



STUDY ON MEDIA  
PROFESSIONALS

Tirana, 2019

**ALBANIAN**  
**MEDIA LANDSCAPE**



Embassy of the United States of America  
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# Albanian Media Landscape

## STUDY ON MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

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## List of Abbreviations

AKEP	Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications
ALL	Official Currency of Albania
AMA	Audiovisual Media Authority
ATA	Albanian Telegraphic Agency
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews
RTSH	Public Radio and Television
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Executive Summary

IDRA conducted a study among media professionals whose main aim is the understanding of the Albanian Media Landscape, national media policies, legislative environment and regulatory authority. A special focus was put on the challenges that press, media organizations, news agencies and unions are facing. Special attention was paid to exploring the media environment in general as well as the challenges faced by media professionals nowadays, including: editorial independence; political and business interference on editorials of journalists; job security for media employees; truthfulness of the news; and the professionalism of journalists and media freedom in Albania in particular. The study provides data for a clearer understanding of the media landscape as well as the effect of digital media on the traditional media.

The study consists of quantitative and qualitative parts namely; 800 Survey Interviews with Media Professionals, seven (7) Focus Groups with Journalists and 20 in-depth interviews with media editors, media managers, media analysts and media owners. Through the analysis of respective data gathered, the following key-findings have been identified;

### General

- Data revealed that most of the respondents **have extensive experience in the media sector**. Nearly one quarter of the sample has been working in the media sector for 6-10 years (24%). Another 19 percent has worked for 16-20 years, and 18 percent for 11-15 years.
- Most media professionals who have worked in media for more than 3 years, declared to have worked in different jobs within the sector (i.e. have changed media outlet). During Focus Group discussions the main **reasons mentioned for change of workplace were; i) the disagreements they had with the media owner/manager; ii) the level of salary; iii) high delays or irregular payments; iv) the working conditions**, etc.
- **Media professionals cover more than what is their “official function”**. About 44% of all respondents declared that they cover other functions. This is more obvious in the case of Radios (where 69% of the respondents declared to cover other functions).
- **The number of media outlets (traditional and new media) is high considering the market size of the country**. The abundance of media operators in comparison with population and the advertising market - take to the conclusion that in absence of bankruptcy the media operators does not operate according to market rules. The challenges for Albania seems to be: having less, not having more.



- Within their work at a media outlet, **57 % of the media professionals usually work on a specific subject area, while 43% declared to work on more subjects**. It is common that someone who works in Social Journalism works also in Political Journalism and Chronical Journalism. In general, in smaller media outlets or in local media, due to the staff shortage, often journalists cover all subject areas, working on different types of stories. At the same time, as per media professionals' perception, at the first steps of a journalism career, a journalist covers everything. They consider that young journalists work initially only as reporters. Only afterwards they develop a profile as journalist for a certain area.

### Qualification and Education

- Out of the 800 respondents, 46 percent report to have a Graduate degree (MA) and nearly a third obtained an Undergraduate degree (BA) (29%). Fifteen percent state to have a second level integrated diploma and eight percent report High School to be their highest level of education. Only two percent obtained a PhD.
- **Almost half of the media professionals (46%) have not graduated in journalism, nor do they have any other formal journalism qualifications**. Having a degree in journalism or Albanian literature is seen as slightly preferential, but not as fundamental. The vast majority (90%), independent of their degree, have graduated in Albania.
- In general, journalists have followed various trainings from international Medias and local organizations. Overall, journalists perceive trainings as highly useful, especially the ones who are focused on journalistic writing, news coverage and the usage of multimedia images/tools.
- When asked about “the confidence they have in the future of journalism as a profession,” about 40% of media professionals declare **not to be confident** (31% are “rather not confident” and 9% “not at all confident”). **About 1 in 3 media professionals would not “advise a young person” to pursue a career in journalism**. The level of payment and working conditions in general (including long working hours), are mentioned as the most negative aspects and reasons why media professionals would not recommend this profession to young people. Still, the majority of media professionals though (60%), would still advise them to pursue journalism.

### Employment relationship - Contracts

- About 83% of the respondents declared to be full-time employees, about 9% declared to be part-time employees and 5% to be “freelancers”. Of those respondents that are “fulltime employees,” about **17% declare to not have work contracts or agreements**. This figure goes up to 31% (without a contract) when looking at the respondents/media outside of Tirana.
- Even among those who declared that they have a contract (83%), about 30% of them stated that they do not feel “protected” by the fact that they have a contract. Media professionals admit however, that during the last few years, **there has been a formalization of the media sector in terms of employment**.
- Strangely when asked about their perception on work contracts, again there seems to be an agreement among many media professionals that journalists in Albania usually have **formal work contracts (67%)**, but however the percentage is considerably lower when compared with personal experience data.
- When asked about means to receive their salary, salary, 74 percent report to receive their full salary through a bank. Meanwhile, **1 in 10 respondents still receives their salary in cash and 1 in 7 still gets a part of their salary in cash**.
- Overall, more than half of all media professionals interviewed, **do not think that they are fairly compensated for their work (57%)**. Even among those groups that earn the most (80 000 – 150 000 and more than 150 000 ALL per month), more than 40% do not think they are fairly compensated.

### Professional Journalism

- When respondents were asked to rate the **level of professionalism of journalists in Albanian media** on a scale from 1 to 10, on which 1 = very poor and 10 = excellent, **they prefer to stay rather neutral**, considering that the middle of the scale is 5.5 and this matter is rated with 5.8 points by them. This shows **a lack of “positive consideration” for professionalism in journalism by the journalist themselves**.
- Looking closer at specific types of media outlets, **it appears that respondents have most confidence in the overall professionalism at TVs channels**, rating it with 6.2 out of 10. Radio stands at a rating of 6.1 and Newspaper/Magazine at 5.5. What stands out is the lower rating for professionalism within online media (4.0), which is much lower than all the other types of media.

- Over half of all the respondents (52%) said ***that they have received (themselves) an order from the media owner/editor-in-chief to make a commissioned news/interview.*** Data reveals that those journalists who earn more, are more likely to have received such an “order” and commissioned news are viewed as very common.
- ***Corruption awareness appears to be high among media professionals.*** The great majority of respondents (78%) think that there are journalists who engage in corrupt practices (make money or other benefits) to create/produce a certain chronicle/news.

### Censorship and Self-censorship

- ***Self-censorship is very common among Albanian media professionals.*** Respondents think that either “almost all of the media censors themselves” (41%) or that “there is frequent self-censorship” (36%).
- News are “suppressed” or “delayed” because of: i) Government pressure, ii) Political parties’ pressure and iii) Business pressure evaluated with almost equal weight. About ***36% of respondents declared that they “have been put under pressure” by their editors not to write about a specific event or story.*** Similar, about 38% declared to have been put under pressure by their Media Owner/Director.
- Respondents were asked if there were ***times when their news was reworked/rewritten by the editor or media owner.*** Overall, ***56 percent*** of the respondents have experienced such a situation. Looking through the lens of income groups, the highest income groups have experienced most commonly this kind of situation. Meanwhile, ***around 1 in 3 journalists experienced that a news/story they worked on was removed or deleted without informing them (35%).***

### Verbal and Physical Abuse

- ***Alarming results*** can be observed when asking respondents whether they think “journalists get verbally or psychologically abused when exercising their duties”. ***Combined the overwhelming majority thinks either that journalists get somewhat verbally or psychologically abused (66%), or completely abused (19%).*** This abuse is “nondiscriminatory” in terms of gender (i.e. it does not differentiate between female or male journalists).
- About ***1 in 3 respondents*** declares that he/she himself/herself has been ***subject to verbal and physical threats during their job.***

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Project context

The media landscape in Albania has been undergoing dynamic changes over the past years. The country has a large number of TV stations and newspapers while there has been a boom in online media recently. However, it is interesting to note, that all the types of research studies in Albania so far, do recognize the deficiency of accurate data on the media landscape actors<sup>1</sup>.

At present, only the Public Radio and Television (RTSH) and the Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA) are public media outlets while all others are privately owned.

Currently, the total number of newspapers and magazines published across the country is estimated to be above two hundred. A total of 16 national newspapers are published in Albania, a very high figure in terms of the general number of the population. There are no certified and official figures regarding the circulation and sales of newspapers. Newspaper newsrooms do not have an obligation to publish the number of sold copies and there is no official authority that deals with the verification of such data.<sup>2</sup> Knowing the approximate circulation of the biggest daily newspapers could serve as indicating information and would portray interesting data for further studies in this field.

According to AMA (Audiovisual Media Authority) with regard to television media and radio official figures, there are 49 audiovisual broadcasters (1 public, 5 national and 43 local) and 59 audio broadcasters (2 national radio, 3 audio operators with repetition service, 50 local audios and 4 audio community subjects). There are also 98 authorized operators for repetition of audio/audiovisual programs (cable operators). According to the Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications (AKEP), the 2016 annual report revealed that the number of domains registered during 2016 is 5800 with an increase of 12 % compared with 2015, out of those 650 are news portals.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding solid statistics about media professionals in Albania, the information from different sources varies. The Union of Albanian Journalists estimates that at the end of 2014 there were about 5,527 employees in the media sector, and about half were people involved in producing

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<sup>1</sup> Overview of Labor Relations in the Media – AMI 2015, Albania’s Diverse, Active Media Landscape – EOJ 2016, <http://www.cji.ro/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Albania.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Social Media and their use by Albanian Media- Albanian Media Institute, 2015, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/albanien/12292.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> AKEP- Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications -Annual Report 2016

editorial content, namely journalists and editors, - said Aleksandër Çipa, Chair of the Union of Albanian Journalists.<sup>4</sup> Later on, in the beginning of 2018, Mr. Cipa claimed that there are 2,872 journalists engaged in the media sector including full-time, part-time and intern journalists as well. Out of those, 2,658 are located in Tirana, 33 in Fier, 30 of them respectively for each in Gjirokaster, Elbasan and Shkoder, 23 in Durres, 21 in Vlore, 20 in Korçe and 10 in Sarandë.<sup>5</sup> However, despite this there has never been a “break down” of these figures regarding how many of them are engaged in the traditional media and how many in the online media, how many of them are engaged as full-time or part-time employees etc. There is an information gap in this regard and institutions currently don’t provide accurate data on the number of media professionals.

According to the latest report<sup>6</sup> of the American Department of State, independent media in Albania were active and expressed a wide variety of viewpoints, although there were efforts to exert direct and indirect political and economic pressure on the media. Business owners freely used media outlets to gain favors and promote their interests with political parties. Most owners of private television stations used the content of their broadcasts to influence government action toward their other businesses. Political pressure, corruption, and lack of funding constrained independent print media, and journalists reportedly practiced self-censorship. Economic insecurity due to a lack of enforceable labor contracts reduced reporters’ independence and contributed to bias in reporting.

Today’s information provided by online media, identify some of the important challenges facing the press and media industry. According to Europe and Euro Asia Media Sustainability Index 2018, Albania’s media environment fell slightly, losing 0.12 points, especially due the economic crisis and management practices in Albanian media which took a heavy toll on finances and quality of reporting in media outlets.<sup>7</sup> Shortcomings in implementation of the laws, mainly from the judiciary can be noted as well. The legal framework of press protection has persistent gaps — particularly in the area of defamation. Civil cases around defamation, which is not fully decriminalized, often result in punishing sanctions. With regard to professional journalism, very few outlets in Albania maintain a high standard of professional reporting, and most exhibit serious shortcomings. Conditions in which journalists work, including staff shortages, heavy workloads, competitive and fiscal burdens, and poor labor relations are seen as top obstacles. Meanwhile, Media financing has been a mystery in Albania for many years.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.mediacenterbg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Media-Literacy-and-Education-Needs-of-Journalists-and-the-Public\\_REPORT\\_FINAL.pdfn](http://www.mediacenterbg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Media-Literacy-and-Education-Needs-of-Journalists-and-the-Public_REPORT_FINAL.pdfn)

<sup>5</sup> Union of Albanian Journalists, Mr. Aleksander Cipa declaration on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018

<sup>6</sup> American Department of State, ‘Albania 2018 Human Rights Report’, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>

<sup>7</sup> Europe and Euro Asia Media Sustainability Index 2018, <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe- Eurasia-2018-full.pdf>

Far from improving during 2018, Albania's media environment has degenerated in some respects. In 2017, the major story was the Constitutional Court's nullification of Article 62/3 of the Audiovisual Media law, which had prohibited any single owner from holding more than 40 percent of an outlet's share, thus annulling the legal mechanism that sought to guarantee pluralism of media ownership. This decision paves the way for the rich and well-connected to tighten their grip on the country's broadcast media. De facto, the ownership of broadcast media has been concentrated in 3 families (Hoxha, Frangaj, Dulaku). The situation was further worsened now with the distribution by AMA of digital national licenses.

In regards to the legislation in place, Albania lacks a law on online media, however, the government is currently working to create a legal framework to regulate online media. The slow licensing of digital platforms is another problem in this regard, placing Albania among the last countries to complete the process of switching from analog to digital transmission. The delays are due to legal challenges, political flux and the late introduction of the public broadcaster (RTSH) into the process.

According to Reporters Without Borders and their latest 2019 report, World Press Freedom Index, media freedom in Albania has moved down in the ranking with 7 position compared with 2018, standing 82<sup>th</sup> from 180 countries.<sup>8</sup> During 2018, journalists were subjected to insults, death threats and legal proceedings designed to intimidate and deter them from investigating corruption. Politicians, led by Prime Minister Edi Rama, branded them as trash and as fake news manufacturers. The prime minister has proposed a law designed to reinforce state control over the electronic media and, critics say, restrict access to news and information.

A joint research project between Reporters Without Borders and the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network in Albania, revealed that the Albania media scene is highly concentrated in the hand of few major owners, who have strong political affiliations, and control more than half of the audience share and nearly 90% of the market share.<sup>9</sup> Due to the pressure from media owners and their political and economic interests, many Albanian journalists resort to self-censorship. This has created a situation in which self-censorship is widespread and 80% of journalists have no confidence in their professional future.

Moderately prepared in the field of information society and audiovisual media. This, in effect, was the conclusion of the European Commission's annual report at the end of 2018 on this candidate for European Union admission. Some progress was made on the digital agenda action plan and e-government services. The Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) approved its strategic action plan for 2017-2019 and the public broadcaster its new statute. However,

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<sup>8</sup> Reporters Without Borders, Media Freedom Index Report, Albania 2019, <http://www.mom-rsf.org/en/countries/albania/>

<sup>9</sup> Media Ownership Monitor, RFS and BIRN joint project, 2018, <http://albania.mom-rsf.org/en/findings/media-concentration/>

audiovisual media ownership and the transparency of media funding and public advertising remain key issues. The editorial direction of private media continues to be strongly influenced by political and business interests. Media funding remains key to improving media freedom, especially given new challenges such as ‘fake news’ and third-party influence. Among others, self-censorship and the precarious nature of employment for journalists remain issues of strong concern. The latest European Commission Progress Report on Albania 2018, highlighted among main issues that job security for journalists needs to be strengthened. Media owners do not formalize work contracts and the Labour Code needs to be properly implemented for journalists.

The EU 2018 Progress Report also identified that physical assaults on journalists remain very rare. A case was reported in March 2017 and was swiftly condemned by the authorities. Investigations were launched and led to the perpetrator’s arrest. The case reached appeal level and is still ongoing. However, serious cases were registered in 2018 where unidentified persons sprayed bullets against the home of the father of crime reporter Klodiana Lala.

According to Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, the media landscape in Albania is very diverse, with each big party having its own mouthpiece and the wide range of media outlets which has improved the coverage of political processes, government policies and wrongdoings (which daily receive a substantial share of attention). Yet, the media is usually financed by businesses, who tend to use them as a tool to gain political access and lucrative contracts in return for favorable political coverage, complicating the quality of media reporting. During the period under investigation, several journalists were promoted to political positions showing the informal relations between media and politics.<sup>10</sup>

European Journalism Observatory’s article on “The four Challenges Faced by the Albanian Media” identifies challenges based on the technological changes that shake the traditional media<sup>11</sup>. These identified challenges are inter alia; the general changing of professional journalism culture, the old fashioned generalist profile without a clear social identity, reform on management culture and economic models, and the management challenges that Albanian Media must face in the era of online news.

Other sources<sup>12</sup> note that among important challenges are also the social situations of journalists, work security and weak implementation of labor relations. The same challenge among other journalist rights that need to be approved is highlighted and stressed by Albanian Journalist Union and other media associations.

The general perception is that Albanian media journalists limit to reporting events instead of conducting thorough investigations. Generally, reporting tend to be superficial, somewhat

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<sup>10</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI) 2018, Albania Country Report, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-reports/detail/itc/alb/ity/2018/itr/ecse/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://en.ejo.ch/media-economics/challenges-albanian-media>

<sup>12</sup> Overview of Labor Relations in the Media

unprofessional and consist of ready-made materials. Another issue is that most of reports, in the print and online media are unattributed.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile several challenges lie ahead in the Albania Media Landscape. New phenomena which were unthinkable 10 years ago are taking place such as: leaders of institutions, businesses, and celebrities reporting for themselves; live broadcasting of political figures; rare cases where journalist are present - let alone ask questions; the journalist instead of reporting news- becoming news themselves; the model of opinionist versus the model of reporter; the appearance of fake news and the effect of social media (especially on Facebook), etc.

## 1.2 Objective of the study

The purpose of the study is to gather information to foster better understanding of the media landscape, the national media policies, the legal framework and regulatory authority. Special attention is paid to exploring the media environment in general as well as identify the challenges faced by media professionals today, including: editorial independence; political and business influence on the editorial line of media outlets; job security for media workers; truthfulness and quality of the news; professionalism of journalists and media freedom in Albania in particular. The study provides data for a clearer understanding of Albanian media scene as well as the effect of digital media on traditional media.

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<sup>13</sup> Europe and Euro Asia Media Sustainability Index 2017, <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/pdf/media-sustainability-index-europe-eurasia-2017-full.pdf>



## 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The study employed initially a preliminary Desk Research phase, exploring each specific research element. The study has involved a Quantitative component as well as a Qualitative one.

### 2.1 Desk Research

In order to expand both horizontally and vertically on the research objectives, considering the size of the study, a desk research phase was undertaken. This phase consisted of collecting and analyzing existing data, documents and strategies on the media landscape in Albania. The full report produced by the desk research served as a good basis for the research topics and questions (research instruments) that were asked on the later stages by the Quantitative and Qualitative research instruments (the draft questionnaire for the survey, draft Moderation guides for Focus Group discussions and draft Moderation guides for In Depth Interviews).

### 2.2 Quantitative approach

The most important component of the project is the comprehensive survey of Media professionals with a solid sample size of N=800. In fact this is a sample may result to be 40% or more of the total number of media professionals in Albania<sup>14</sup>.

