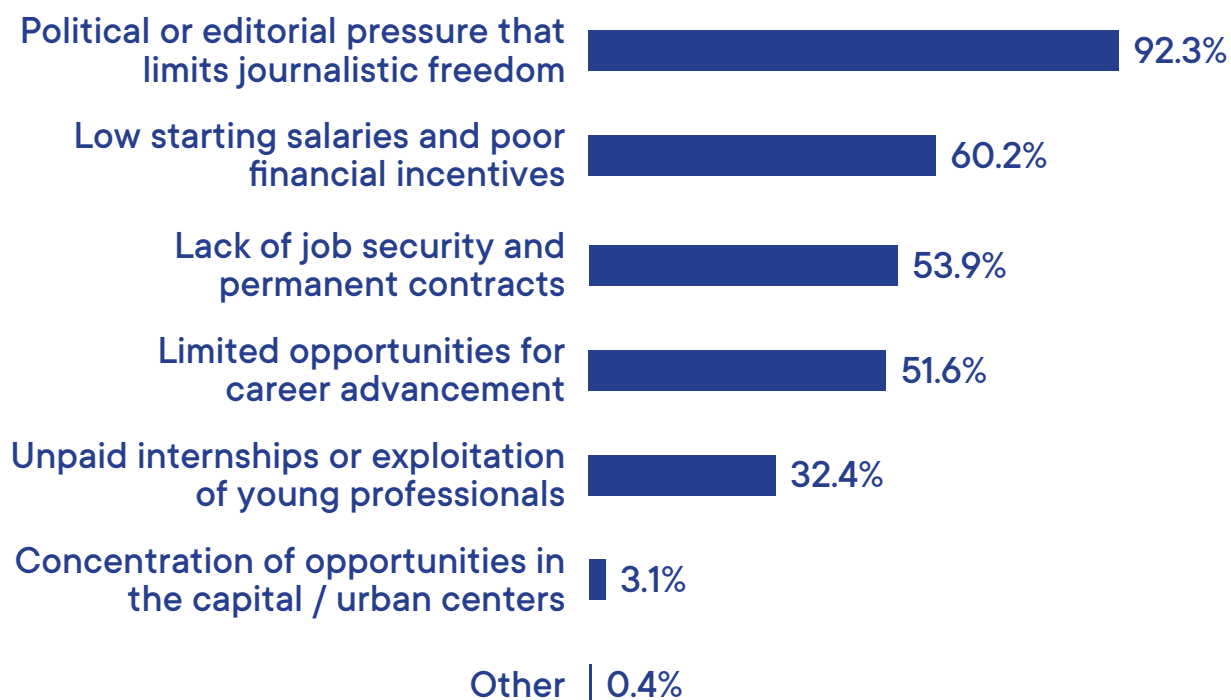
2 – Mostly disagree

1 – Strongly disagree

When it comes to barriers to young people entering the profession, respondents most often cite political or editorial pressure that limits journalistic freedom – as many as 92.3% of participants highlight this factor as key. Low starting salaries and lack of financial incentives are cited by 60.2% of respondents, while 53.9% see job insecurity and lack of permanent contracts as a barrier. Limited opportunities for advancement are recognized by 51.6% of participants, and unpaid internships and exploitation of young people by 32.4%. The concentration of opportunities in the capital or urban centers represents a barrier for 3.1% of respondents.

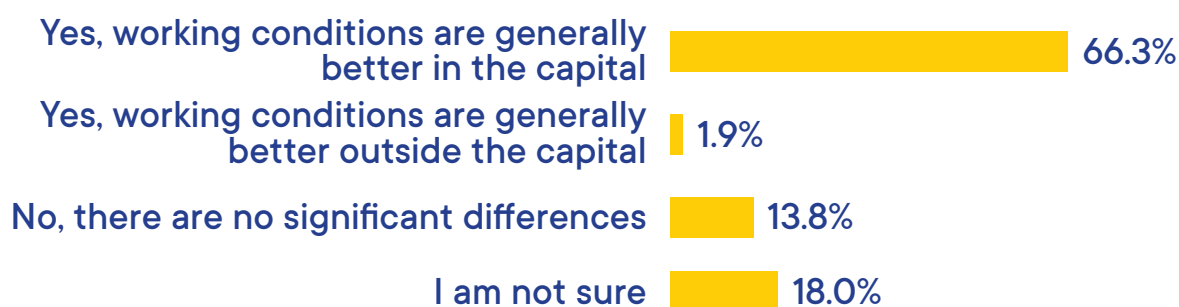


Graph 66 : What do you consider to be the biggest obstacles for young people who want to pursue journalism in Montenegro?



