

STUDY ON MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

- ✓ **800 Survey Interviews** with Media Professionals all over Albania (March – December 2018)
- 🔍 **20 In-depth Interviews** with media editors, media managers, media analysts and media owners
- 👥 **Seven (7) Focus Groups** with Journalists in Tirana, Durrës, Shkodër, Fier, Vlorë and Korçë (February 2019)

THE STUDY

Institute for Development Research and Alternatives (IDRA) was supported by the Embassy of United States of America in Tirana to conduct a study among media professionals to **better understand the Albanian Media Landscape, national media policies, legislative environment and regulatory authority**. 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.

KEY FINDINGS

GENERAL

- 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.
- Data revealed that on **average the greater the general work experience of media professionals, the lower the rate of continuous work in one job**. Main reasons mentioned for change of workplace were; i) the disagreements they had with the media owner/manager; ii) the level of salary; iii) the high delays or irregular payments; iv) the working conditions, etc.

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Almost **half of the media professionals (46%) have not graduated in journalism, nor do they have any other formal journalism qualifications**. As per their perception, having a degree in journalism or Albanian literature is seen as slightly preferential but not as fundamental.
- 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. **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.

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, about **17% declare to not have work contracts or service agreements**. This figure goes up to 31% (without a contract) when looking at the respondents/media outside of Tirana. Even among those who have a contract about 30% of them stated that they do not feel “protected” by it.
- When asked about means of receiving their salary, 74 percent report to receive their full salary through a bank, whereas **1 in 10 respondents still receives their salary in cash and 1 in 5 still gets a part of their salary in cash**. Moreover, more than half of all media professionals interviewed, do not think that they are fairly compensated for their work (57%).

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**, with 5.8 points. This shows **a lack of “positive consideration” for professionalism in journalism by the journalist themselves**. Despite not taking a strong stand when asked whether they 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%) or very good (5%)**.
- 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 a commissioned news/interview (52%)**.
- 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%)**. As main obstacles to specialized reporting are seen financial resources, editorial short-sightedness and lack of training.

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. Respondents declared that they “have been put under pressure” by their editors (36%) or media owner (38%) not to write about a specific event or story. About **35% of the respondents declare that “a news/story” has been deleted or removed by their editors/owners without informing them**.

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 even 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**.