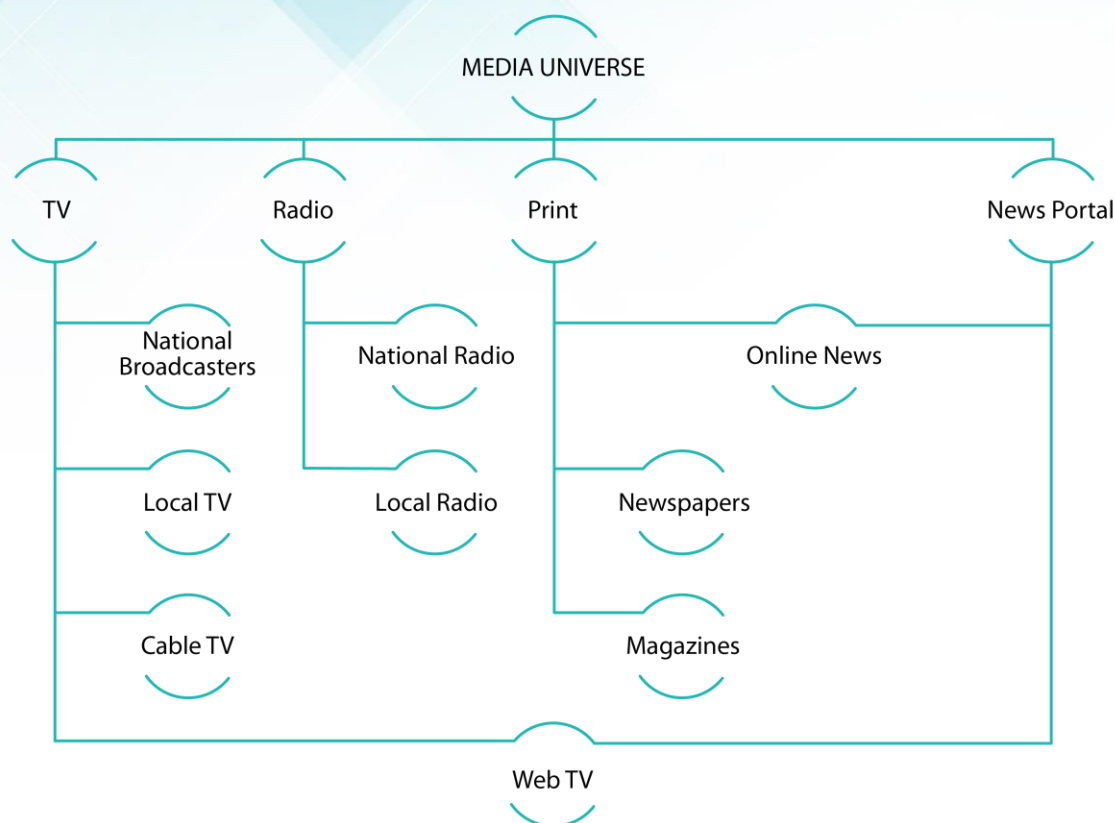
As mentioned above accurate statistics on the number of media workers are missing, however, estimates put this number between 1500 to 3000 journalists.

Prior to deciding on the sampling methodology, the universe of the media operators in Albania, or the so called sampling framework, was established.

The following scheme presents the landscape of the media Universe in Albania:

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<sup>14</sup> See the background information on the numbers of journalists in Albania.



The Media Universe in Albania is composed of:

- TV stations (National and local)
- Cable TV operators (for their own channels that produce content)
- Radio stations (National and local)
- Print Newspapers/Magazines
- Online (newspapers/portals/websites/Social media)

Initially the project focused on identifying the universe along with the specific data to enable a solid framework for the sampling afterwards. The initial information included enough data to stratify the sample according to the following parameters:

- Type of Media (TV or Newspapers or Online)
- Size of media (in terms of employees)
- Typology of media professionals (editors, journalist, administrative workers, other etc.)
- Geography coverage (National or Local)

After this information was gathered, a full database of media actors was developed which then was used as the sampling frame to select the study sample. The selected sample was a multistage stratified one based on Type of Media, the geography and the type of media professionals.

The study included 800 face-to-face interviews with media professionals. Such an exercise required an extensive amount of time to be managed logistically (March – December 2018).

## 2.3 Qualitative Approach

The use of focus groups and in-depth interviews complement the quantitative survey with qualitative information enabling questions such as “Why? And How?”, while offering illustrative arguments to the results of the quantitative survey.

In total, **7 Focus groups with journalists were conducted**, as shown below:

- ✓ 1 FG prior to the Quantitative Survey, in order to define the issues to be included in the survey, explore topics of interest, explore formulation of questions, sensitive information to be included, validate the research objectives etc.
- ✓ 6 FG after the Quantitative survey in order to validate the findings and also to complement the quantitative data with arguments and illustrations.

Focus groups, organized as “collective discussions”, were composed with target group representatives (8-15 media professionals) guided towards the objectives of research which in this case provided a typology of issues, a mapping of concerns and preferences along with in-depth understanding of key issues of the media landscape in Albania. The conclusions from focus groups show in-depth understanding of issues and provide answers to questions like “What/In what way?”, “Why?”, “How come?”.

At the same time, **20 In Depth Interviews** were conducted with media editors, media managers, media analysts and media owners.

## 3. ALBANIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE: FINDINGS

### 3.1 General Information

The quantitative and qualitative component enabled the analysis to convey a representative picture of the work in the media sector in Albania.

The majority of media professionals describes themselves as Journalists (58%). Eight percent would describe themselves as Top Editors, seven percent as Moderators or Hosts, and six percent as Editors. All other job description titles were mentioned by less than five percent of the respondents.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1. What job title you normally use to describe the job that you do?**

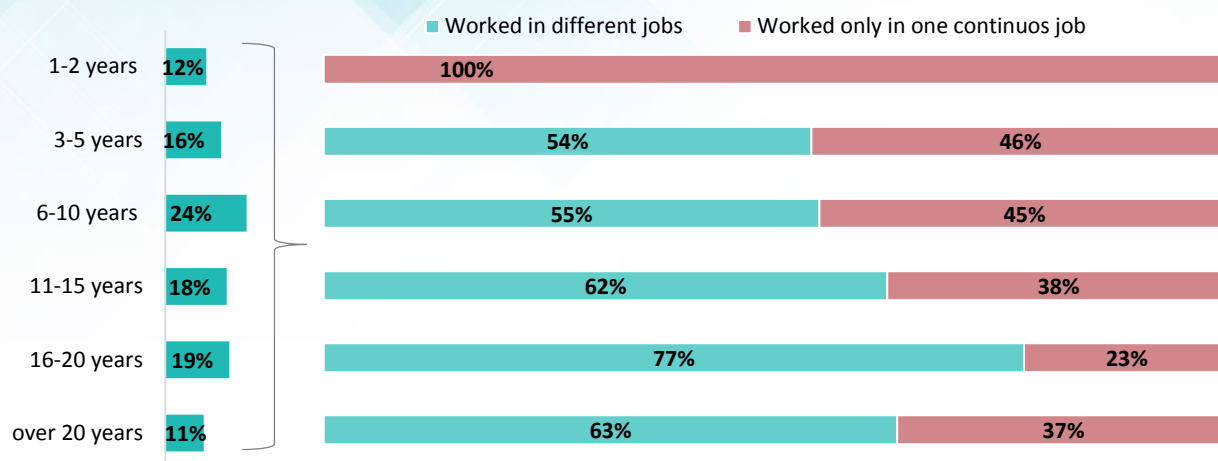
Job Title	Percentage (%)	Respondent Count
Journalist	58%	465
Top editor	8%	63
Moderators, Host	7%	58
Editor	6%	45
Video/Audio Editor	4%	31
Executive staff	3%	26
Field operator/cameraman	3%	26
Programme author/ Producer	3%	24
Information director	3%	20
Manager	2%	13
Other	4%	29

First, different kinds of background information were gathered in order to gain a basic understanding of the respondents' profile. Data revealed that most of the respondents have extensive experience in the media sector. Nearly one quarter of the sample has been working in the media sector since 6-10 years (24%). Another 19 percent has worked since 16-20 years, and 18 percent since 11-15 years. Only some stated to have worked since five, or fewer years, in the media sector.

When being asked about the length of current continuous work, it can be observed that on **average the greater the general work experience, the lower the rate of continuous work in one job.**

<sup>15</sup> Demographic information on respondents profile can be found in Annex A

Figure 1. The overall working period in the media sector and length of current continuous work (years)

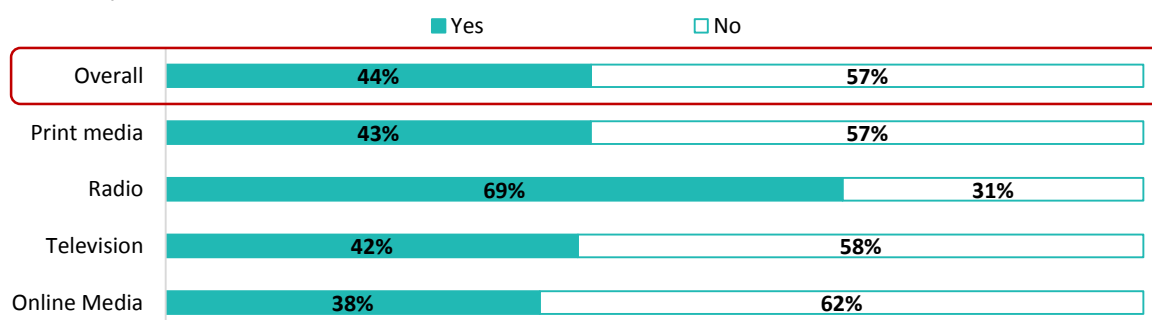


Respondents who only worked 1-2 years in the sector all did so in a continuous position. More than half of the respondents with medium amounts of experience, have done so in in different jobs; 3-5 y.o experience (54%) and 6-10 y.o. of experience (55%). Respondents who have more experiences, have worked mostly at different jobs and not only in one continuous one.

During the focus group discussions, media professionals mentioned as main reasons for their change of work place within the media sector the disagreements they had with the media owner/manager; the level of salary; the insufficient payment or the high delays or irregular payments; the working conditions and the personal ambition to grow professionally in an a more challenging environment. While, parallel movements from one media to the other seem to be more frequent in the case of Tirana, local media professionals claim that their options are very limited or inexistent. Although the situation in local media is considered less favorable, media owners have somehow achieved ‘a sophisticated agreement’ between them so that they offer similar conditions in terms of salaries, working conditions, etc.

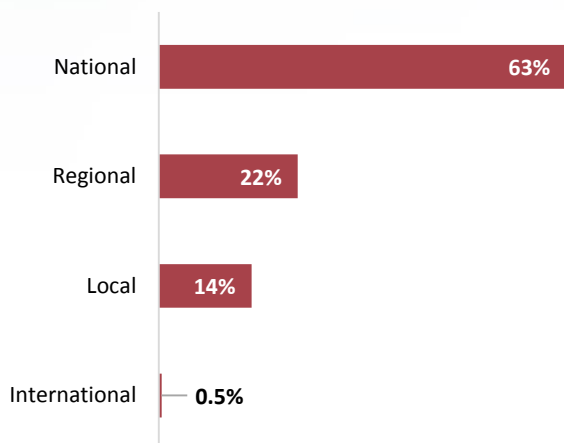
When being asked whether the respondents cover any other functions apart from the duties and functions of their normal job positions, over two thirds stated also to perform functions related to Radio (69%). Over 40 percent replied with yes when asked about functions related to print media (43%) or Television (42%). Another 38 percent stated to cover functions related to Online Media.

Figure 2. Do you cover any other function apart from the duties and functions of your formal job position? (By media outlet)



As per the focus group discussions with media professionals, it is considered a common phenomenon to cover other functions apart from the duties and functions of their formal job position. Especially in local media, often the journalists have to master and cover also the functions of the field operator, video editor, etc.

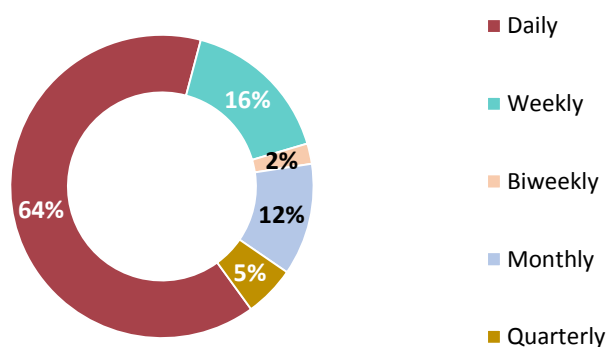
**Figure 3. Coverage of the media, media professionals work for**  
(N=651, excluding online media)



The majority of media professionals who took part in this study, work for a media outlet which covers news nationwide (63%). Twenty-two percent work for an outlet which covers regionally and another 14 percent work for a media which has local coverage. Only 0.5 percent of the total sample work for a media outlet which has international coverage.

The periodicity or frequency of publication of the print media outlet respondents work for, is most commonly daily (64%), whereas 16 percent publish weekly and another 12 percent monthly. Few publish quarterly or biweekly (5% and 2% respectively).

**Figure 4. Periodicity / frequency of publication**



The great majority of the media professionals work for one media outlet (82%), most commonly within the realms of Television (64%) or Online Media (19%). Seven percent work for a Radio Channel. Combined only 13 percent work for any sort of printed media. (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Do you work for one or more than one media outlet?

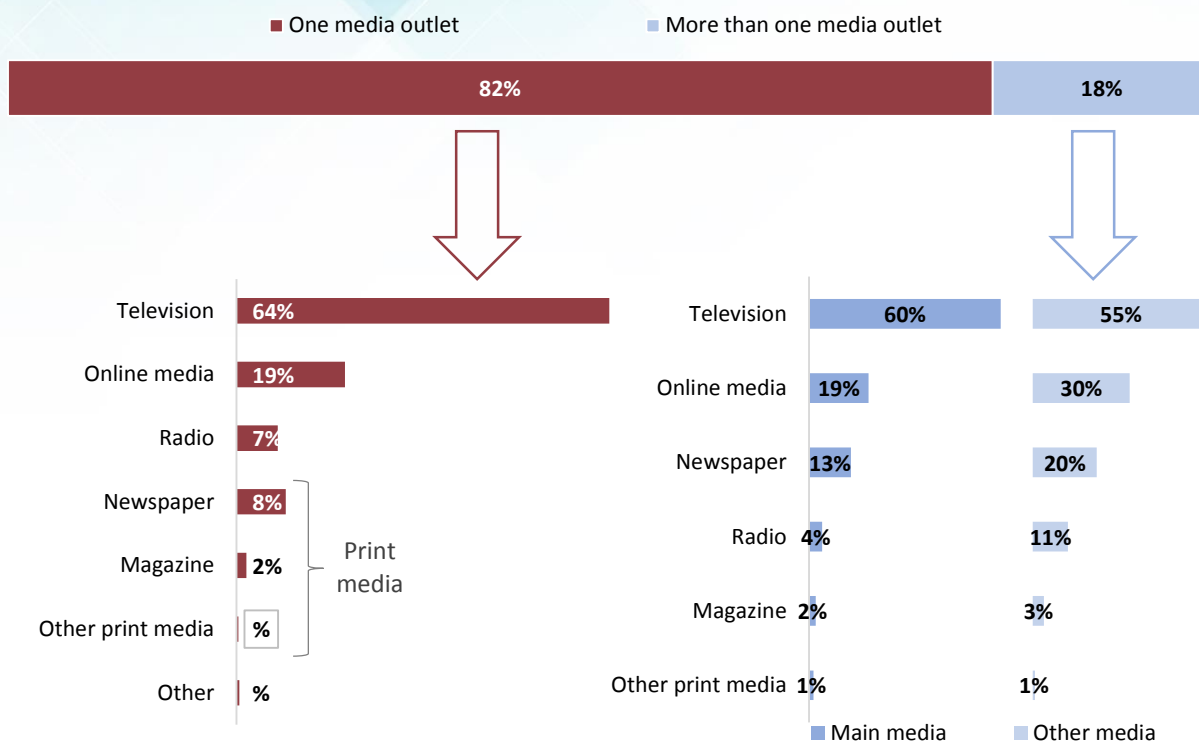


Figure 6. Which type of media outlet do you currently work in?  
 (N=655 only those who work for one media outlet)

Figure 7. Type of the other media outlet you work for?  
 (N=145 only those who work for more than one media outlet)

Most of the 145 respondents who also work in other media outlets, most commonly work during their main work engagement at either a TV station (60%), are engaged with online media (19%) or work with newspapers (13%). The other type of media they are typically engaged with is most commonly Television (55%). Nearly one third additionally works for an Online Media outlet (30%) and another 20 percent work for a newspaper. Eleven percent also work for a Radio Channel.

As per focus group discussions with media professionals, working for more than one media outlet seems to be more frequent for those professionals who are engaged in local media. Due to insufficient monthly revenues, they often work in two, three or even four media outlets (mostly working as a correspondent for more than one national television channel or work part-time for affiliated online media) in order to achieve what they call ‘a decent’ payment. Meanwhile, in Tirana fewer media professionals are working for more than one media outlet. Especially media professionals engaged with big national media emphasize that their media owners somehow limit them to work for more than one media outlet.

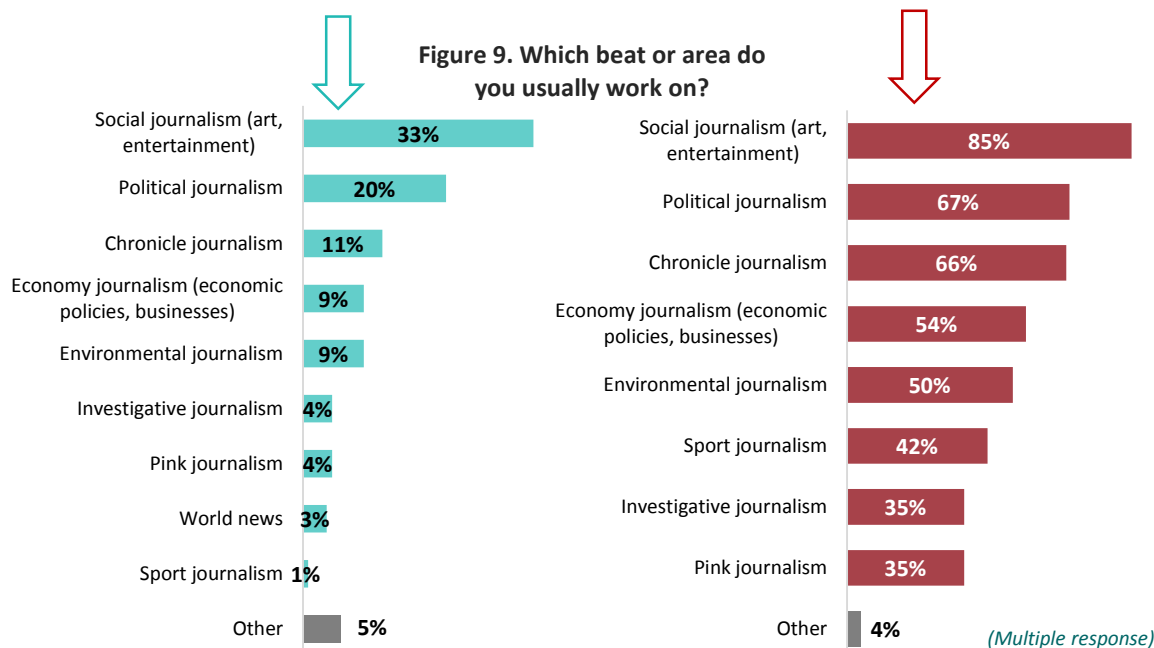
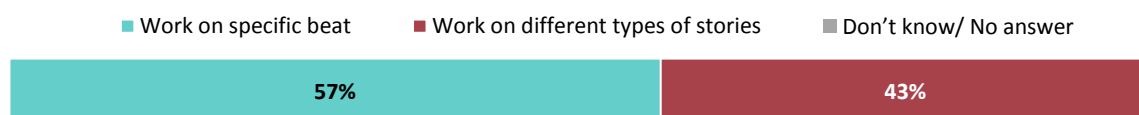
Within their work at a media outlet, 57 percent of the media professional usually work on a specific beat or subject area. This specific subject area is for half of this (turquoise) group

situated within Social Journalism (33%) and Political Journalism (20%). Other areas mentioned by around 10 percent each are; Environmental, Chronical, Economy or Pink Journalism.

The 43 percent who work on different types of stories also most commonly work in the subject areas of either Social Journalism (85%) or Political Journalism (67%). Two thirds of this second (red) group also mentions Chronicle Journalism (66%) and 54 percent state to work on different stories within Economy Journalism and 50 percent on environmental journalism. More than one third each mentions Sport, Investigative and other Journalism, and Pink Journalism.

**Figure 8. Do you usually work on a specific ‘beat’ or subject area?**

(N=465, only those who work as journalist)



N=265 (only those who work on a specific beat)

N=199 (only those who work on different type of stories)

In general, in smaller media outlets or in local media, due to the staff shortage, often journalists cover all beats, working on different types of stories. Furthermore, as per media professional perception, at the first step of a journalism career, a journalist covers everything. They consider that new journalists work initially only as reporters. Afterwards, as they gain experience, they develop a specific profile in a subject area they are most capable of or interested in.