Regional and sectoral differences further shape the perception of working conditions. The majority of respondents (66.3%) believe that working conditions in media are better in the capital, while only 1.9% believe they are better outside the capital.

Graph 67 : Do you think working conditions differ significantly between the capital and other regions?



Finally, the data clearly indicate that most respondents believe that public and private media in Montenegro do not operate under equal conditions.



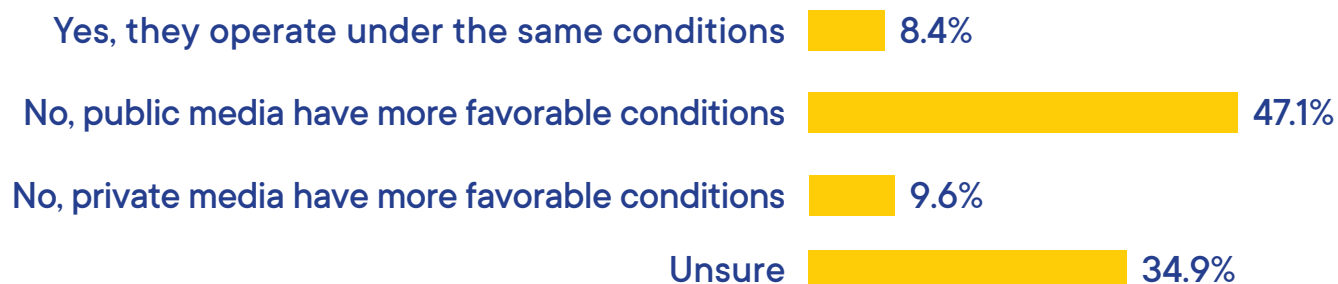
"We in private media fight for our salaries, and they have secure salaries that come from the budget." (Focus group participant)



Well, it's easy for the public media, 20 million from the budget every year, so they don't have to work." (Focus group participant)

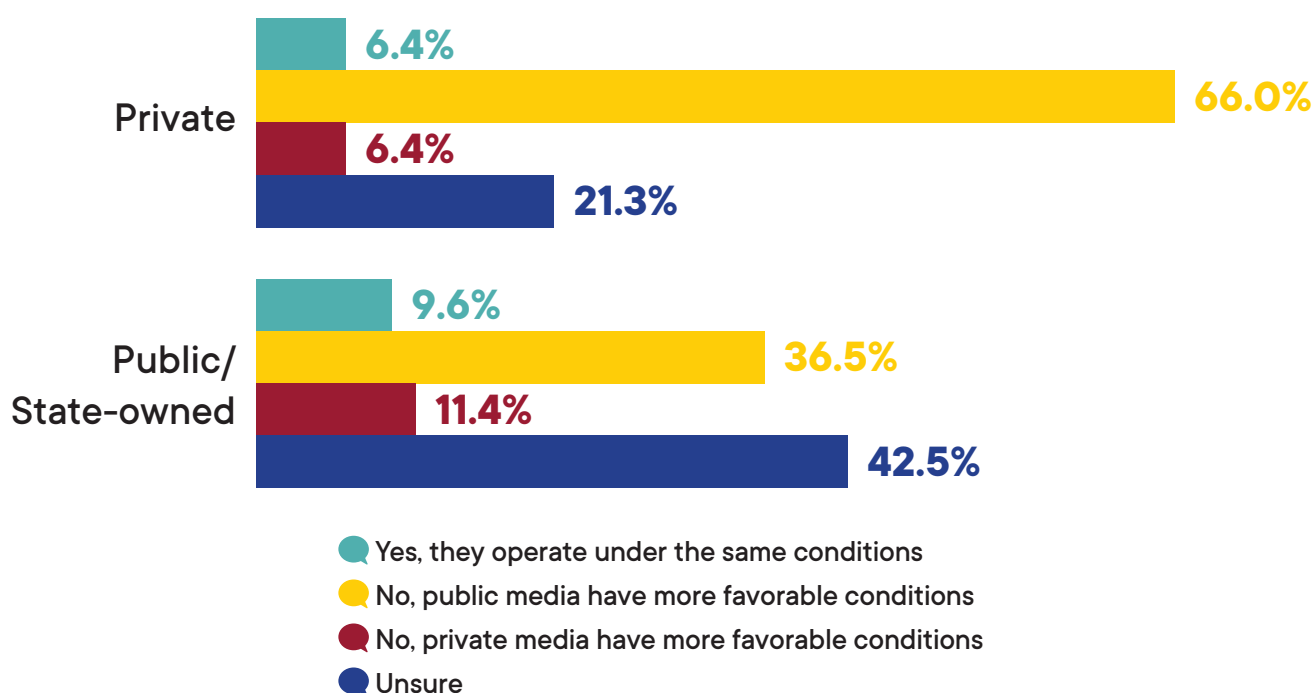
Almost half of the respondents (47.1%) believe that public media have more favorable conditions, only 8.4% believe that the market is equalized, while 9.6% see an advantage on the side of private media.