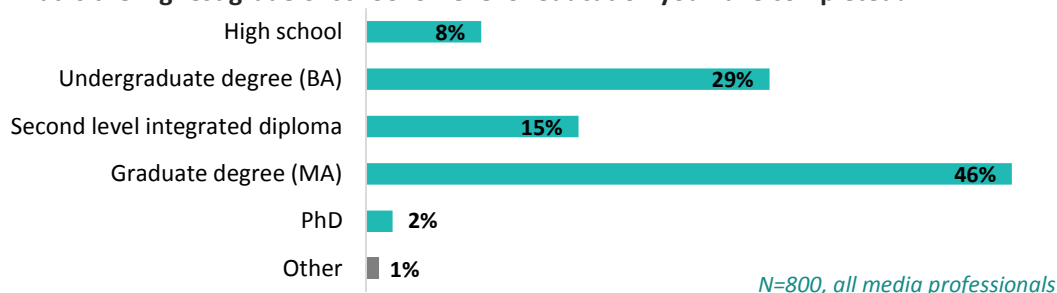


### 3.2 Qualification and Education

This section revolves around the qualification and education of the media professional respondents, fostering a deeper insight into the respondents' profile.

Out of the 800 respondents, 46 percent report to have a Graduate degree (MA) and nearly a third obtained an Undergraduate degree (BA) (29%). Fifteen percent state to have a second level integrated diploma and eight percent report High School to be their highest level of education. Only two percent obtained a PhD. Only one percent obtained a PhD.

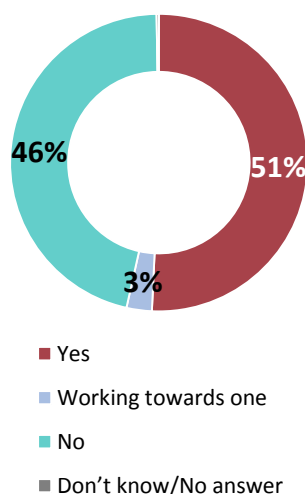
**Figure 10. What is the highest grade of school or level of education you have completed?**



About half of the respondents have received a degree in journalism or any other type of formal qualification (51%). Nearly as many did not obtain any degree or formal qualification related to journalism (46%). Three percent are working towards one.

Based on the in-depth interviews, journalists have followed various trainings from international Media and local organizations. Trainings were considered highly effective in a previous era (before the year 2000), whereas now their content is perceived more formal rather than qualitative. However, overall journalists perceive trainings as highly useful, especially the ones who are focused on journalistic writing, news coverage and usage of multimedia images/tools.

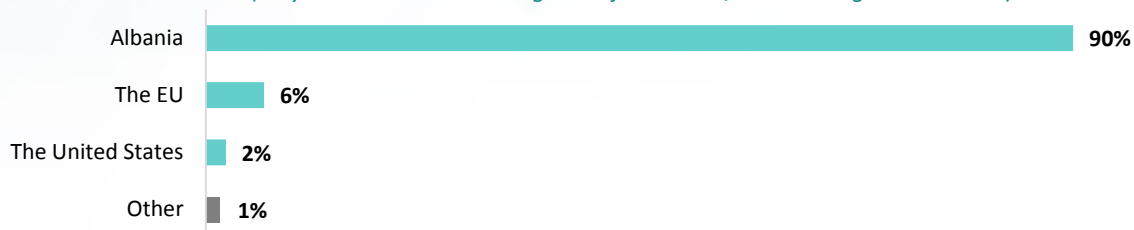
**Figure 11. Have you received a degree in journalism or any other type of formal qualification?**



The respondents who have obtained a qualification within the field of journalism, most commonly have a postgraduate qualification in journalism (44%). Another 27 percent have obtained an undergraduate degree in journalism and 18 percent have obtained a certificate. The most common certificate obtained are those for attending trainings of different international media such as BBC, CNN fellowship programmes; international community as US Embassy, USAID; international organization such as Thomson Reuters Foundation, or national organizations, mainly from the Albanian Media Institute focused mostly on qualitative and investigative journalism.

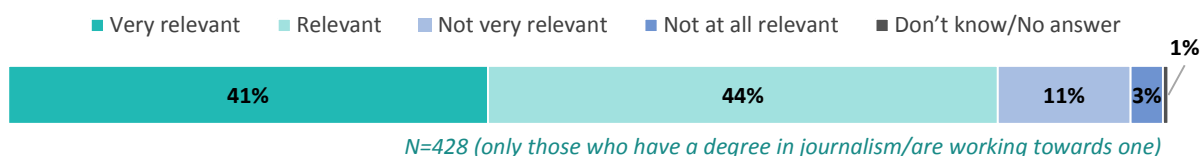
The great majority of those respondents who have acquired a degree or qualification in journalism, or are working towards one, have done so in Albania (90%). Six percent have obtained their degree in the EU and two percent in the US.

**Figure 12. Where did you acquire your qualification?**  
*N=428 (only those who have a degree in journalism/are working towards one)*

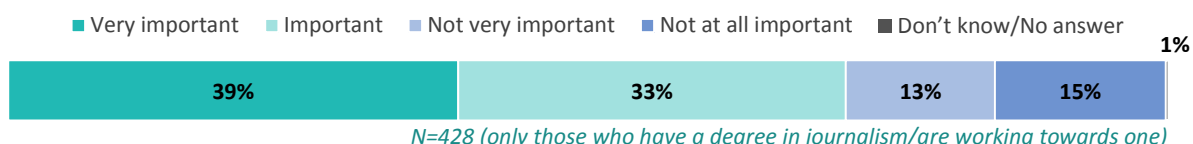


Asking the respondents whether the qualification they have obtained within the field of journalism has been relevant or important, data reveals that it mostly has. Combined, the majority would rate their qualification as either relevant (44%) or very relevant (41%) and as very important (39%) or important (33%). It appears that the qualification is experienced as slightly more relevant, than important to the respondents.

**Figure 13. How relevant has been this qualification to your work as journalists?**



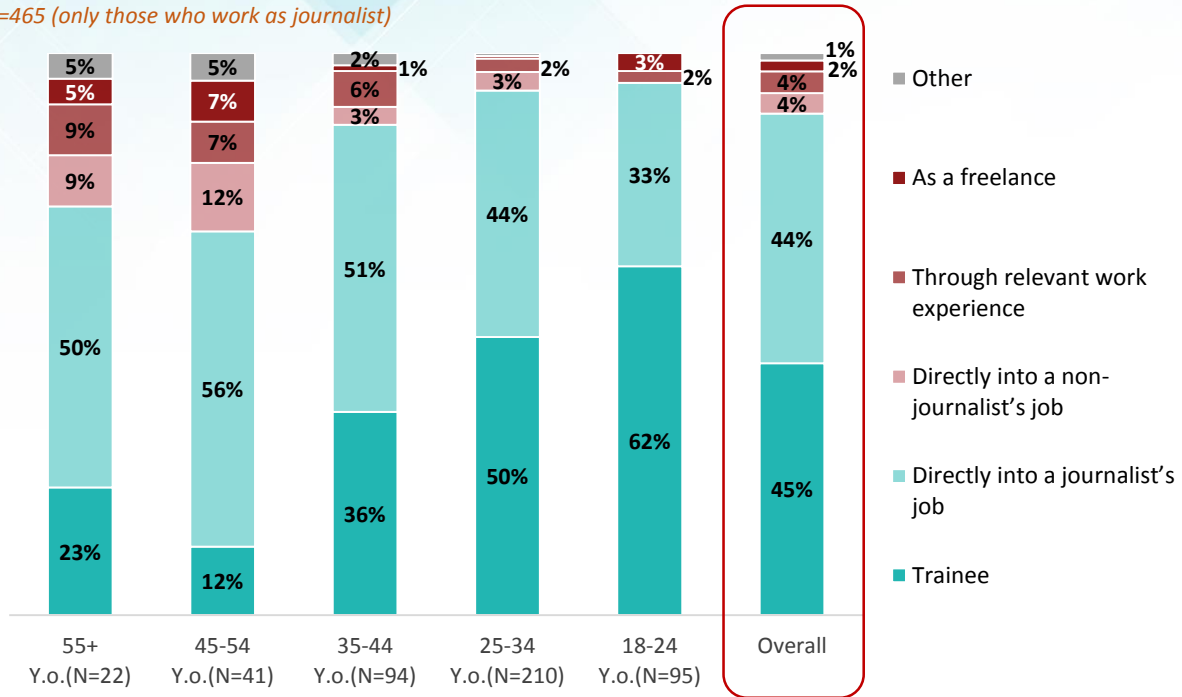
**Figure 14. How important was this qualification in getting started a work as journalist?**



As per focus group discussions' findings, most journalists consider higher education 'a must' for pursuing a career as a journalist. Having a degree in journalism or Albanian literature is considered preferential, since individuals graduated in this field are more familiar with the main rules on how a news/article should be structured and composed. Still, media professionals don't consider a degree in journalism or any other type of formal qualifications in journalism as fundamental. As per their suggestions, each journalist should master the beat area he/she works on, for example an economy journalist should have a degree in economy, or in a related area, in order to perform better.

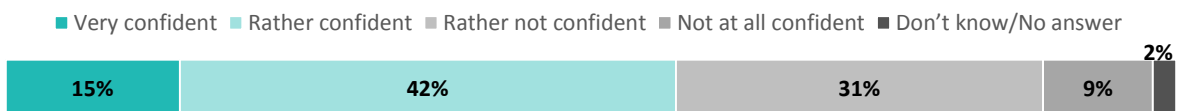
Around 45 percent have entered the field of journalism either as a trainee (45%) or directly through a journalist job (44%). More of the younger respondents have started their journalism career through traineeships than older generations (18-24 y.o. 62% and 25-34 y.o. 50%). Overall, very few have entered the field of journalism through relevant work experience. The older generations are slightly more prone to have entered the field through a non-journalist job, relevant work experience or as a freelancer.

**Figure 15. Did you enter journalism as:**  
*N=465 (only those who work as journalist)*



Furthermore, there appears to be differing opinions when asked whether the respondents are confident about the future of journalism as a profession. Most claim to be rather confident (42%) and fifteen percent feel very confident. However, nearly a third is rather not confident (31%) and nine percent are not confident at all in this regard.

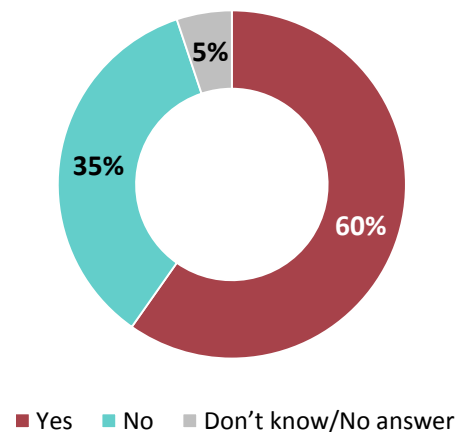
**Figure 16 How confident are you about the future of journalism as a profession?**



*N=465 (only those who work as journalist)*

Despite the mixed opinions in regard to the future of journalism as a profession, the clear majority would advise a young person to pursue a career as a journalist (60%). Based on the in-depth interviews, media professionals stress that they would strongly advise the journalist profession *only to those who are really passionate about journalism and reporting the truth*. Slightly more than one third of the respondents would however not recommend a young person to pursue journalism as a career (35%).

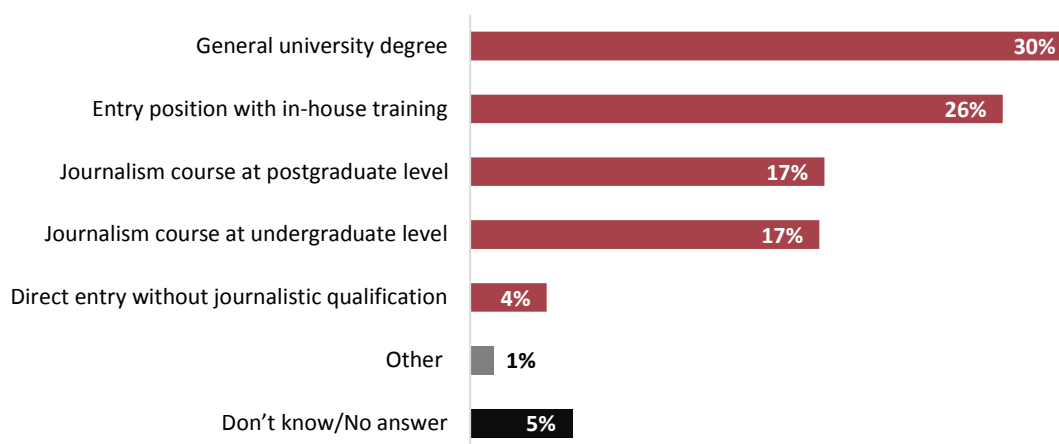
**Figure 17. Would you advise a young person to pursue a career as a journalist?**



The level of payment and working conditions in general (including long working hours) are mentioned as the most negative aspects and reason why media professionals would not recommend this profession to young people. A considerable number of journalists expresses a level of disappointment with their profession, as they feel exploited by their employer.

The respondents were next asked what kind of advice they would give to a young person entering the field of journalism. Two advices were mentioned most commonly; a general university degree (30%) and an entry position with in-house training (26%). Seventeen percent each would also recommend either a journalism course at postgraduate level, or at an undergraduate level.

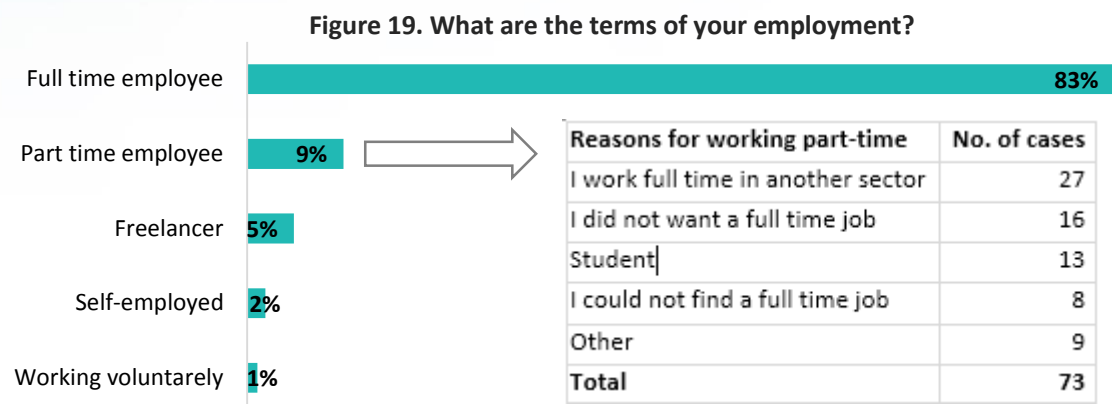
**Figure 18. If you were advising a young person on entry to the profession, which of the following would you recommend most?**



According to media professionals, field experience is considered as a key asset for being a professional journalist. Furthermore, passion and practice are seen as the main drivers for success in in the field of journalism.

### 3.3 Employment Relationship – Contracts

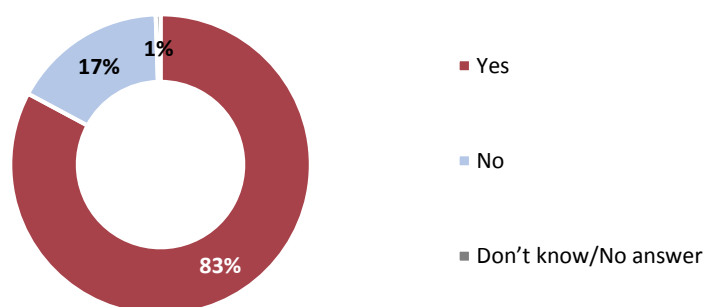
In this section media professionals were asked about their employment relationships and contract types, in order to gain insight into their work conditions. The great majority is engaged as a full time employee (83%). Only nine percent work part time. Only few work as a free-lancer, are self-employed or work voluntarily.



The 73 respondents who work part time, where asked about the reasons for working only part time. Most commonly the reason is a full time engagement in another sector (27 cases), 16 employees did not want a full time job and 13 are currently students.

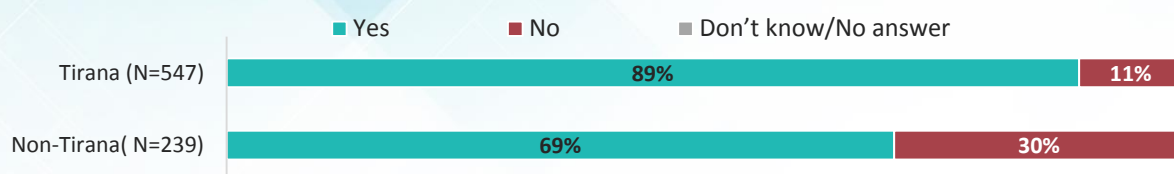
The same amount of respondent who are working full time, also hold a work contract or service agreement (83%). Seventeen percent do not hold one. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the percentage of those not having a work contract or service agreement with their employer may be higher. Firstly, a considerable part of the interviews with media professionals were conducted in their work place, which may have had an influence on their honesty when answering certain questions. Secondly, based on the validation meetings with media professionals, it was observed that many (especially those engaged in local media), don't have a clear understanding of what 'having a contract' consists of. Most of them understand 'having a contract' as the same as being insured or working in the formal sector.

**Figure 20. Are you holding a work contract or service agreement with your media outlet?**  
*N=786 (excluding self-employed)*



However, media professionals admit that during the last two years a formalization of the media sector has taken place. According to them, the Labor Inspectorate has further executed pressure in this regard, especially to the largest Media outlets in Albania.

**Figure 21. Are you holding a work contract or service agreement with your media outlet? (by region)**

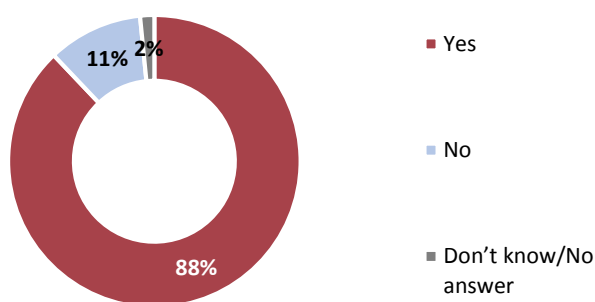


When dividing the data based on the regions, some important differences can be observed between Tirana and Non-Tirana region. Respectively 89 percent versus 69 percent declared to have a work contract or service agreement. The reason for such difference is the fact that most Media and the largest ones, showing a higher level of formalization, are located in Tirana.

**Figure 22. Does your contract adequately reflect your job description?**

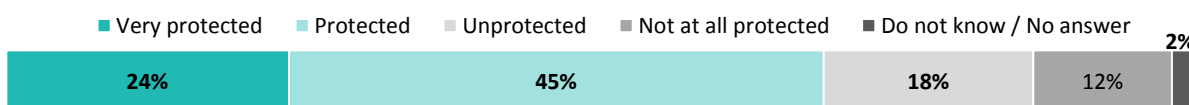
*N=637 (Only those who work full/part-time or voluntarily and have a contract)*

A significant majority of those who work full/part time or voluntarily and have a contract, feel that their work contract adequately reflects their job descriptions (88%). Only 11 percent feel that their contracts do not.



When asked if respondents feel protected by their job contract, the majority states to either feel protected (45%) or very protected (24%). On the other hand, a worth noting 30 percent combined either feel unprotected (18%) or not at all protected (12%).