Graph 68 : Do you believe that public (state-owned) and private media in Montenegro operate under the same conditions?

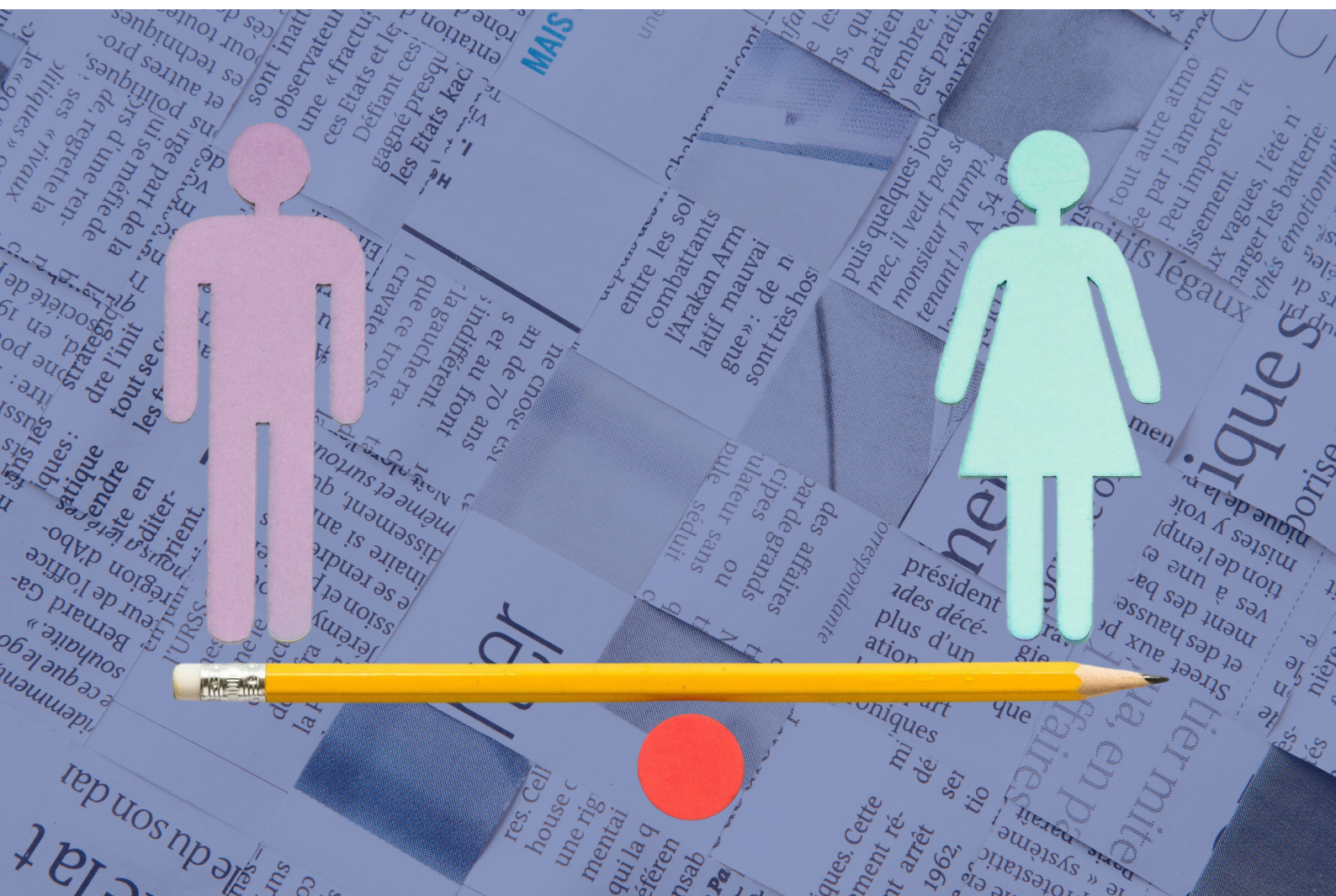


Additional analysis clearly shows that employees in public/state-owned and private media have different views on whether both sectors operate under equal conditions, although in both groups the prevailing belief is that there is no equality. Cross-tabulation shows that employees in private media predominantly believe that the public sector has more favorable conditions – 66% of them cite this option, while only 6.4% believe that both sectors operate under equal conditions, and the same percentage believe that private media have an advantage. In public media, the picture is more balanced: 36.5% of employees believe that public media have more favorable conditions, 11.4% that private are at an advantage, 9.6% that conditions are equal, while as many as 42.5% are undecided.

Graph 69 : Do you believe that public (state) and private media in Montenegro operate under the same conditions? * 2. What is the ownership status of the media company you work for?



In conclusion, the data indicate that most media employees perceive their work environment as gender-equal, with a relatively high level of formal equality in opportunities for advancement and absence of direct discrimination. However, women more often recognize the negative impact of gender, and certain findings suggest the presence of subtle gender and generational differences. The perspective of young people is particularly critical: they often question equal opportunities, long-term career prospects, fair initial conditions, and availability of mentorship. At the same time, they strongly recognize political and editorial pressures, low salaries, and job insecurity as key barriers to entering and remaining in the profession. Regional and sectoral differences - more favorable conditions in the capital and the perception of advantages for public media - further complicate the picture of equal opportunities in the sector. Overall, the findings point to the need to strengthen policies and practices that promote gender, generational, and regional equality, as well as to create more sustainable and development-oriented conditions for young journalists.



Digital Transformation

Digital transformation represents one of the most significant processes shaping contemporary journalism and the media sector as a whole. The introduction of new technologies, digital platforms, and tools changes the way journalists collect, process, and distribute information, but also affects organizational practices, workload, and professional competencies of employees. In this context, understanding the level of digital skills, availability of training, readiness to work in a digital environment, as well as the perception of challenges that digital transformation brings, is crucial for assessing the capacity of media professionals in Montenegro.

Together, these questions provide a comprehensive insight into how journalists experience digital transformation, not only as a technical challenge, but also as a broader process that affects professional identity, workload, and future prospects of working in media.

The largest percentage of respondents, as many as 85.4%, state that they learned to use digital tools independently or through informal means. The majority of respondents (78.9%) feel confident in using digital platforms and tools necessary for work. Similarly, 76.6% of respondents state that they can independently perform more complex digital tasks, such as live reporting, social media management, or using analytical tools.

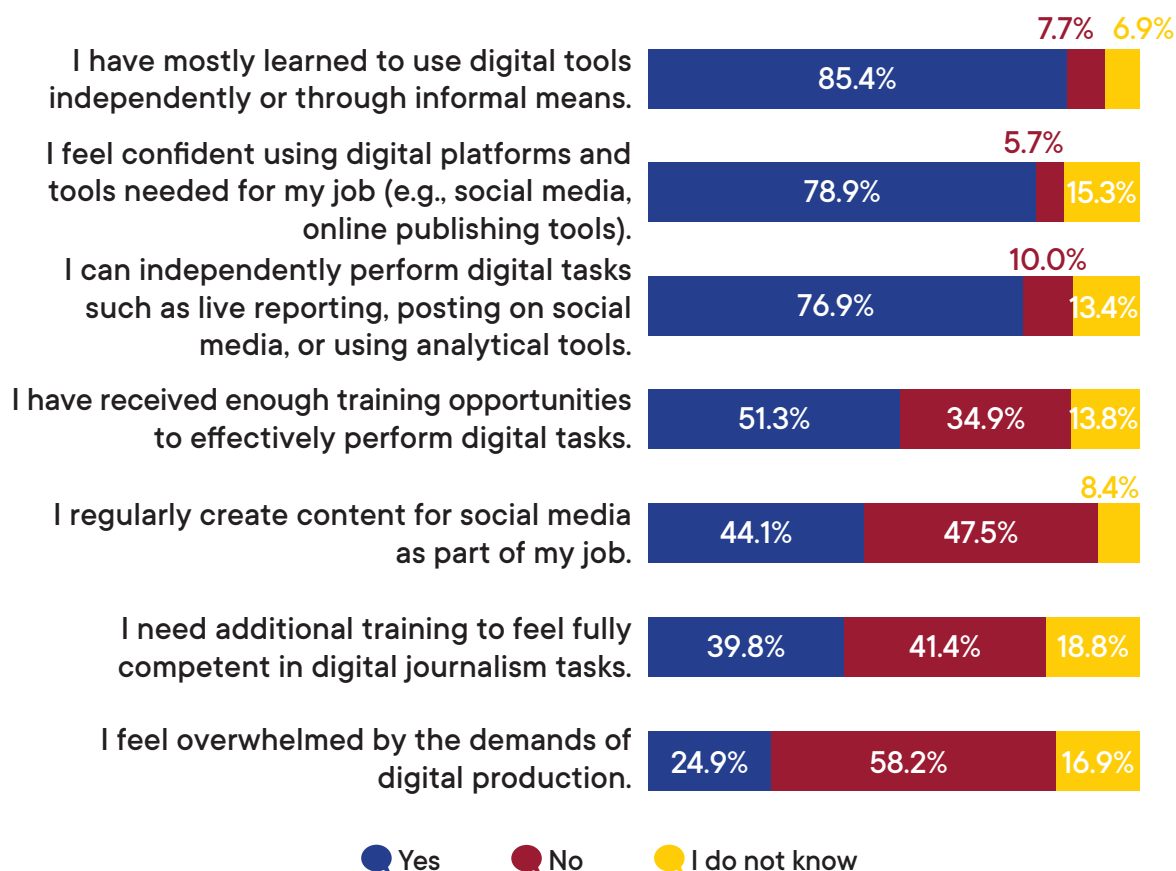
When it comes to formal support, only 51.3% of respondents believe they received sufficient training opportunities, while 34.9% disagree with this statement. The data also shows that 44.1% of respondents regularly create content for social networks as part of their job, while 47.5% state that this is not the case.