**Figure 23. How protected do you feel from your job contract?**

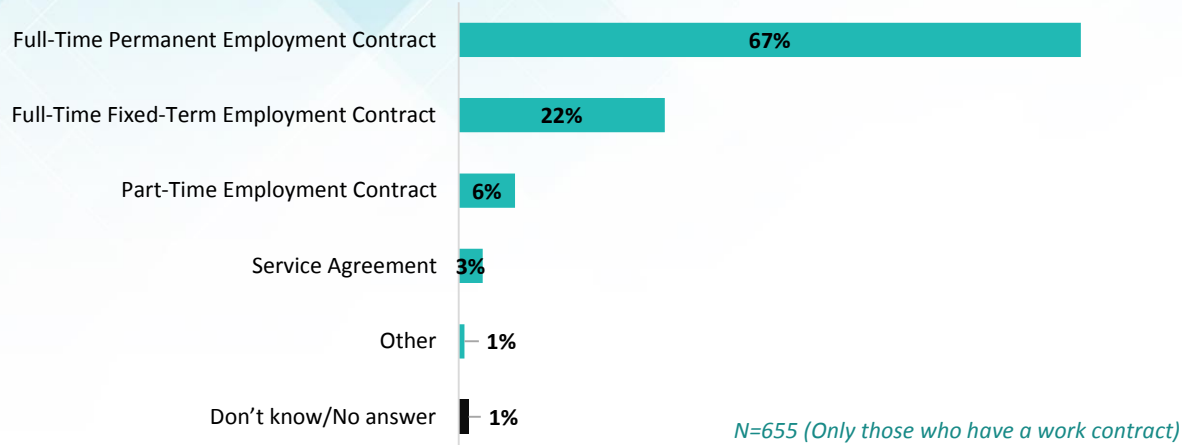


*N=637 (Only those who work full/part-time or voluntarily and have a contract)*

Around two thirds of the media professionals who do have a work contract, most commonly describe them as full-time permanent employment contract (67%). Twenty-two percent hold a full-time fixed-term contract (22%). Other types of contracts are mentioned by few of the respondents.

Based on the discussions with media professionals, the protection from existing contracts is considered as minimal. Some journalists stated that they felt highly exposed, unsecured and vulnerable in their media outlet. As per in-depth interviews findings, journalists claim that currently almost all media professionals have work contracts, but most of them are “Generic Contracts” (consisting only of 2 or 3 pages), which are highly in favor of the employer and include nothing on the freedom of speech.

Figure 24. Which of the following best describes your current or most recent employment contract?



Interestingly, around two thirds of the media professionals have at some point during their career worked without a work contract (65%). Only 35 percent haven't.

Figure 25. Have you ever been part of unreported employment (working in the black market)?



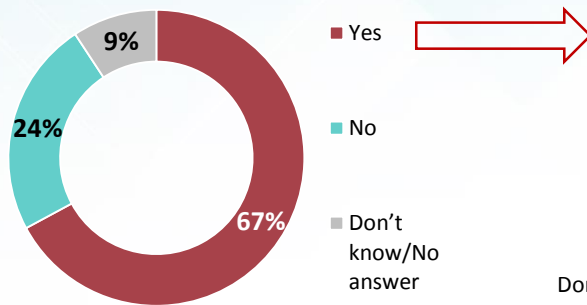
Nearly the same significant amount has also taken part in unreported employment (working in the black market at some point in their life) (61%), and only 39 percent have not done so. Based on the in-depth interviews, *the majority of senior journalists claim that at the beginning of their career they worked in the informal market and thus consider those years lost in terms of insurance.*

Figure 26. Have you ever worked without a work contract?



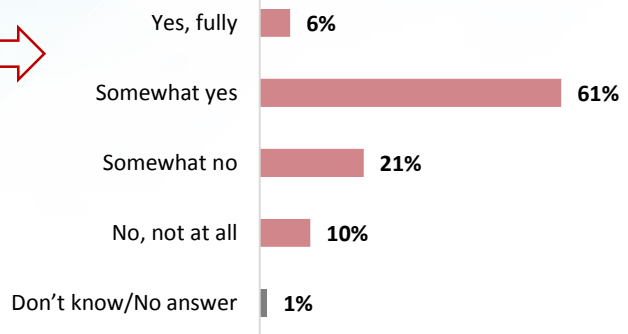
There seems to be an agreement among many media professionals that journalists in Albania usually have formal work contracts (67%). However, 1 in 4 of the respondents does not think they do (24%). Those respondents who do think that journalists most commonly have a formal contract, mostly think that these contracts are 'somewhat implemented' (61%). Twenty-one percent believe that they are 'somewhat not implemented' and 10 percent believe that they are 'not at all implemented'. Only few believe that they are fully implemented (6%).

**Figure 27. According to you, do journalists in Albania have formal work contracts?**



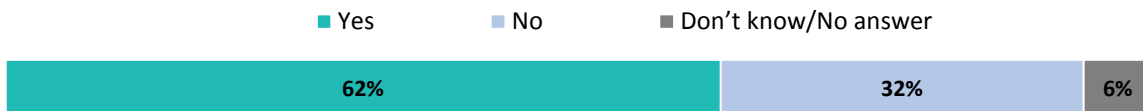
**Figure 28. Are these contracts implemented?**

*N=537 (Only those who think that journalists in Albania have formal work contracts)*



Over 60 percent would take legal action, should a work contract be breached (61%). On the other hand, nearly 1 in 3 respondents would not follow a case of contract breach legally (32%).

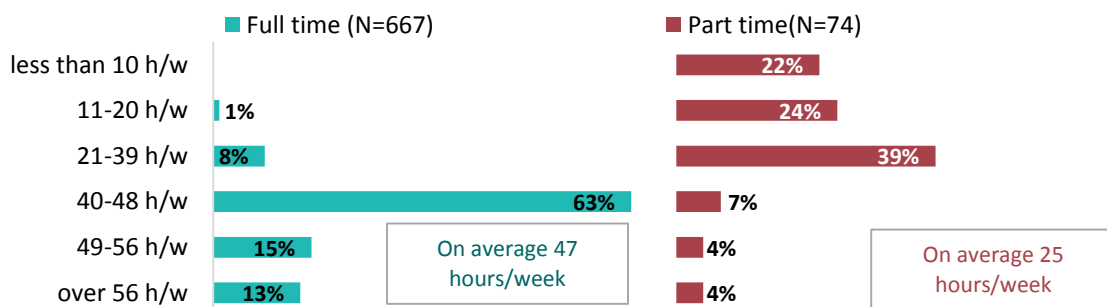
**Figure 29 Do you consider that in case of breach of contract you would follow the case legally?**



*N=655 (Only those who have a work contract)*

Turning to the topic of working hours, data reveals that the majority of media professionals who work full time, works on average 40-48 h/w (63%). Thirty-nine percent of the part time respondents work 21-39 h/w, and nearly a quarter each works either 11-20 h/w (22%) or less than 10 h/w (22%).

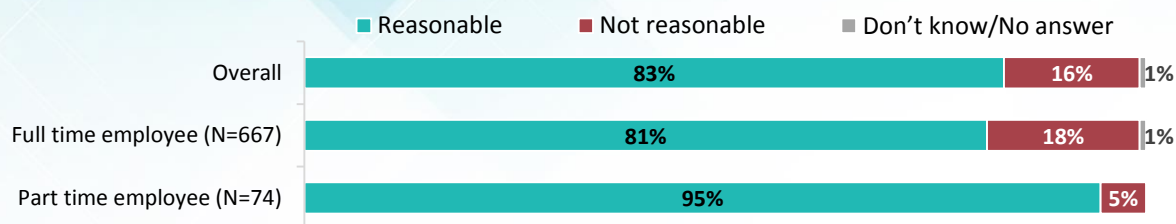
**Figure 30. How many hours per week do you normally work?**



Most of the respondents think that their working hours are reasonable (83%). Only 16 percent experience them as not reasonable. Nearly all part time employees find them reasonable (95%). Based on the focus group discussions with media professionals, working hours seem not to represent a problem anymore for most of them, as it used to in the past. However, there are still identified cases when journalist claim working more than eight hours a day and working during weekends as well.

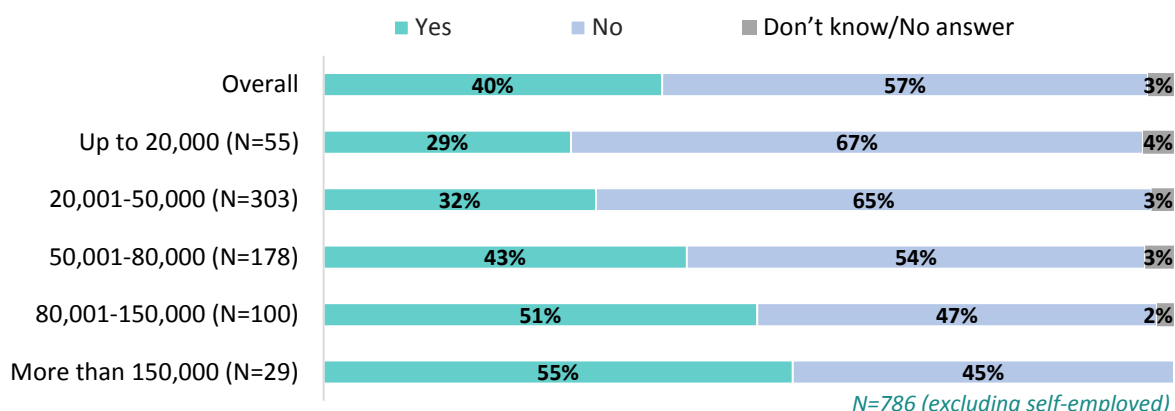


Figure 31. Do you consider your hours of working:



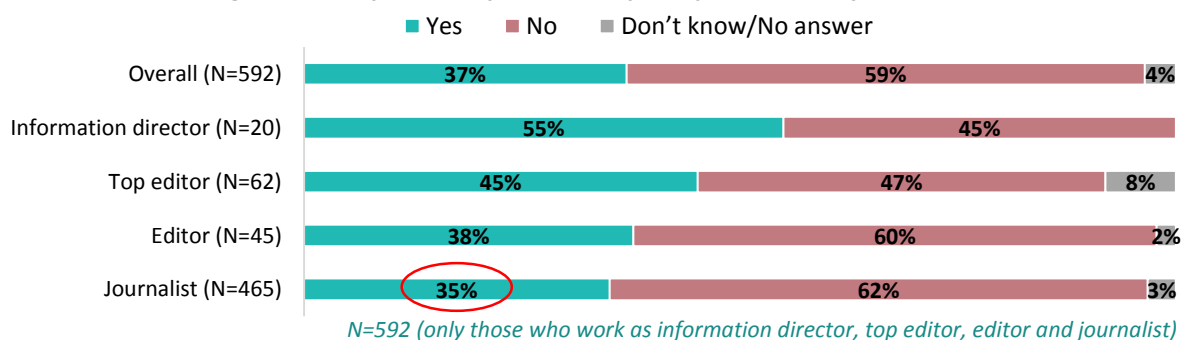
Overall, more than half of all media professionals interviewed, do not think that they are fairly compensated for their work (57%). Respondents who earn up to 20,000 ALL per month, are part of the group who feels least fairly compensated (67%). The most common monthly income appears to revolve around 20,001 and 50,000 ALL, received by 303 respondents; nearly two thirds of this group feels that this salary does not compensated their work fairly (65%). Data reveals that the more the person earns per month, the more likely she/he is to feel fairly compensated. Nonetheless, it should be noted that more than 40 percent of those two groups earning the highest amount of salary, still do not feel fairly compensated.

Figure 32. Do you think you are fairly compensated for your work? (By monthly income)



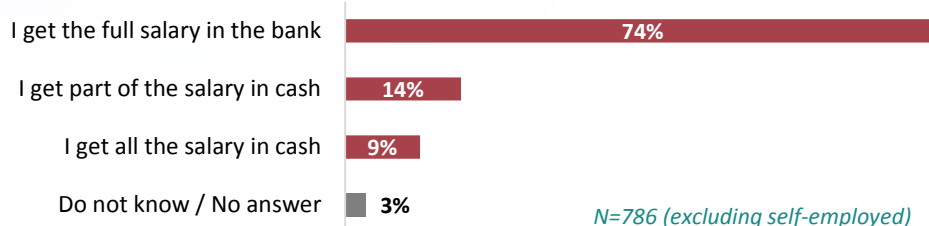
When considering only those who work as information director, top editor, editor or journalist it stands out that only 35 percent of the journalists feel that they are fairly compensated for their work. Also most editors appear not satisfied with their salary with only 38 percent who feel that they are fairly compensated. Information directors and top editors on the other hand appear more satisfied, with around half who feel fairly compensated for their work (55 and 45 % respectively).

Figure 33. Do you think you are fairly compensated for your work?



When asked about means to receive their salary, 74 percent report to receive their full salary through a bank. Fourteen percent obtains parts of their salary in the bank. Nine percent receive their salary in cash. This hence means that 1 in 10 respondents still receives their salary in cash and 1 in 7 still gets a part of their salary in cash.

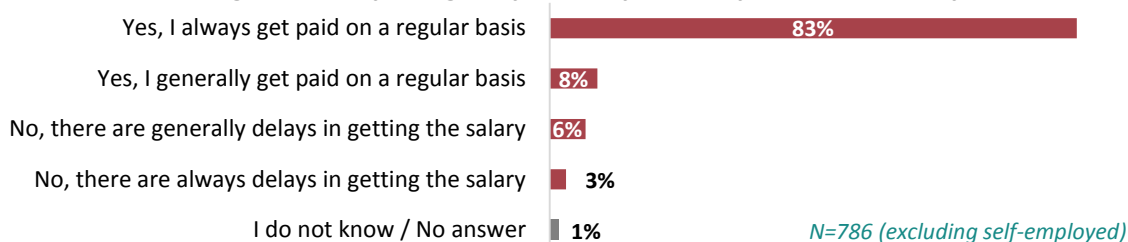
**Figure 34. Do you get full salary at the bank or you are paid in cash?**



However, based on the focus groups discussions with media professionals, the percentage of those not getting their full salary in the bank is considerably higher. There are many cases of journalists working in local Media, or as correspondents, which get all their salary in cash. Meanwhile, media professionals both in Tirana and non-Tirana region mention cases when journalists have a so called ‘silent agreement’ with their media owner to get part of the salary in the bank (consisting mostly at the minimal wage level) and the other part directly in cash.

Most of the respondents claim that they *always* receive their salary on a regular basis (83%)<sup>16</sup>. Eight percent states that they *generally* get paid on a regular base, and only six percent generally experiences some delays.

**Figure 35. Do you regularly receive your salary or there are delays?**



As per in-depth interviews, a considerable number of senior journalists denounce that it is common for Albanian media to pay journalists once in a while or to delay their payment for some months (up to 3 months). Some of them perceive that the main cause for this irregularity is that the media is not self-financed (has no liquidity), but is supported indirectly either by a political party or another business.

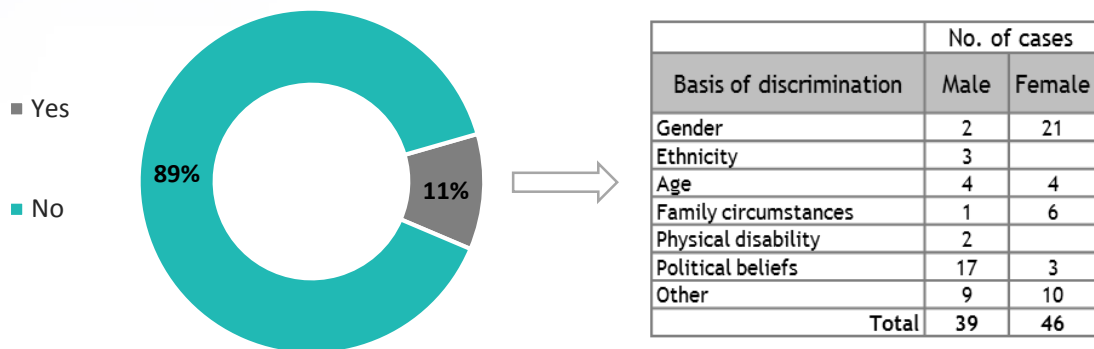
As per focus group discussions with journalists, delays in receiving their salary seem to be more present especially in the case of small and local media outlets. Some cases of delays in receiving salaries are however also reported in some of the big national media outlets. It is worth highlighting that a considerable part of media professionals admits to have experienced

<sup>16</sup> Here it should be noted that many of the interviews were conducted at the respondents’ work place, where they might feel not entirely comfortable to speak open about issues directly connected to their own job. Hence, we have reasons to believe that in reality the number who always receives their salary on an irregular base may be lower.

in the past such delays, however they also point out that the situation regarding the regularity in salaries in the media sector has improved noticeably during the last year.

Out of the total sample of 800 media professionals, 85 people have suffered disadvantages at work because of discrimination (11%). More cases are reported by women than by men (46 vs. 39 cases respectively). Women are more likely to suffer disadvantages due to their gender (21 cases), while men are more likely to suffer under political beliefs (17 cases).

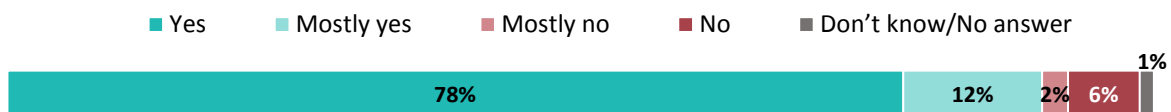
Figure 36. Have you ever suffered disadvantage at work because of discrimination?



As per focus group discussions with media professionals, in general journalists consider discrimination cases to be almost inexistent.

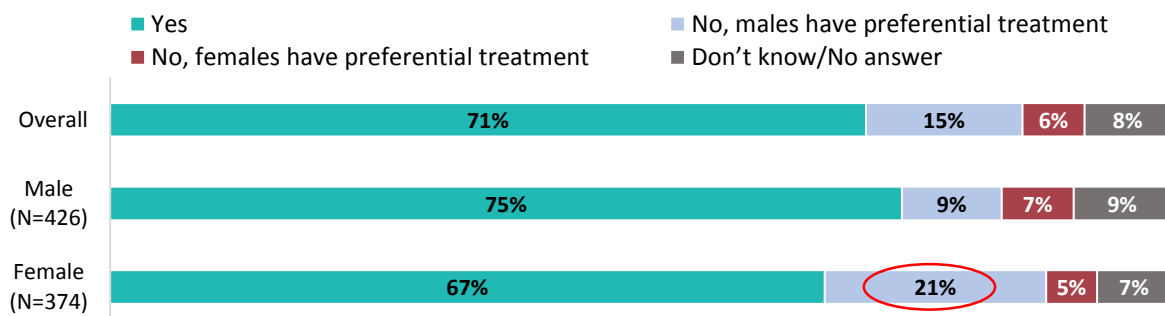
Overall, most respondents feel that their media outlet has a gender inclusive culture (78%), another 12 percent feel that it is mostly inclusive. Combined eight percent either believe it is mostly not gender inclusive (2%) or not gender inclusive (6%).

Figure 37. Do you feel your media outlet has a gender inclusive culture?