When it comes to needs for additional training, responses are divided: 39.8% of respondents believe they need additional training, while 41.4% assess that they do not. At the same time, 58.2% of respondents state that they do not feel overburdened by the demands of digital production, while 24.9% agree with this statement. These findings suggest that digitalization has varying effects on journalists' workload, with some respondents recognizing increased demands of digital production, while the majority do not perceive digital changes as an additional burden.



“In the past, it was up to us to prepare a report or broadcast and that was it. Today you need to prepare a report or broadcast, then adapt it for the portal, then prepare the text that goes on the portal, then record something for social networks... the work has more than doubled.” (Focus group participant)

Graph 70: Please read the following statements and mark all that apply to you:

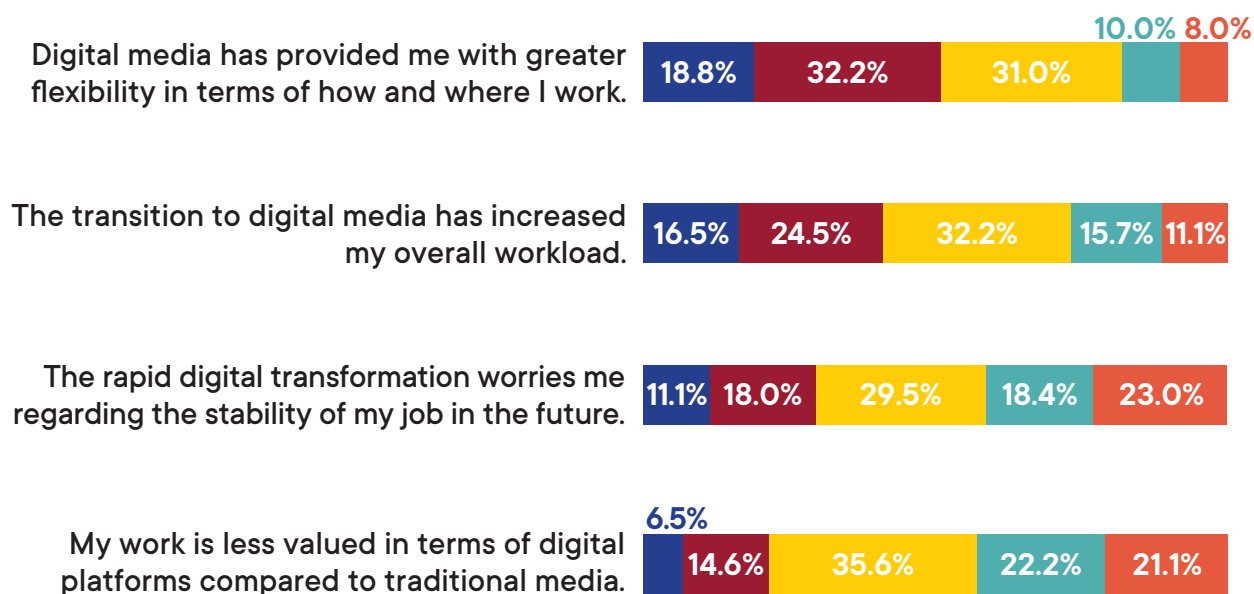


Perceptions of the impact of digital transformation on working conditions are not unambiguous. When it comes to flexibility, 51% of respondents believe that digital media enable them greater flexibility in terms of the way and place of work.

On the other hand, 41% of respondents agree with the statement that digitalization has increased their workload. A relatively low percentage of disagreement (26.8%) suggests that most journalists associate digital demands with additional volume of work, either through parallel production for multiple platforms, shorter deadlines, or increased availability.

The perception of valuing work on digital platforms is also complex. A total of 21.1% of respondents believe that their digital work is less valued compared to traditional formats.