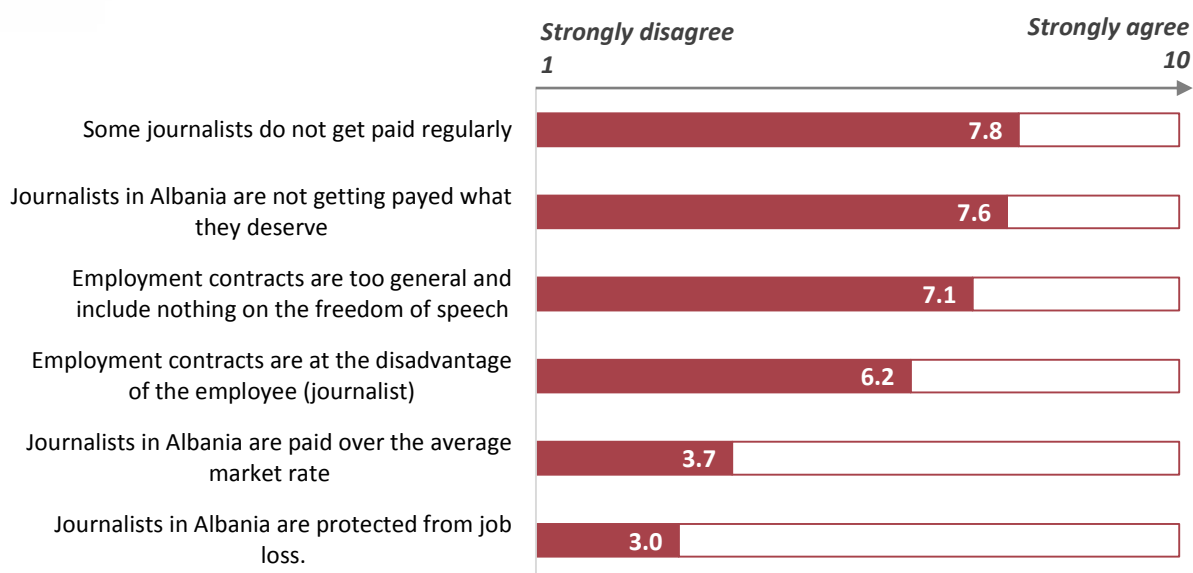
When looking closer at the topic of gender discrimination, data reveals that the overall sample of media professionals think that male and female journalists are treated equally in terms of salary (71%). However, it must be noted that 21 percent of female respondents think that male journalists receive preferential treatment when it comes to salaries, whereas only nine percent of male respondents think the same.

Figure 38. Do you think male and female journalists are treated equally in terms of salary?



The respondents were also asked to state to what extent they agree with six statements concerning the work of journalists in Albania. Each statement was rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). Overall the strongest agreement can be observed in regard to the statement “some journalists do not get paid regularly” (7.8 out of 10), “journalists in Albania are not getting paid what they deserve” (7.6) and “employment contracts are too general and include nothing on the freedom of speech” (7.1). The lowest level of agreement can be observed in regard to the statement “journalists in Albania are protected from job loss” (3.0 out of 10).

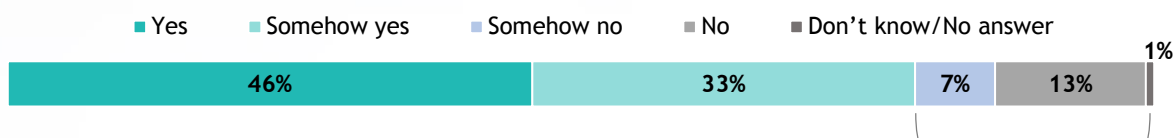
Figure 39. How much do you agree with the following statement regarding employment relationships?



### 3.4 Legal Framework – Freedom of Speech

From the information the respondents have, 46 percent believe that the Albanian legislation guarantees freedom of speech. Another third believes it does somehow (33%). Combined 20 percent think either that the Albanian legislation somehow does not guarantee freedom of speech (7%) or that it does not (13%).

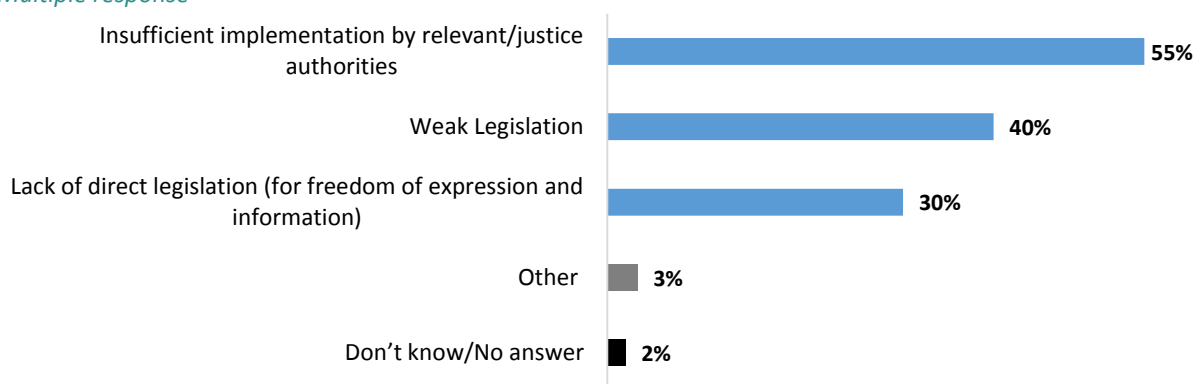
Figure 40. From the information you have, do Albanian legislation guarantees freedom of speech?



Those 161 respondents who do not think that the Albanian legislation guarantees freedom of speech most commonly see the reason in insufficient implementation by relevant/ justice authorities (55%), weak legislation (40%) and lack of direct legislation (for freedom of expression and information).

Figure 41. The reasons why the Albanian legislation does not guarantee freedom of speech

*Multiple response*



When being asked to what extent the legal framework is implemented regarding the freedom of speech, the respondents overall rated it with 4.7 points, on a scale 1-10 where 1 is not at all and 10 completely. Hence respondents do not seem very confident that it is implemented to a great extent.

Figure 42. According to you at what extent is the legal framework regarding the freedom of speech being implemented?



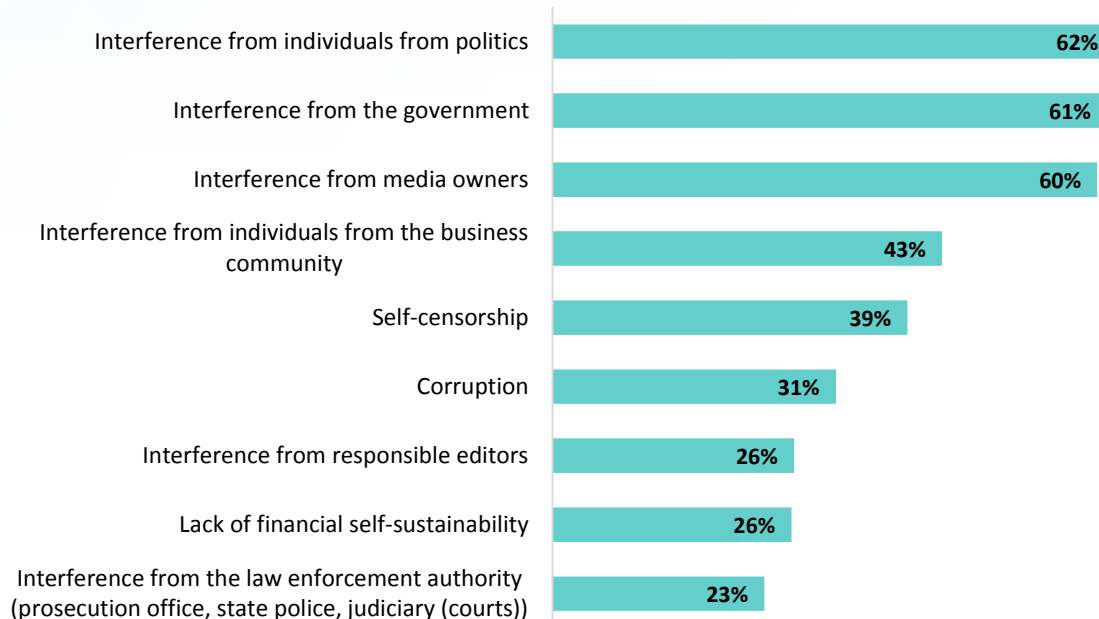
*N=161 (only those who think that Albanian legislation does not guarantee freedom of speech)*

When exploring deeper into the issue of limited freedom of speech, three limiting factors related to interferences by others, stand out as mentioned the most; interferences from individuals from political (62%), interference from the government (61%) and interference from the media owners (60%). Another seemingly important factor is the interference from

individuals from the business community (43%). More than 30 percent also report that self-censorship and corruption are main factors that limit the freedom of speech (39% and 31% respectively).

**Figure 43. Which are the main factors that limit the freedom of speech?**

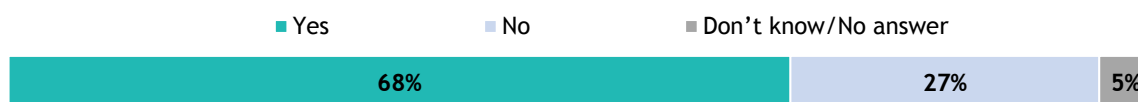
*N=741 (only those who have evaluated <10 the application of legal framework regarding the freedom of speech)*



Based on the focus group discussions with media professionals as well, journalists considered politics as the main obstacle to freedom of speech. Moreover, media professionals perceive that most journalists depend directly on the political framework of the media they work with, since in general media outlets clearly show or imply the political line to be followed.

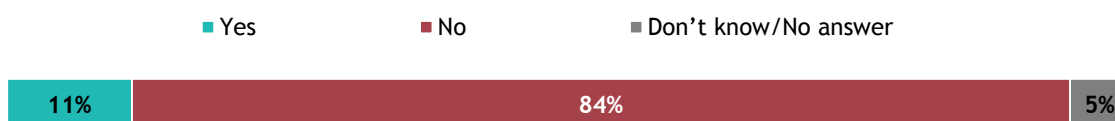
While over two thirds of respondents believe that the Albanian laws protect human rights (68%), a significant number of respondents does not think so (27%).

**Figure 44. Do Albanian laws protect human rights?**



Respondents however appear to be confident in regard to that there are no legal or financial barrier in entering the journalism profession (84%). Only 11 percent believe that there are barriers.

**Figure 45. Are there in Albania any legal or financial barrier to entering the journalism profession?**



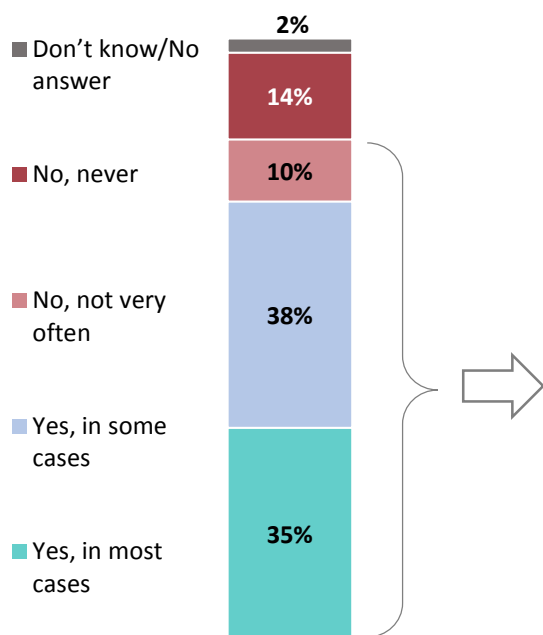
Most of the media professional who took part in this survey appear to be informed in regard to law on the release of public information with 72 % replying with yes when asked whether such laws exist.

Figure 46. Is there any Law on the release of public information?



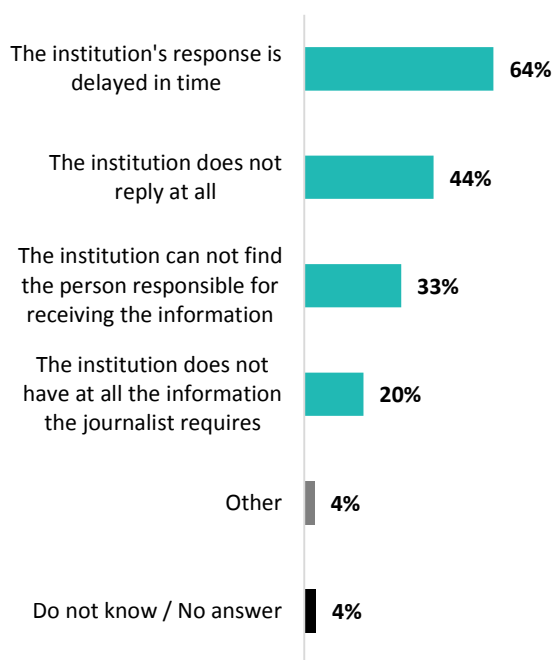
Media professionals were next asked whether they face obstacles in obtaining official documents. The majority does either in some cases (38%) or even in most cases (35%). The most common reason for that are either ‘the institution’s responses are either delayed in time’ (64%) or do not reply at all (44%).

Figure 47. In general, do you face obstacles in obtaining official documents?



N=465 (only those who work as journalist)

Figure 48. What are the obstacle you are facing?



This result was supported also by the media professionals’ focus group discussions findings. According to them, journalists face high obstacles in obtaining public information. State institutions, especially those on local level, are not helpful at all and in most cases orient journalists to search for the information directly at the relevant ministry in Tirana. The majority of journalists state that they have seen some improvement in this regard due to the Law on the Right of Information, but again state institutions often ignore their official requests for information or respond formally without providing/offering the required information.

### 3.5 Professional Journalism

The next section revolves around professional journalism and issues connected to it, as well as correct conduct in this field of work.

First respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 10, on which 1 equals poor and 10 excellent, how they assess the level of professionalism of journalists in Albanian media. It appears that respondents in this regard prefer to rather stay neutral, or are not sure about their answers, considering that the middle of the scale is 5.5 and this matter is rated with 5.8. They neither seem to think that it is poor nor excellent.

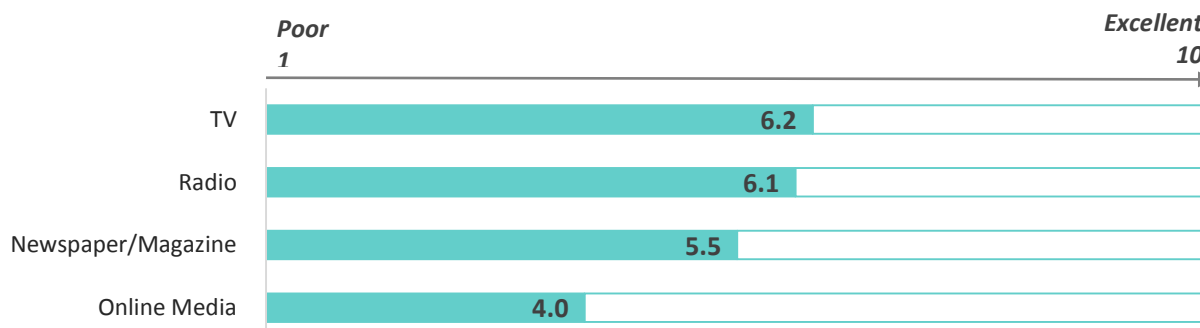
**Figure 49. Personally, how do you assess the level of professionalism of journalists in the Albanian media?**



As per the group discussions findings with media professionals, they highlighted the fact that the journalists nowadays are engaging more with the role of a reporter rather than that of a journalist. According to them, media in Albania has lost its educative role. Across most media a clear lack of ethics can be observed. As a result, the level of professionalism of journalists in Albania has worsened.

Looking closer at specific types of media outlets, it appears that respondents have most confidence in the overall professionalism within the realms of TV, rating it with 6.2 out of 10. Radio stands at a rating of 6.1 and Newspaper/Magazine at 5.5. What stands out is the lower rating for professionalism within online media (4.0). Respondents seem to experience online media as less professional than other types of outlets.

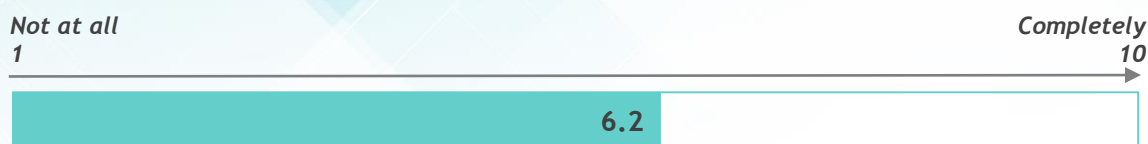
**Figure 50. How do you assess the overall level of professionalism of the following media?**



The trust by the public in the media is evaluated at 6.2 by the interviewed media professionals. Similar to the finding above (Figure 48), respondents appear to neither think that the public has great trust, nor has a complete lack of trust in the media.



Figure 51. How much do you think the public trusts in the media?



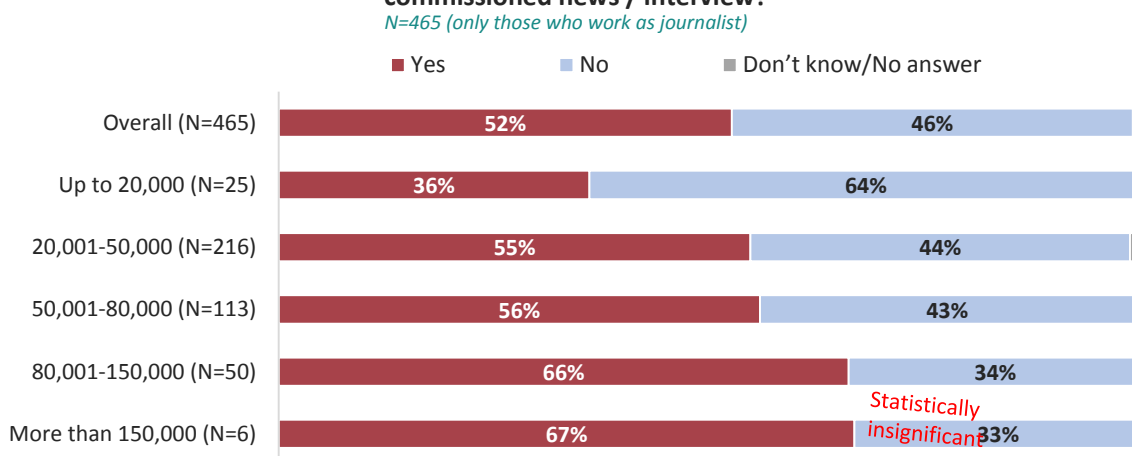
Despite not taking a strong stand when asked whether the respondents believe the work of different types of media outlets is professional, the majority would rate the quality of journalists chronicles/news or articles in Albania as good (75%). Another five percent would rate it as very good. Nineteen percent would describe it however as poor but only two percent as very poor.

Figure 52. In general, how would you rate the quality of journalists' chronicles / news / articles in Albania?



Over half of all the respondents replied with yes when asked whether they ever received an order from the media owner/editor-in-chief to make commissioned news/interviews (52%). Looking at the different income groups, data reveals that respondents who earn more a more likely to have replied with yes to this question. Based on the focus groups discussions with media professionals, commissioned news are seen as a common phenomenon. The usual format or manner of doing commissioned news is to get ready-made materials.

Figure 53. Have you ever received an order from the media owner / editor-in-chief to make a commissioned news / interview?



Corruption awareness appears to be high among media professionals, with the great majority of respondents thinking that there are journalists who engage with corrupt practices (make money or other benefits) to create a certain chronicle (78%). Only 11 percent does not think so and another 11 percent claimed not to know an answer to this question.

**Figure 54. Do you think there are journalists who practice corrupt practices (make money or other benefits) to make a certain chronicle?**

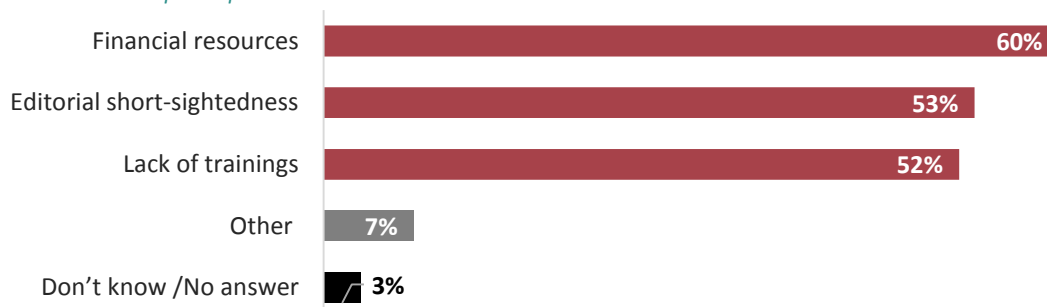


As per focus group discussions with media professionals, corruptive practices seem to be present and according to them most prevalent among youth journalists. Media professionals further stressed that engaging with corruptive behavior in journalism leads to significant misinforming of the general public.

Overall, according to the respondents, the main obstacles to specialized reporting are financial resources (60%), over half also think that editorial short-sightedness (53%) and lack of training (52%) play an important role.

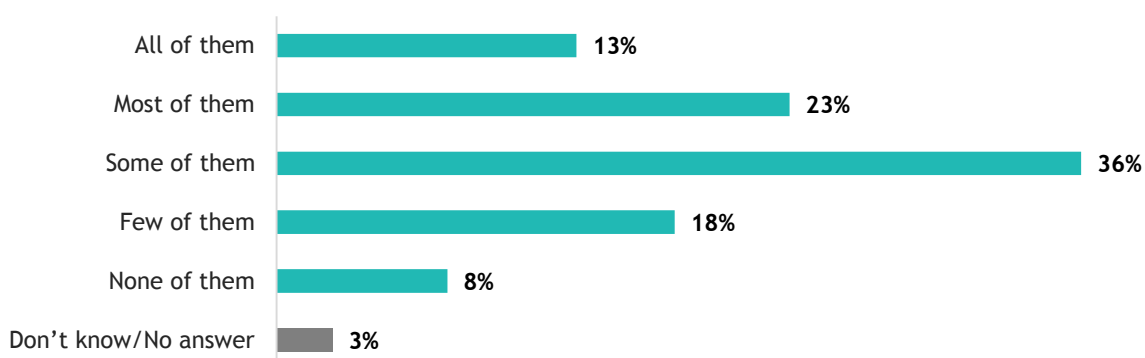
**Figure 55. According to you, what are the main obstacles to specialized reporting?**

*Multiple response*



Next respondents were asked whether they think that media outlets have ethic codes. Opinions appear to be divided, with 36 percent stating that some of them do, 23 percent say that most of them do, and 18 percent claim that few of them do. Another 13 percent think that all of them do.

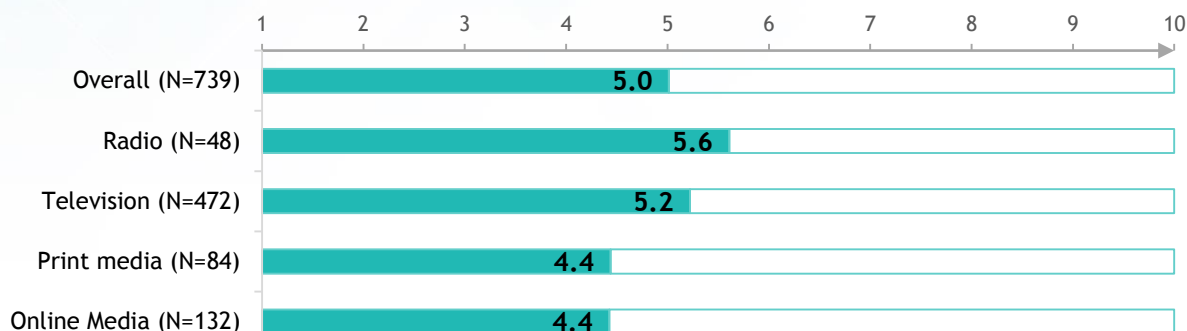
**Figure 56. Do media outlets have an ethics code?**



Those who think that media outlets have ethics codes, were asked to what extent these codes are implemented according to their opinion on a scale from 1 (not at all)-10 (completely). Overall respondents would rate the extent of ethics code implementation at 5.0, positioning themselves around the middle of the scale. This may either indicate that the respondents are

not too knowledgeable in this regard, or feel that they are implemented to a medium extent. They seem to be more confident in regard to Radio (5.6) or Television (5.2), than in regard to Print Media (4.4) or Online Media (4.4).

Figure 57. In general, to what extent is this code implemented?

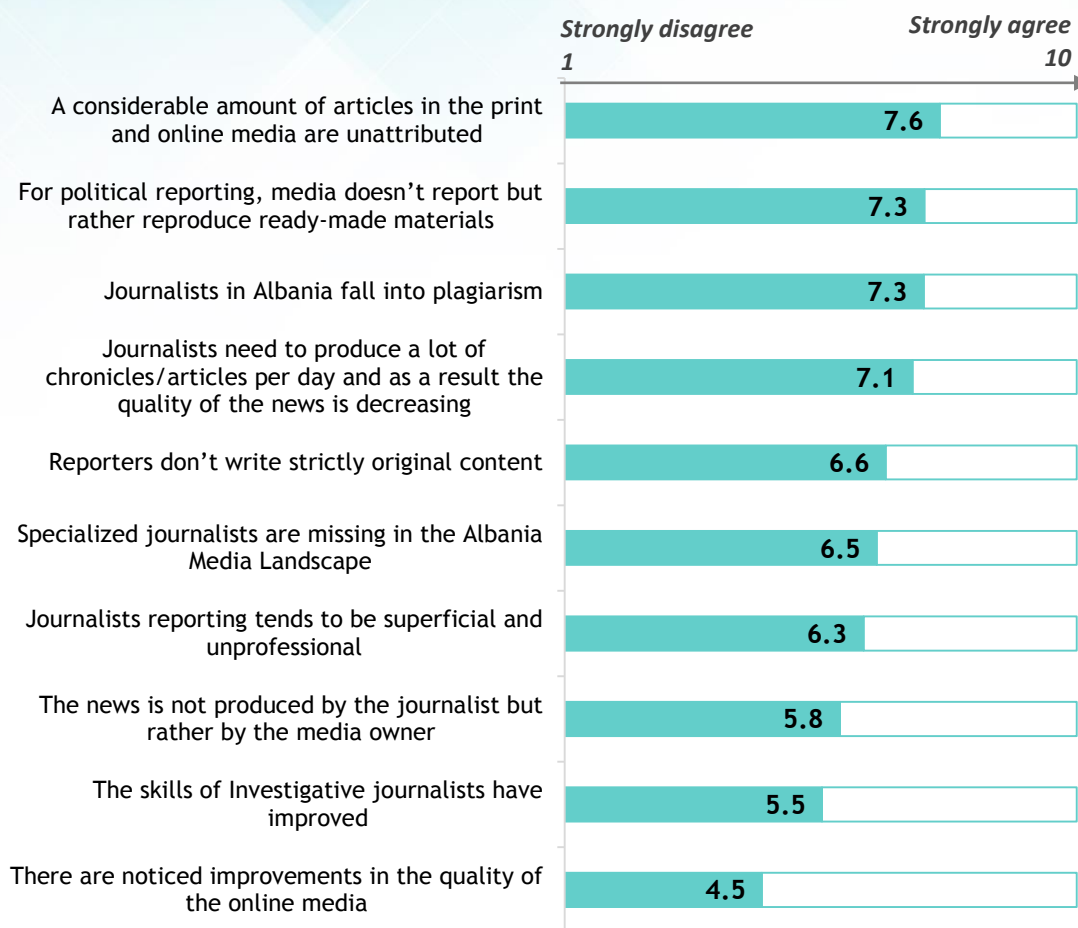


N=439 (only those who think that media outlets have ethics code)

The media professionals were next presented with a list of 10 statements and asked to share to what extent they agree with them (on a scale from 1-10 where one equals strongly disagree and 10 equals strongly agree). The highest level of agreement can be observed with the statement *“a considerable amount of articles in the print and online media are unattributed”* (7.6 out of 10). High agreement can also be observed in regard to the statements *“for political reporting, media doesn’t report but rather reproduces ready-made material”* and *“journalists in Albania fall into plagiarism”* (7.3 for both).

The statements which received the least amount of agreement, are the positive ones; *“the skills of investigative journalists have improved”* (5.5) and *“there are noticed improvement in the quality of the online media”* (4.5).

Figure 58. How much do you agree with the following statements regarding professional journalism?



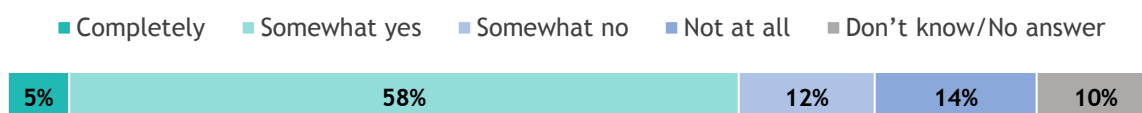
More than two thirds of the respondents believe that as per Albanians legislation, journalist are not forced to divulge their sources (69%). Nineteen percent think they are forced to reveal their sources and another 12 percent did not know an answer to this question.

Figure 59. As per Albanian legislation are journalists forced to divulge their sources?



Lastly in this thematic section, media professionals were asked to what degree they think journalists' sources and information are protected by the Albanian legislation. Over half believe that they are somewhat protected (58%). Fourteen percent believe that they are not at all protected and another 12 percent think that they are somewhat not protected. Only five percent believe that they are completely protected.

Figure 60. To what degree are journalists' sources and information protected by Albanian legislation?

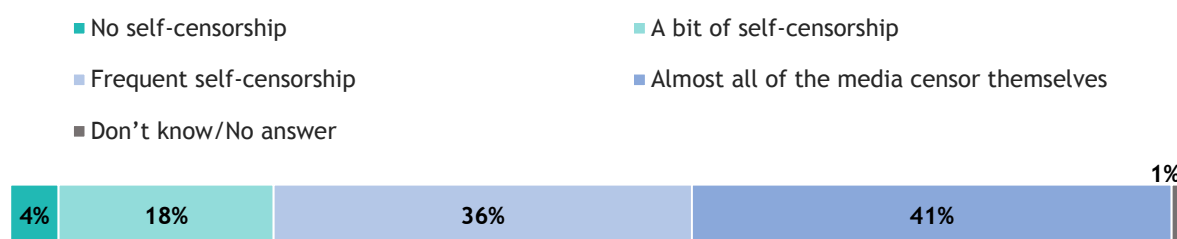


### 3.6 Censorship and Self-Censorship

The next topic of this report revolves around censorship and self-censorship by media professionals in Albania.

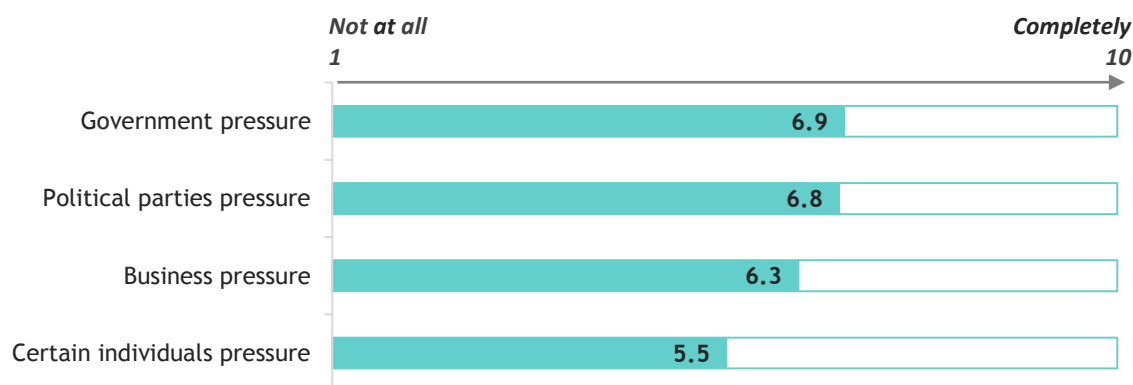
First in this section respondents were asked if, in their opinion, the media censors themselves. The opinion which seems to be most common among media professionals is that almost all of the media censors themselves (41%). Over one third believes that the media do so on frequent basis (36%). Eighteen percent think that a bit of self-censorship is most common and only four percent have the opinion that there is no self-censorship at all.

**Figure 61. In your opinion, do the media censor themselves?**



When news pieces are suppressed or delayed in Albania, according to the media professionals, this is most commonly due to government pressure (rated with 6.9 out of 10). The extent of political parties’ pressure causing suppression or delays, is rated nearly as high as government pressure with 6.8 out of 10 points. Pressure by business or individuals appear to also play a role, however less significantly than the pressure by political entities (rated with 6.3 and 5.5 respectively).

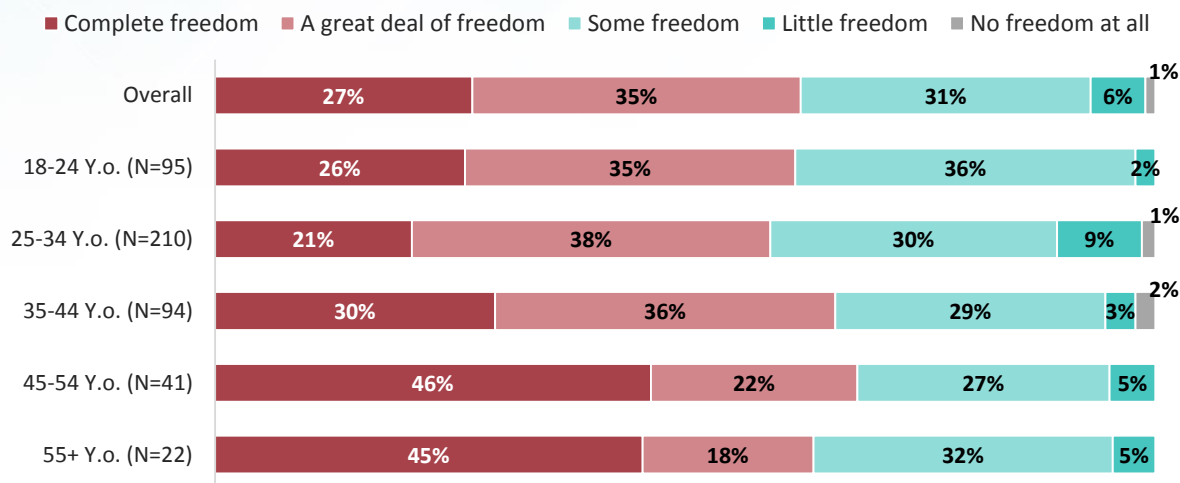
**Figure 62. According to your opinion, to what extent are news suppressed or delayed because of:**



When asked about their own work and how much freedom the media professionals have in selecting news/stories, data reveals that most have freedom to a certain extent. Overall, around one third each either have complete freedom, a great deal of freedom or some freedom (27, 35 and 31 percent respectively). Looking closer at the different age groups, it becomes clear that the older the respondents are, the more freedom they usually have. Interestingly, the group which reports to have the least amount of freedom is not the

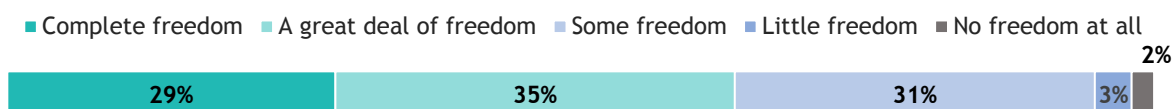
youngest age group, but the second youngest one (25-34 y.o.). Only 21 percent of that group feel that they have complete freedom and nine percent claim to have little freedom.

**Figure 63 .Thinking of your work, how much freedom do you personally have in selecting news/stories you work on?**



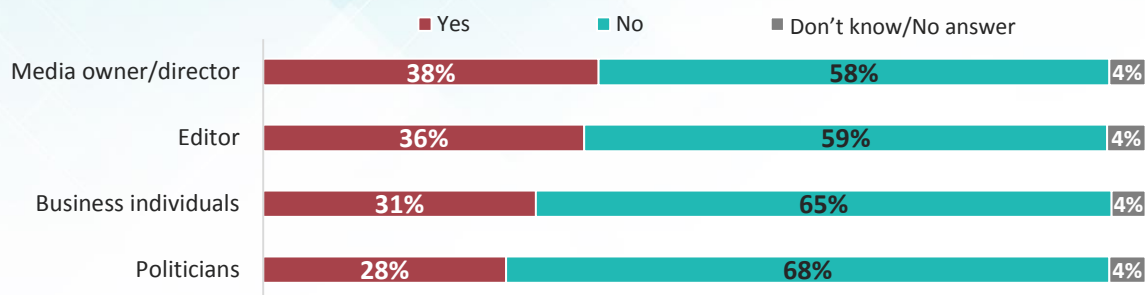
When it comes to decisions where the emphasize of a story should lay, most respondents feel that they have the freedom to decide this matter up to a certain extent, similar to the above question. More than one third experiences a great deal of freedom (35%), 31 percent report to have some freedom and 29 percent feel completely free in this regard.

**Figure 64. How much freedom do you personally have in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized?**



When asked whether the respondents have ever been put under pressure not to write/report about certain events or subjects, it stands out that more than one third (nearly 2 in 5) journalists declare to have suffered such pressure within their media outlet, mostly by their media owner or editor (respectively 38% and 36%). Data reveals that media professionals appear slightly less likely to be pressured by business individuals (31%) and by politicians (28%) than by their own editor or media owner.

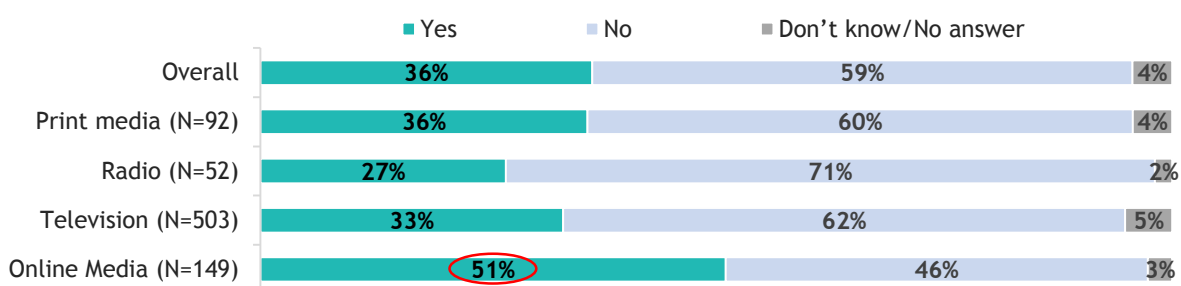
Figure 65. According to your experience, have you ever been put under pressure by your editor/media owner/politicians/businessmen not to write/report about certain events or subjects?



Based on the focus group discussions with media professionals and in-depth interviews with senior journalists, it is observed that censorship seems to be present across most media. However, at some media outlets the need of self-censorship is simply implied. Especially experienced journalists themselves understand and respect the (political and economic) interests of their media owners and editors, and engage with self-censorship without being told to do so.<sup>17</sup>

When dividing the findings according to the media typology, it can be observed that over half of the media professionals who work in online media have been put under pressure by their editor not to write on certain events or subjects (51%). Media professionals from other types of media outlets appear to experience this type of pressure less commonly; print media (36%), radio (27%) and TV (33%).

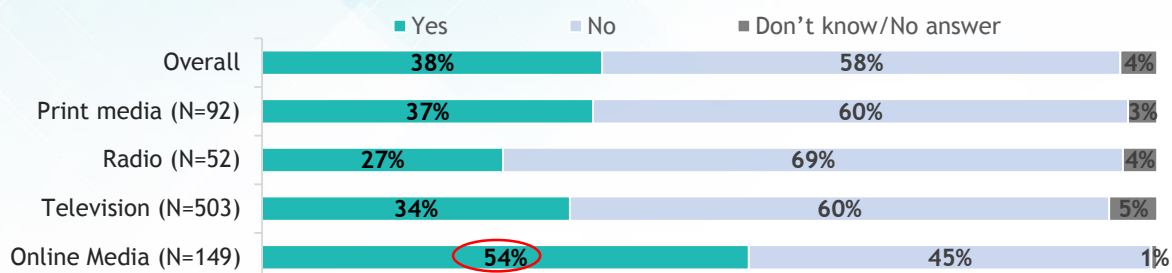
Figure 66. According to your experience, have you ever been put under pressure by your editor not to write/report about certain events or subjects?



Respondents working within the field of online media also seem to be more prone to experience pressure by their media owner/director not to write or report about certain events or subjects (54%). In comparison, 37 percent of the respondents working in print media have experienced pressure by their media owner and 34 percent who work at a TV station. As above, radio appears to be the media outlet in which respondents less commonly experience pressure by their superiors (27%).