Graph 71: Please rate on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) how much you agree with the following statements:



- 5 – Strongly agree
- 4 – Mostly agree
- 3 – Neither agree nor disagree
- 2 – Mostly disagree
- 1 – Strongly disagree

Focus group participants emphasize the need for more substantial digital training, especially in the areas of digital security, content verification, and fieldwork. Additionally, concerns have been expressed that the accelerated development of artificial intelligence could further reduce space for investigative journalism and authorial approaches.



ChatGPT journalism needs to be reduced.”
(Focus group participant)

“The problem now is not using artificial intelligence, we’ve all learned that already, we don’t need training in that area. Now we need training on recognizing its use, primarily the misuse of artificial intelligence.” (Focus group participant)



The findings of this chapter show that journalists in Montenegro largely possess basic and more advanced digital skills, but that their development is predominantly based on independent learning, with limited institutional support. At the same time, digital transformation is experienced both as an opportunity and as a burden: some journalists recognize greater flexibility and professional opportunities, and also emphasize increased volume of work and a feeling of being overburdened. Concerns about job security and the perception of unequal valuation of digital work indicate that technological changes are not accompanied by sufficiently clear human resource management and professional development strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the combined findings of quantitative research and focus groups. They are directed toward key actors – state institutions, media houses, trade unions, professional associations, and international organizations, with the aim of improving working conditions, professional security, and long-term sustainability of journalism in Montenegro.

Labor Rights, Salaries, and Social Protection

- Adoption of a Sectoral Collective Agreement (SCA): Urgently adopt an SCA for the media sector that will define minimum salary coefficients, additional pay (overtime, night work, holidays), vacation bonus, severance pay, and clear advancement rules. The negotiation process needs to be accelerated by including, in addition to the participation of social partners (Media Union and employers), other relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Government of Montenegro, in order to ensure full institutional support and sustainability of solutions.
- Increase journalists' salaries at least to the level of average earnings in the country and introduce mechanisms for periodic adjustment with inflation.
- Eliminate work without contracts through intensified inspection supervision and sanctions. Regulate all forms of cooperation (fee-based, project-based) with written contracts that guarantee social rights.
- Introduce clear internal procedures for recording working hours. Ensure that all overtime work, weekend and holiday work, is adequately paid or compensated with days off with the employee's consent.
- Provide young people with fair and stimulating conditions at the beginning of their career by introducing quality internships that include adequate mentorship, clearly defined tasks, and realistic opportunities for professional development. Special focus should be placed on ensuring transparent and fair entry-level positions to facilitate young journalists' entry into the profession.

Safety, Editorial Independence, and Working Conditions

- Strengthen the work of the Commission for Monitoring Investigations of Attacks on Journalists and increase its transparency.
- Regularly conduct training in physical, digital, and legal security, with special focus on protecting female journalists from gender-based and online violence.
- Establish clear internal protocols for responding to threats, with the employer's obligation to report attacks and pressures.
- Establish and publicly publish editorial statutes or internal policies that guarantee independence in content editing and define procedures for reporting pressure from owners, politicians, or advertisers. These policies should be accessible to employees and the public, in order to strengthen transparency, accountability, and trust in editorial processes, and to provide institutional protection for journalists in situations of potential pressure.
- At the level of media houses, it is necessary to systematically develop a culture of psychological security through a set of measures that contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of employees. This may include establishing cooperation with psychologists for anonymous counseling sessions, especially after traumatic events, but also a wider range of activities such as regular workshops, education on stress and burnout, internal protocols for responding in crisis situations, and mechanisms for confidential reporting of problems.
- Establish cooperation with psychologists for anonymous counseling sessions, especially after traumatic events.

Professional Development and Career Growth

- Digital Skills: Establish systematic and structured digital training (multimedia, data journalism, verification, analytical tools).
- Valuation of Digital Work: Through editorial policies, clearly recognize and reward digital work (account management, multimedia, quick updates) as an integral part of professional engagement.

Role of the State, Trade Unions, Associations, and International Partners

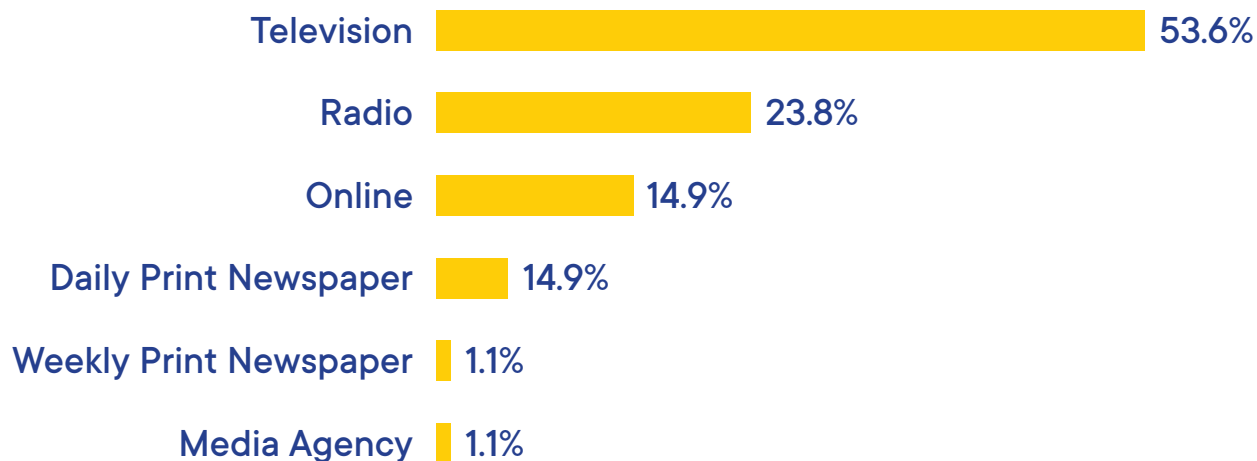
- Make the use of public funds (grants, subsidies) conditional on proof of financial compliance (paid salaries and contributions, respect for labor legislation).
- Trade unions and journalists' associations should direct their work toward solving key professional issues, such as earnings, working conditions, stable contracts, professional security, and protection of journalists' rights. It is necessary to increase the transparency of their operations, strengthen communication with membership, and actively encourage professional solidarity among employees in the sector.
- Editorial offices must adopt gender-sensitive policies for monitoring structure and salaries. Provide additional support (grants, training, equipment) to strengthen media capacity, especially smaller local media, through training, support in developing internal policies, and strengthening organizational processes.
- Role of International Partners: Active support of international partners in the process of adopting the SCA (mediation, expertise) and targeted financing of training for security, digital skills, and mental health.



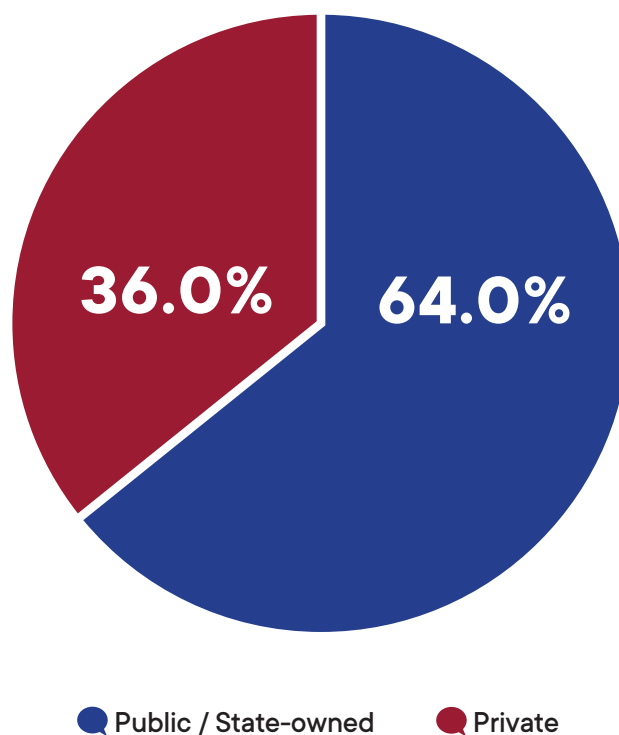
Demographic data

In the Annex, we present a detailed overview of key demographic characteristics of the sample for this research.

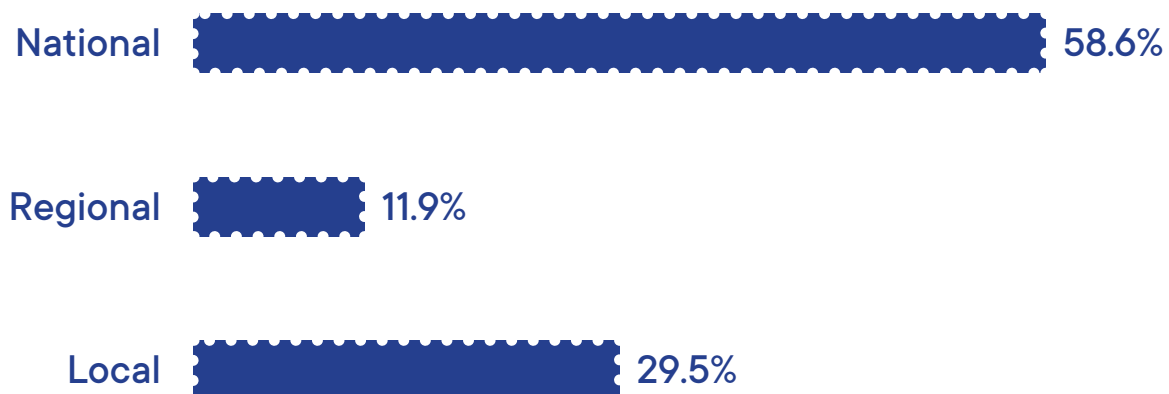
Graph 72: Which type of media do you work in?