<sup>17</sup> Known differently as a kind of sophisticated manner of censorship

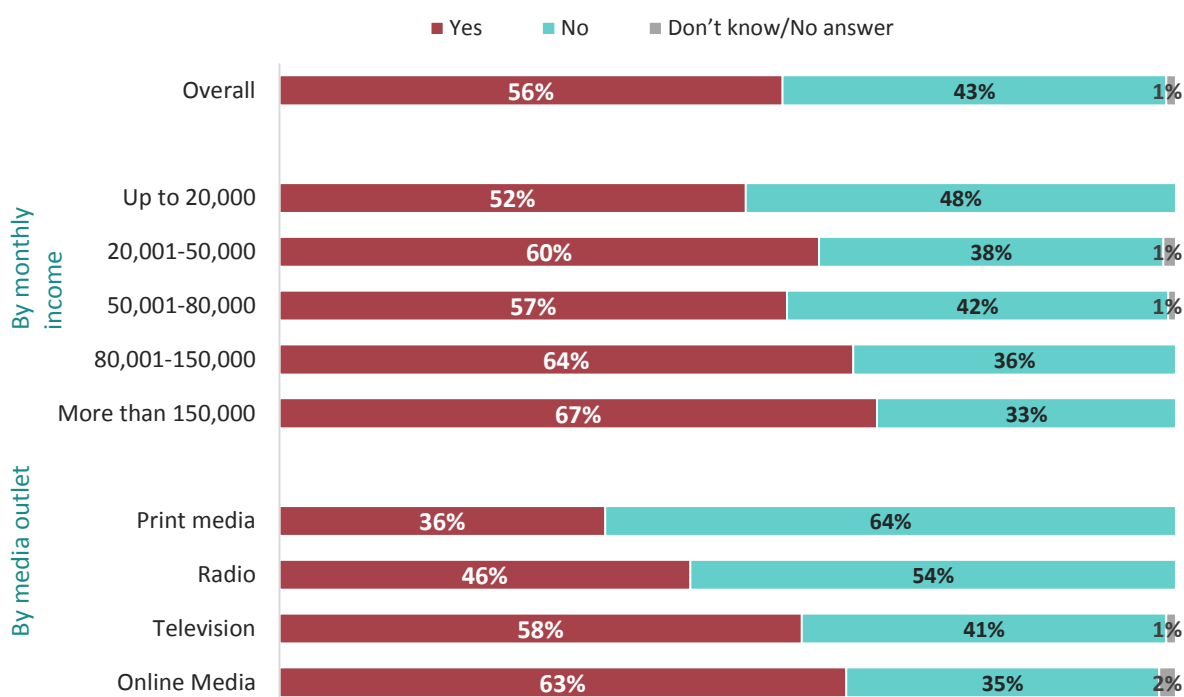
**Figure 67. According to your experience, have you ever been put under pressure by your media owner/director not to write/report about certain events or subjects?**



Next, respondents were asked whether there were times when their news was reworked/rewritten by the editor or media owner. Overall, 56 percent of the respondents have experienced this kind of situation.

Looking through the lens of income groups, it can be observed that over half of all income groups have had their editor or media owner rework or rewrite their news. Most commonly this kind of situation is experienced by the two highest income groups, with around two thirds of both groups.

**Figure 68. Were there times when your news was reworked / rewritten by the editor or media owner?**

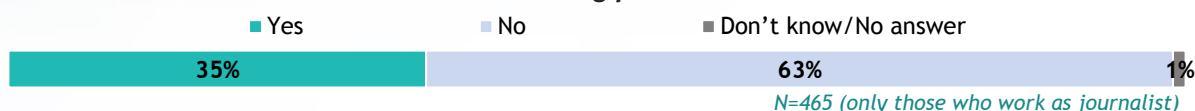


When exploring this topic by media outlet, here as well, online media stands out with the highest percentage of news being reworked by respondents' respective superiors (63%). More than half of the media professionals working at a TV station have also experienced this phenomena (58%). Media professionals working for radio or print media are less likely to have their news reworked or rewritten (46% and 36% respectively).



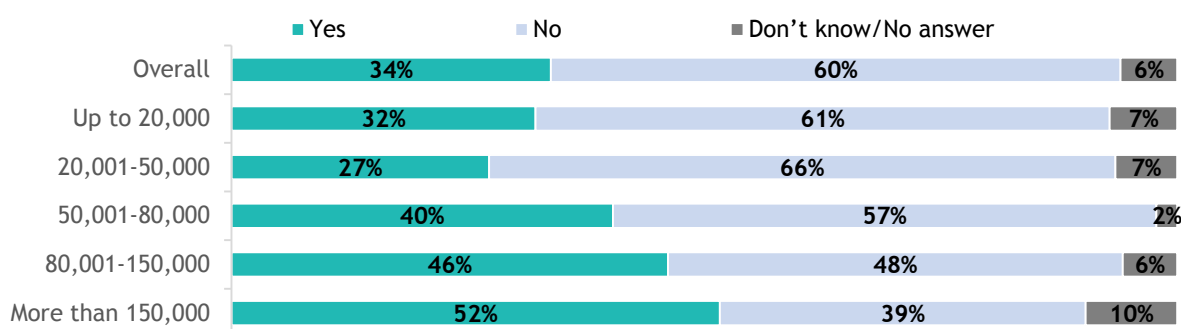
Around 1 in 3 journalists experienced that a news/story they worked on was removed or deleted without informing them (35%). As per the focus groups discussions with media professionals, when the interest of the media owner or editor is at risk, news/story are deleted or censored immediately.

**Figure 69. Has it ever happened that a news/story you worked on was removed or deleted without informing you?**



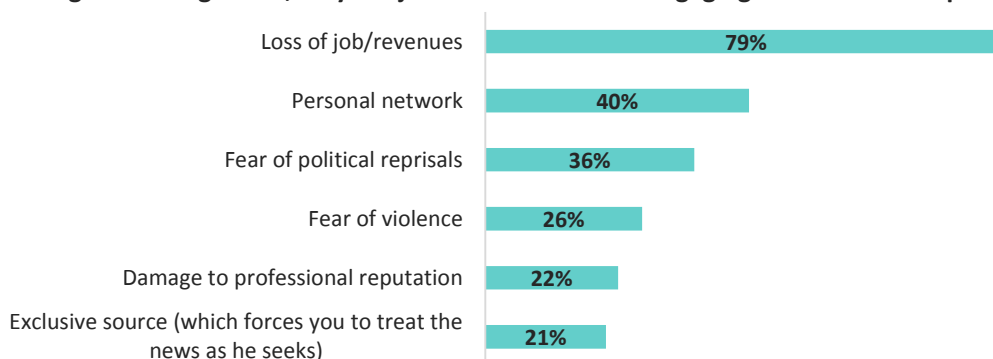
Overall, around one third of the respondents have engaged with self-censorship at least once in their life (34%). It can be observed that higher income groups are more likely to practice self-censorship than lower ones. Over half of the respondents who earn more than 150,000 ALL have engaged with self-censorship (52%).

**Figure 70. Have you ever practiced self-censorship?**



When asked about the reasons why journalists or editors typically engage in self-censorship it stands out, regardless of the income groups that most respondents believe that it happens due to loss of job/revenues (79%). Personal networks are the second most common mentioned reason (40%). Other reasons are the fear of political reprisals and fear of violence, mentioned respectively by 36% and 26% of all respondents. The next section of this report dives deeper into this theme.

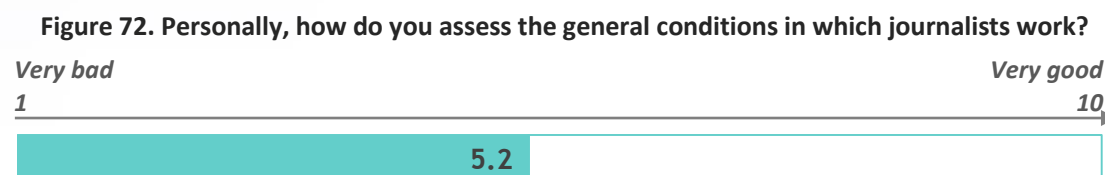
**Figure 71. In general, why are journalists or editors engaging in self-censorships?**



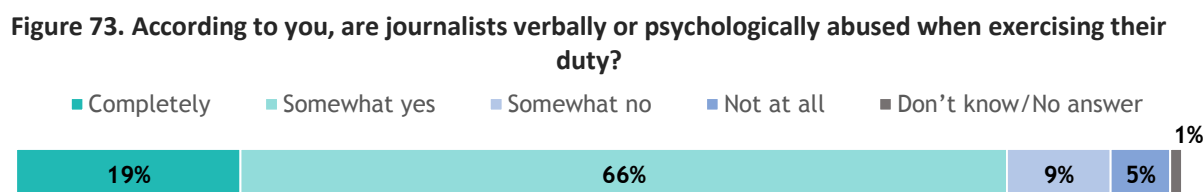
### 3.7 Verbal Abuse and Physical Violence

This part of the report takes a closer look at the phenomena of verbal abuse and physical violence some media professional experience in Albania.

First respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 10 how they assess the general conditions journalists work in. Respondents rating this topic with 5.2 points paints a picture of media professionals who are not very satisfied in this regard.

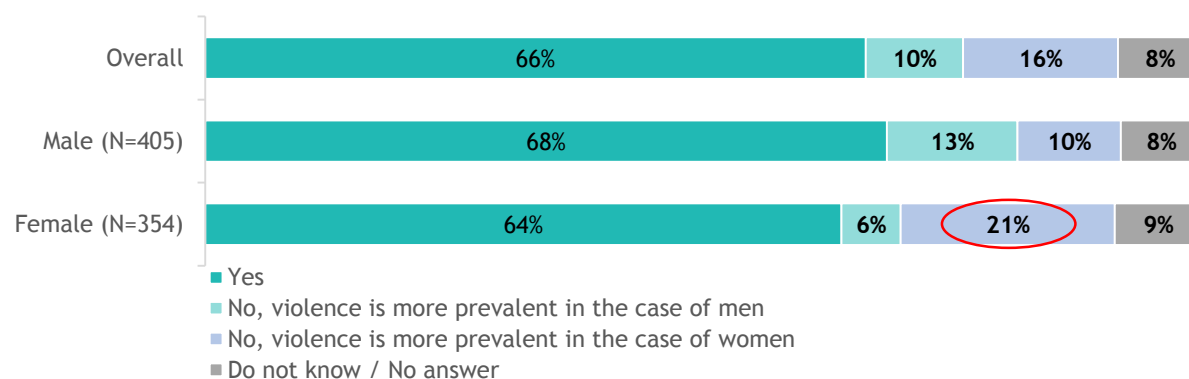


Alarming results can be observed when asking respondents whether they think journalists get verbally or psychologically abused when exercising their duties. Combined the overwhelming majority either thinks journalists get somewhat verbally or psychologically abused (66%) or even completely abused (19%).



Those who think that journalists get verbally or psychologically abused where asked if male and female journalist experience this type of violation to the same extent. Two out of three respondents believe that there is no difference between men and women. However, 16 percent of the overall sample believe that women are more prone to be violated. More significantly, 21 percent of the women believe that they are more likely to experience this type of violence.

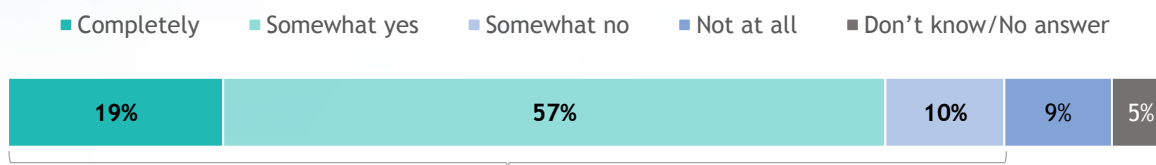
**Figure 74. Do you think that male and female journalists are verbally or psychologically violated alike when performing their job?**



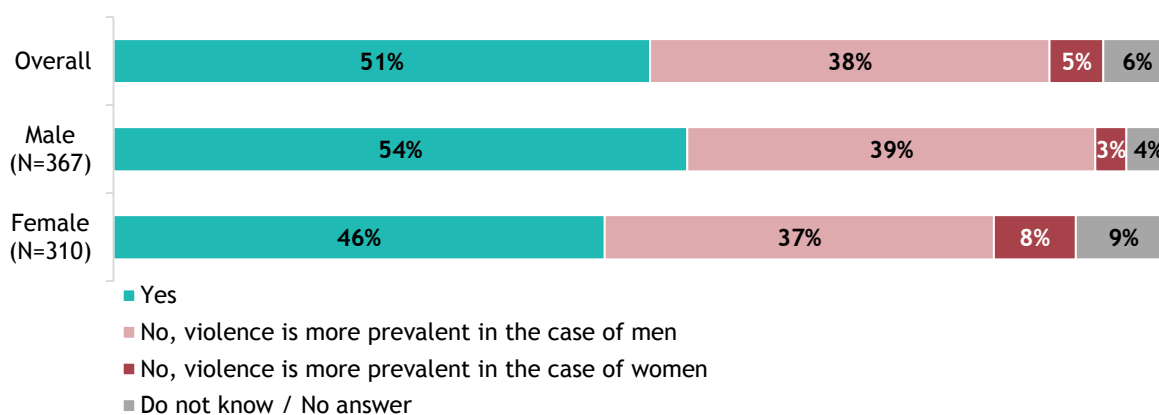
*N=759 (only those who think that journalists are verbally or psychologically abused)*

Even more alarming results can be observed regarding physical violence. Over half replied with ‘somewhat yes’ when asked whether journalists are threatened by physical violence when exercising their duties (57%). Another 19 percent feel that journalists are ‘completely threatened’ by physical violence when exercising their duties.

**Figure 75. Are journalists threatened by physical violence when exercising their duty?**



**Figure 76. Do you think that male and female journalists are physically threatened alike when performing their job?**

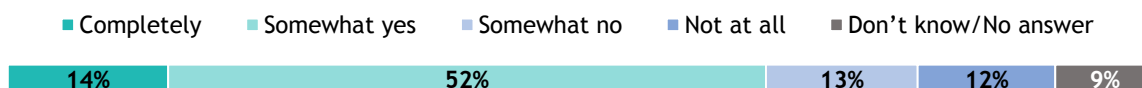


*N=686 (only those who think that journalists are threatened by physical violence)*

Overall, around half believe that both genders are equally affected by threats of physical violence (51%). However, nearly two out of five respondents believe that men are more prone to be threatened with physical violence (38%). Both male and female media professionals are more likely to think that men are more affected in this regard than women.

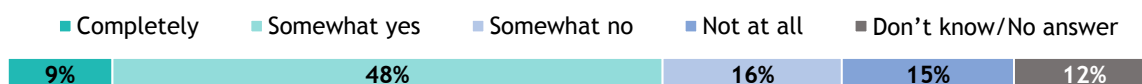
Positively, 1 out of 3 respondents feel that the police either completely or somewhat protects journalists when it is required (14 and 52% respectively).

**Figure 77. Does the police provide protection to journalists when required?**



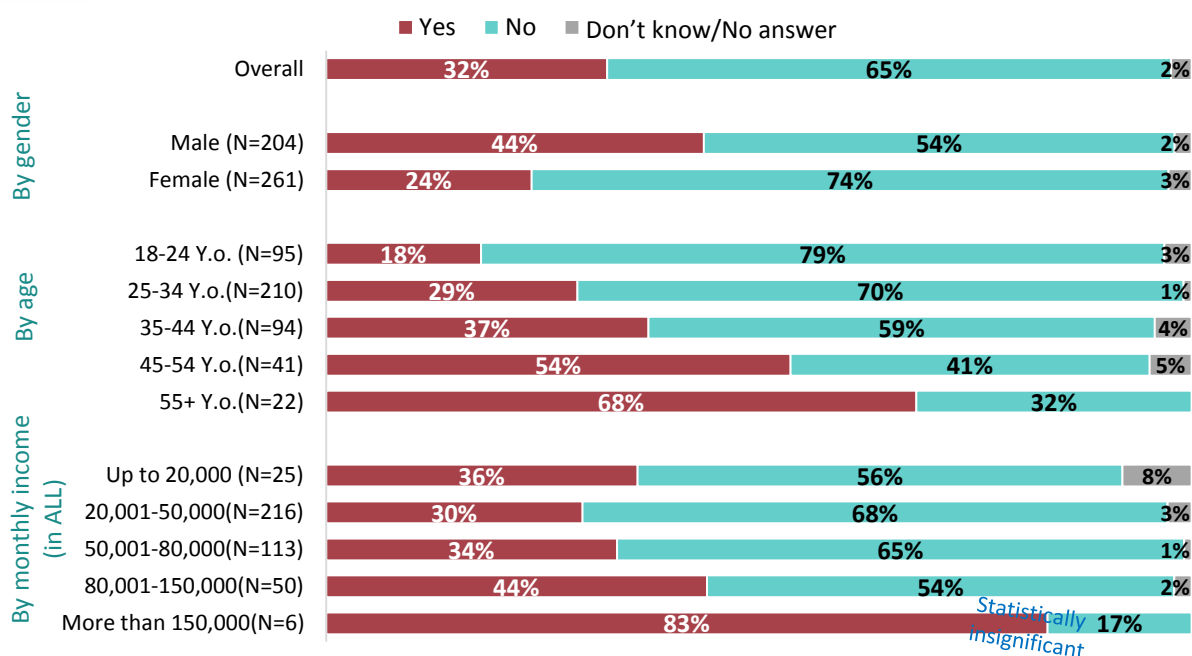
Slightly fewer believe that justice institutions deal with journalists' threats adequately (properly and quickly). Forty-eight percent believe they somewhat do and nine percent believe they do so completely.

**Figure 78. Do justice institutions deal with journalists' threats adequately (properly and quickly)?**



Journalists were also asked whether they have ever been threatened verbally or physically during their work. Overall, around 1 in 3 respondents has experienced such situations (32%). Data reveals that more men than women have experienced threats (44% vs. 24%). The older the journalists are, the more prone they seem to experience verbal or physical threats. The youngest age group of 18-24 y.o. are significantly less likely to be threatened, when compared to respondents above the age of 45 years old. Furthermore, the lowest income group, as well as the higher income group, appear more prone to have experienced threats than the two medium groups which consist of the majority of respondents.

**Figure 79. Have you ever been threatened verbally or physically during your job?**  
*N=465 (only those who work as journalist)*



Around 3 out of 4 respondents believe that there are cases when journalists have to stop working or are unfairly dismissed due to external pressure, blackmail or threats (77%). Based on the focus group discussions with media professionals, although they are able to mention cases of verbal and physical violence in the past, still they think that verbal and physical violence is not a problem anymore in the regions of Shkodra, Vlora, Fier and Korca. However, media professionals in Tirana and Durres admit that verbal violence and pressure represents also nowadays a serious problem in their work.

**Figure 80. In your opinion, are there cases when journalists have to stop working or are unfairly dismissed due to external pressure, blackmail or threats?**



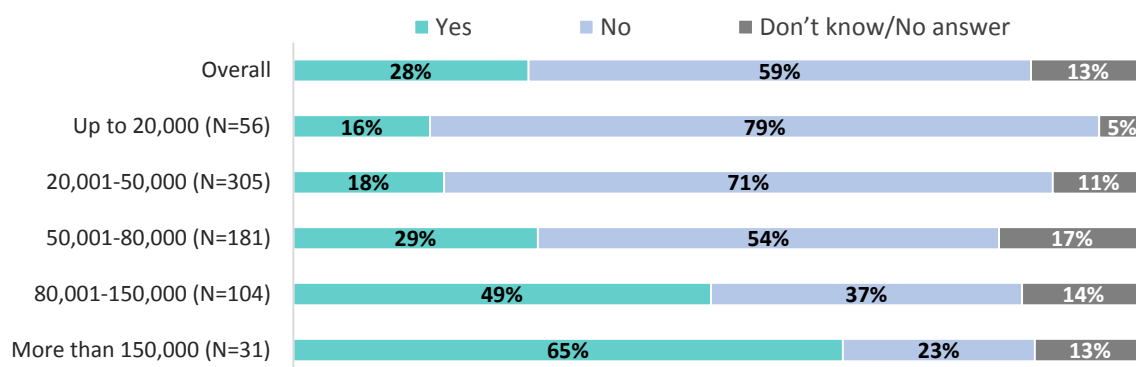
When asked whether the respondents think that the Albanian legislation includes criminal law provisions regarding defamation or libel, 75 percent do think so. Only 16 percent replied with no and nine percent did not know an answer to this question.