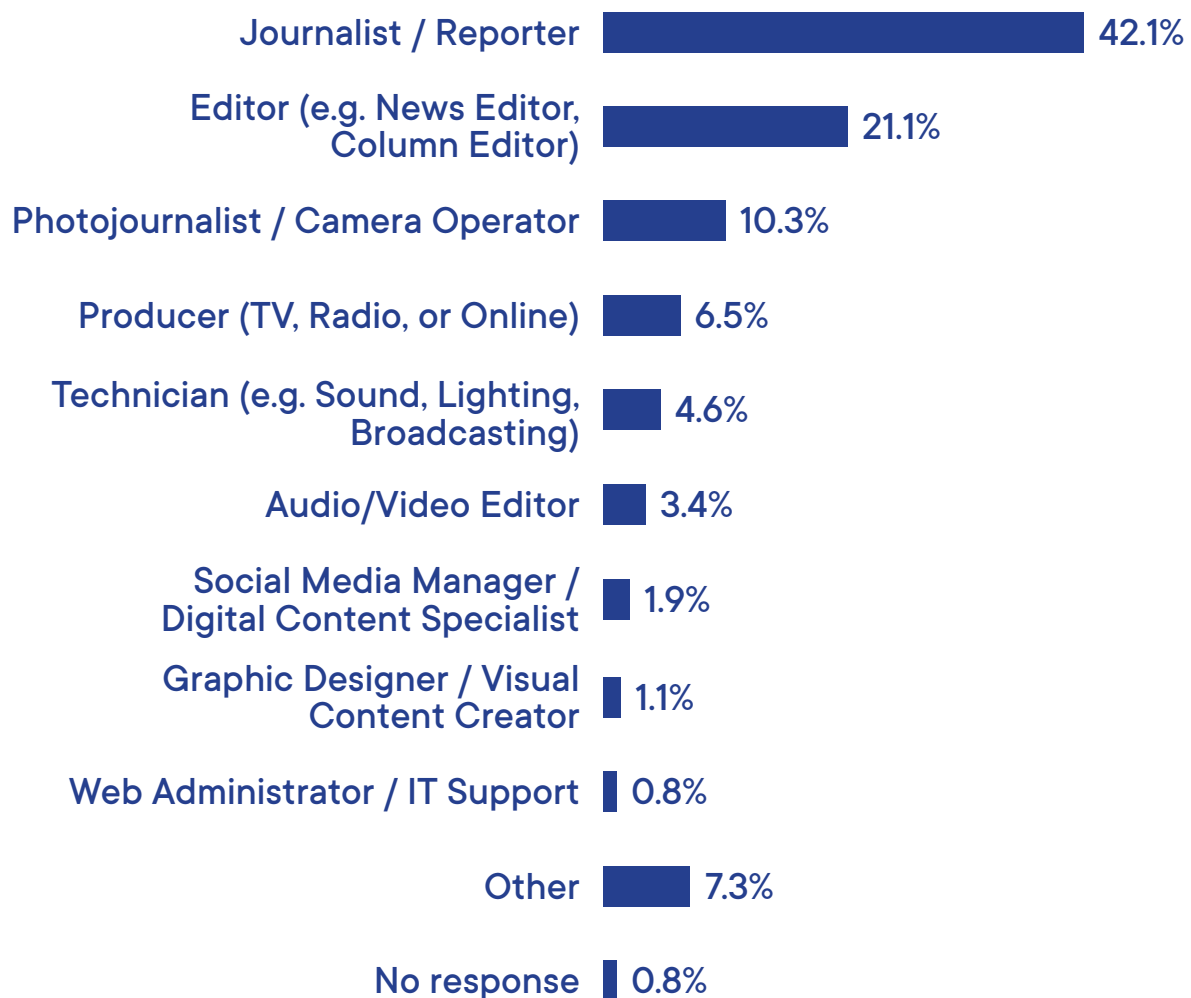
Graph 73: What is the ownership status of the media company you work for?



Graph 74: What is the geographic scope of the media outlet you work for?



Graph 75 : What is your registered job title?



Graph 76 : If you are a journalist/reporter, what is your primary area of work?