**Figure 81. Does the Albanian legislation regarding defamation/libel include criminal law provisions?**



It appears that overall few are aware of any open court issues from journalists to media administrators (28%). Data reveals that the more the respondents earn, the higher the awareness about such cases. While only 16 percent of the media professionals earning up to 20,000 ALL are aware about such cases, 65 percent of the respondents earning more than 150,000 ALL are.

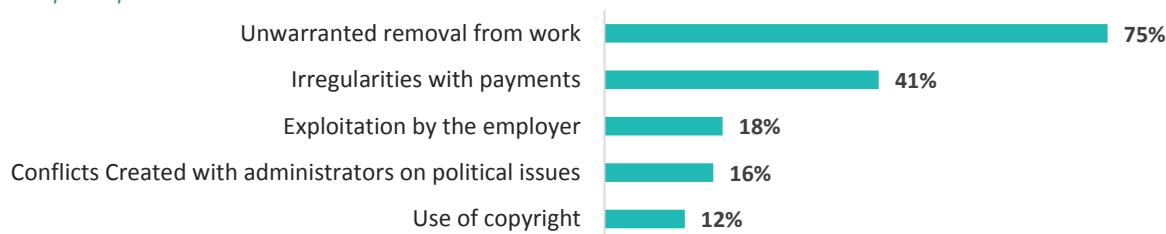
**Figure 82. Are you aware of any open court issues from journalists to media administrators?**



The main reason for journalists being addressed to the courts, according to the respondents, is unwarranted removal from work (75%). Around two out of five respondents believe that one of the main reasons are irregularities with payments (41%). Fewer see exploitation by the employer (18%), conflicted created with administrators on political issues (16%) or use of copyright (12%) as the main reasons.

**Figure 83. In your knowledge, what are the main reasons journalists are addressed to the courts?**

*Multiple response*



Awareness about court cases in which external persons (businessmen, politicians etc.) or the media administrator have initiated against a journalist appears rather low. Only 21 percent are aware of such cases.

**Figure 84. Have you heard of any court cases that external persons (businessmen, politicians, etc.) or the media administrator itself have initiated against journalists?**



### 3.8 Media Supporting Institutions

During the last part of the interviews media professionals were asked about their knowledge on media supporting institutions and were invited to share their opinion of their respective effectiveness.

The majority has knowledge about the existence of associations that defend journalists’ rights (81%). Those who were aware about any associations were asked about their names without being presented with a list. The vast majority (90%) mentioned the Albanian Journalist Union, followed by 27 percent who mentioned the Albanian Media Institute. The association of Professionals Journalists in Albania and the League of Albanian journalists were mentioned by 19 and 18 percent respectively. Media professionals seem most likely to be part of the Albanian Journalists Union (29%), the Albanian Media Institute (8%) and the Association of professional Journalists of Albania (4%).

Figure 85. Is there any association that defends journalists’ rights?

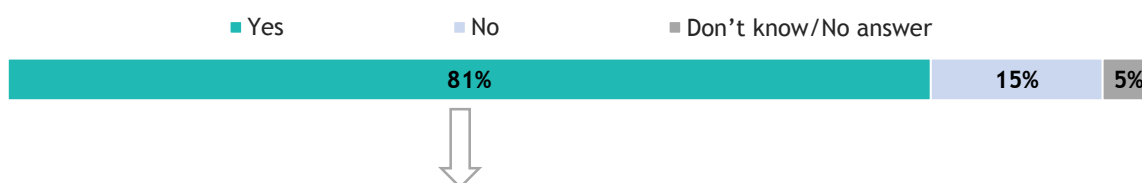


Figure 86. Association name (unprompted)

Multiple response

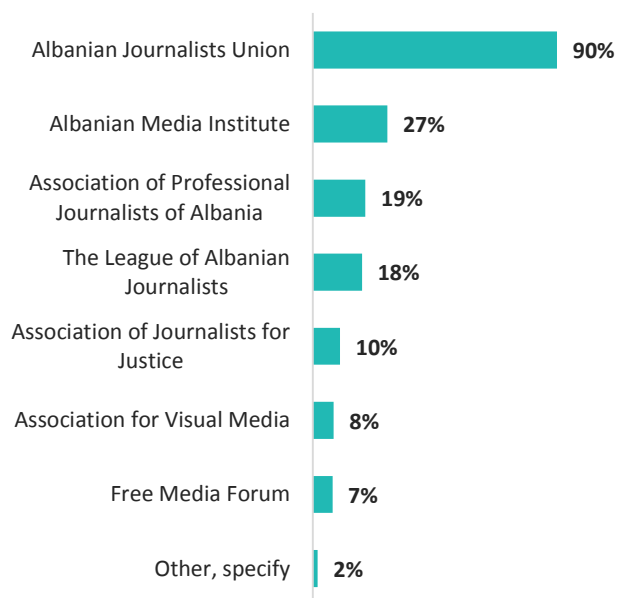
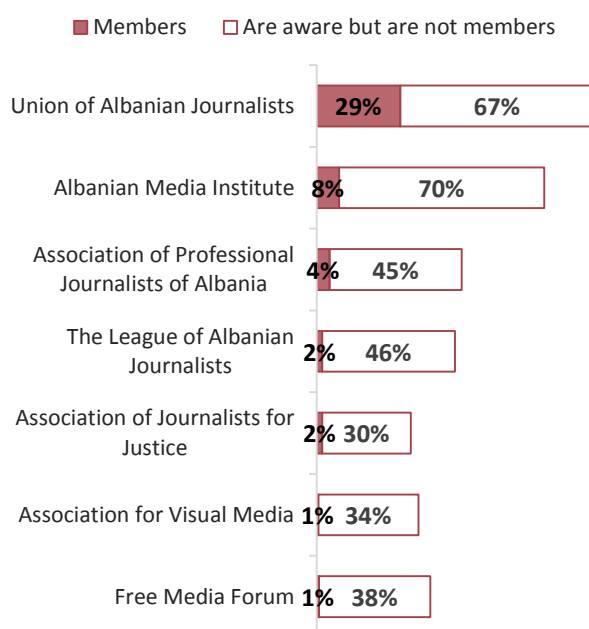


Figure 87. Are you part of this association? (prompted)

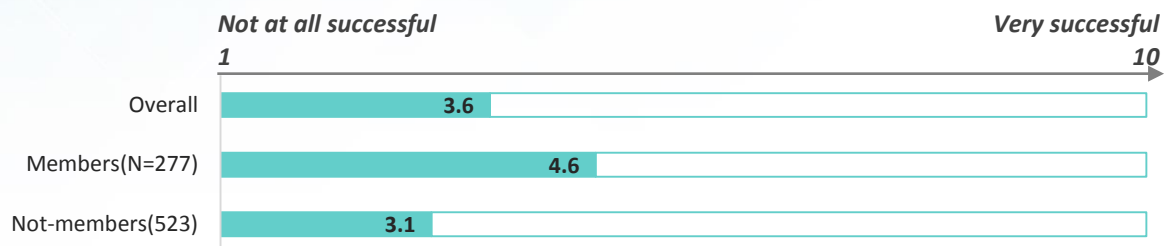


N=644 (only those who are aware of associations existence)

Media professionals in Albania don’t seem to think that these associations are particularly successful. When asked to rate the success of the associations, on a scale from 1 to 10, the overall total only results in 3.6 points. Media professionals who are a member of any of these association are slightly more likely to believe that they are successful, however not to a great extent (4.6 points). Respondents who are not a member perceive them as least successful

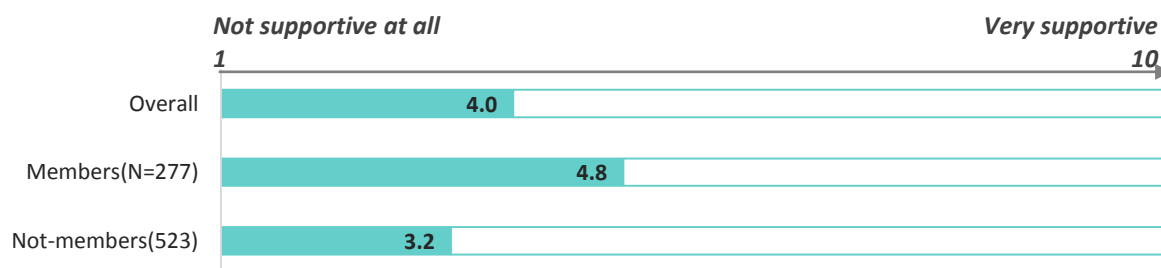
(3.1 points). Although, media professionals recognize that some associations are quite active with their critical declarations, they perceive that those do not produce any tangible result or success.

**Figure 88. Based on your opinion how successful have been these associations?**



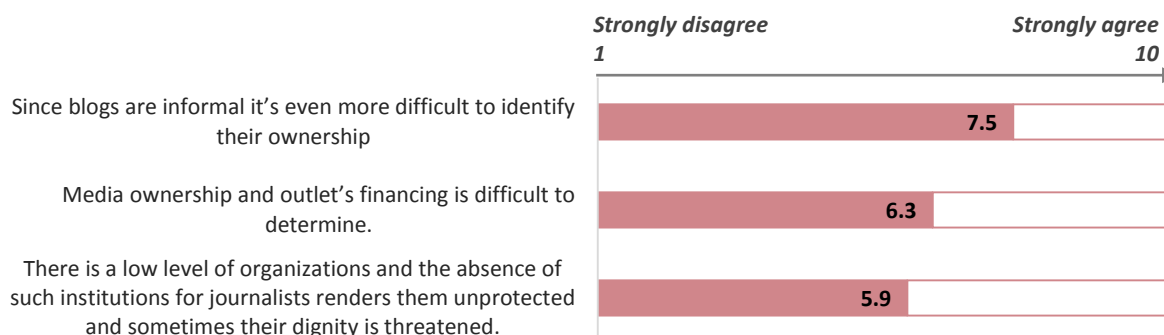
When asked how the respondents would rate the support and protection by journalists’ unions in case of external pressure, most appear not too confident. The overall rating stands at 4.0 points, while members are slightly more optimistic (4.8) and non-members would rate the support and protection with only 3.2 points.

**Figure 89. How would you rate the support and protection by journalist unions in case of external pressure?**



The last question in the survey revolved around three statements and the respondents were asked to express their level of agreement toward them. The highest level of agreement with 7.5 points can be observed regarding the statement “since blogs are informal it is even more difficult to identify their ownership.” The statement “media ownership and outlets financing is difficult to determine” ranks 6.3 points. The last statement namely; “there is a low level of organizations and the absence of such institutions for journalists renders them unprotected and sometimes their dignity is threatened” received 5.9 out of 10 points.

**Figure 90. How much do you agree with the following statements regarding professional journalism?**



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Print media

Since currently there is no official authority with regard to print media, there is a gap in terms of official data on the number of newspapers and magazines published across the country. Meanwhile, there are also no certified and official figures for the circulation and sales of newspapers and magazines. Similarly to the AMA, ***an institution responsible for regulating, supervising and monitoring the print media should be in charge.***

### Online: - old challenges!

The highest level of agreement can be observed with the statement *“a considerable amount of articles in the print and online media are unattributed”* (7.6 out of 10). High agreement can also be observed in regard to the statements *“for political reporting, the media doesn’t report but rather reproduces ready-made material”* and *“journalists in Albania fall into plagiarism”*. Online Journalism particularly - where the ethical issues/anonymity are more prevalent compare with traditional media - should be ***subjected to increased fact-checking and quality control.*** Media outlets engaging with online journalism must pay more attention and put more effort on work attribution and correct ethical conduct while publishing their work.

Meanwhile, Albania still lacks a law on online media, although the government is currently working to create a legal framework to regulate this typology of media. The whole **process of registering, functioning and monitoring online media should be defined and more official.** Therefore, the main objective of **the law on online media shall play a regulatory role.** The first draft of the law was considered by critics good and effective as a frame but wrong in content (focused on penalization and sanctioning). With regards to the online media AKEP as well should play a more indicative role in offering more detailed and comprehensive data on the domains registered as news portal, on their activity and daily online views

### The market

Given that media professionals demonstrate low rates of continuous employment in the media sector, several actions should be undertaken by media owners and administrators in order to improve the situation. As journalists, state among the main reasons for change of workplace the level of salary, working conditions or ambition to grow professionally, owners of Albanian media should engage in building a more competitive and proactive work environment. On one hand, a ***culture of undertaking annual performance appraisal*** of staff should take place, so that accomplished professionals can be promoted. On the other hand, media owners should ***strictly adhere to the contractual terms*** they have with their employees and eliminate cases of delays of payment or cases of working extra hours without being paid.



### Entry in journalism

More than half of respondents have received a degree in journalism. The number of journalists entering the career from Journalism School is likely to increase. Very few have entered the profession through work experience. Hence, it might be advisable to include an **obligatory internship or a certain amount of work hours during the period of study**. Successful cases of integration between the period of study and work can be found in the Nordic countries, where the first year of the Journalism School is theoretical while the second year consists completely in work practice. Such combination allows the students to fully understand what the media market requests and what the challenges are and thus gives them the opportunity to further deepen their knowledge on the issues and courses they are more interested in during the last year of their studies.

Furthermore, it is assumed that journalist should be familiarized with a certain 'area' e.g. through having completed an economy degree the journalist is capable to engage with economic journalism. To overcome this to a certain extent, **long term courses for those who need basic training in journalism could be developed**. These are courses that can be offered by the university itself or by NGOs consortium. Courses to further master journalism skills should be developed as separate programs for those interested, offering extra credits as well for those who want to pursue them.

### Training and capacity building

Trainings were perceived as an effective tool in the past, however, now are dominated by formalities with less focus on qualitative content. Institutions offering the trainings might be following an agenda of donors instead of assessing the needs of the media community. **Engagement of media professionals in the planning stage of a training may foster more qualitative training contents** as well as activities relevant for the media professionals in the field. Furthermore, Albanian media is constantly investing in technology while investments in human capital are not seen as a priority. In-house training is nearly inexistent. Media outlets are advised to **develop in-house training mechanisms, in order to foster the skill development of their media professionals**.

### Working condition - time to keep the momentum of formalization

Formalization of the media sector has started to take place. According to respondents, the Labor Inspectorate has executed pressure in this regard, especially toward the largest Medias in Albania. Further efforts to implement the Labor Code are needed, especially outside Tirana where the law enforcement seems to be weaker. **The Labor Inspectorate should play a decisive role not only in formalizing the media market, but also in reducing any cases of informal engagement at work**, tracking and eliminating cases where journalists Take their salary partly in cash (without insurance taxes) and partly through the bank account. Labor Inspectorate should prepare a working calendar for media inspections and have clear procedures to follow in cases of irregularities by Albanian media (sanctions included).

Albanian Trade Union of Journalist has been vocal about the lack of contract/insurance for journalists. Some journalists stated that they felt highly exposed, unsecured and vulnerable in their media outlet and the contracts are merely formal. Additional efforts need to be done by Unions and other responsible stakeholders to further formalize the media sector and arrange adequate regulations and mechanisms concerning working conditions and employment contracts for media professionals in Albania.

### The “wrong” model?

The model of journalist reporter vs. analyst: the most common monthly income is around 20,000 – 50,000 ALL and two thirds of the respondents feel they are not compensated fairly for their work. Those who have higher salaries (more than 1,500,000 ALL) are editors/moderators. Hence, the **role models seem to be those who appear on the screens, not those who are working in the field.** Another negative phenomenon which is relatively new is “journalist not reporting news, but becoming news,” through posts in social media and TV appearances. Salaries of journalists who are not editors or moderators should be increased nationwide in order to make positions, which aren’t classified as top level, more attractive again. Unions and other organizations fighting for journalist rights should lobby with relevant stakeholders for reforming salary levels within the field of journalistic work.

Media professionals themselves highlighted the fact that journalists nowadays are playing more the role of the reporter rather than that of the journalist. According to them, media in Albania have lost their educative role. A clear lack of ethics can be seen across most media. As a result, the level of professionalism of journalists in Albania has decreased. Combined with the relatively low trust of the public in media - the shortcut to change the situation is: more investigative journalism, more critical reporting (not just merely reporting) and more fact-checking.

### (Self-)Censorship

Journalists often feel pressured by the government, political parties and business affiliated with their media outlet, to engage in self-censorship. **Oftentimes self-censorship is simply implied and many journalists themselves understand and respect the interest of their media owners and editors, and engage in censorship without being told to do so.** The consolidation of the public broadcaster, encouraging independent production of journalists and strengthening the regulatory body (AMA) might help in creating a model which has a public interest in mind.

### Legal knowledge gap: - specific focus on enforcement of Law on the Right to Information

As findings of this report suggest, media professionals appear to have a gap in their legal knowledge when it comes to laws concerning freedom of speech, defamation and others (only 46% think that Albanian legislation guarantees the freedom of the speech and 75% think that defamation is criminal law). **Journalistic trainings** should include **legal components to educate the media professionals about their rights and duties according to the Albanian**

**legal framework.** Innovative instruments such as friendly-booklets or online trainings can be used. When hiring journalists, media outlets should ensure that their employees are familiar with the laws that apply to their work and have a sufficient knowledge to conduct lawful work as well as being able to make use of their own rights when need be.

With regard to the law related to access of information, 28% of media professional appear to be uninformed in regard to law on the release of public information with 12 % replying with no and 16% with don't know when asked whether such laws exist. But the majority of journalists declare facing obstacles in obtaining official documents either in some cases (38%) or even in most cases (35%). Time to evaluate the effects of the new law 119/2014 on the Right to Information. The law stipulates the right to know through the Transparency programs where institutions are obliged to put official documents online and make available for the public. The **Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data**, as the responsible authority, should play **a stronger role in supervising and monitoring whether public institutions are complying with the law and taking actions in cases of violations.** Although the use of this law means that journalist need it not for the “news of the day/current affairs” but rather for investigative pieces.

### **CORRUPTION among the journalists**

Corruption awareness appears to be high among media professionals, with the great majority of respondents thinking that there are journalists who engage with corrupt practices (make money or other benefits) to create a certain chronicle (78%). The **issue of corruption within the media sector is nearly non-existent in the public discourse and does not get sufficient public attention and exposure.** Existing watchdog NGOs and anti-corruptions programs by different relevant stakeholder should make greater effort to investigate, monitor and report corruptive behavior in journalism. Perhaps it's time for establishing a new body or watchdog NGO which will serve as a monitoring/investigative mechanism and will be responsible for increasing the impact rate of such monitoring and reporting efforts through specialized publication like: media on media.

### **Media Association!**

Although the majority of media professionals have knowledge about the existence of associations that defend journalists' rights (81%), they don't seem to think that these associations are particularly successful, both members and non-members. When asked to rate the success of the associations, on a scale from 1 to 10, the overall total only comes to 3.6 points. **Either capacity building is needed in existing associations or new association need to be developed which are not only vocal in articulating the concerns of journalists, but also more “focus and result oriented.”**

### **Challenges ahead**

The leaders of the institutions and the institutions themselves are providing “ready-made content” for the traditional media. Reporters are seen less and less on the screens and

focusing more on editing of the content provided by institutions/politician. The “business model online seems to be more concerned about clicks rather than contents. The transformation of traditional media to multimedia on line seems to be in early stages. While, everyone is producing content the challenge for professional media is to produce context. The spread of Fake news versus fact checking capabilities/media literacy is the main challenge Albanian media should work on.

## Annexes

### Annex A. Respondents profile

