

Safety of Journalists Country Report

Estonia

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In general, Estonia has a favourable political and media environment for journalists. Concerning physical safety, no killings of journalists or physical attacks on journalists have ever been recorded since Estonia's independence in 1991. However, according to some research (Ivask, 2020; Ivask & Lon, 2023; Ivask, Waschková Císařová & Lon, 2024) journalists experience threats of violence and hostility because of their investigative reporting and feel concerned about their physical and mental wellbeing. The investigative journalists who have faced court cases initiated by people whose wrongdoings they have disclosed (several SLAPP cases) declare that such cases make them feeling troubled but as the employer takes care of the legal aid, it does not affect their financial security (Mediadelcom, Estonian case study, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.23673/re-386>). Cyber security in Estonia is highly developed and all media outlets invest in the security of their intranet systems. Despite of continuous cyber attacks, especially by Russia, there have not been serious breaches in these systems. Also, journalists know relatively well how to protect their own social media accounts and websites. Nevertheless, primarily journalists receive hostility directly via their personal communication means. (Ivask & Lon, 2023). A recent study highlights the role of social media influencers who can direct online attacks and enforce "mob censorship" (Ivask, 2025). According to Alma Career Estonia, the average net salary of 80% of Estonian journalists is between 1062 and 2236 EUR a month, while the average net salary in Estonia is between 1102 and 2994 EUR (Palgad.ee, 2025). Most of Estonian journalists negotiate their salaries individually. Therefore, the employment contracts contain very different conditions, depending on media organization. Only National Public Broadcasting (ERR) has a collective agreement for journalists since 2009. However, the competition in the journalistic job market is not very high (despite of rather limited market), there are relatively few freelancers living merely on their journalistic income, and the newcomers find jobs quite easily. There is no practice of using unpaid trainees, and no "ques" behind the doors of the media organizations.

References

- Ivask, S. (2020). A way to silence journalists? Estonian female journalists' experiences with harassment and self-censorship. In: Anna Grøndahl Larsen, Ingrid Fadnes & Roy Krøvel (Eds.) *Journalists' Safety and Self-Censorship*. Routledge.
- Ivask, S., Lon, A. (2023). "You can Run, but You Cannot Hide!" Mapping Journalists' Experiences With Hostility in Personal, Organizational, and Professional Domains. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 78 (2).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10776958231151302>
- Ivask, S., Waschková-Císařová, L. & Lon, A. (2024). "When can I get angry?" Journalists' coping strategies and emotional management in hostile situations. *Journalism*, 25 (10), 2099-2116

Safety Index Scores

Overall Safety Score

85.69

Safety Dimensions

Physical Safety

94.7

Psychological Safety

72.91

Digital Safety

90.8

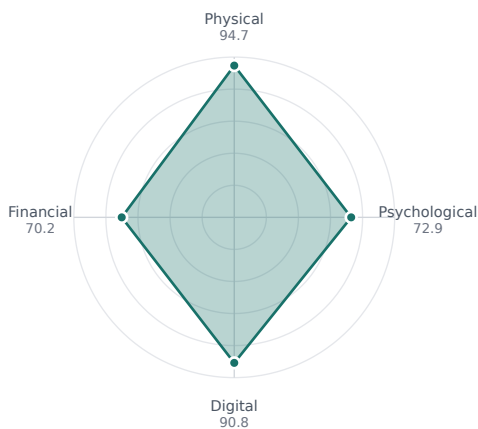
Financial Safety

70.15

Overview

The Safety of Journalists Index provides a comprehensive measurement of journalist safety across four dimensions. The charts below show how Estonia performs across each dimension and highlight any gender-based disparities.

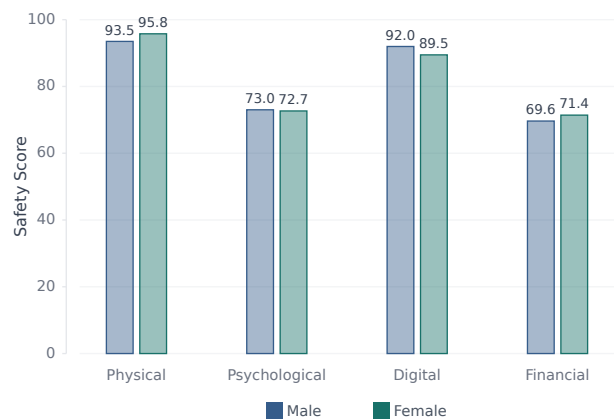
Safety Dimensions Overview



Safety Dimensions

This radar chart displays how the country performs across all four safety dimensions, revealing areas of strength and concern.

Gender Safety Gap by Dimension



Gender Safety Gap

This comparison highlights differences in safety experiences between male and female journalists, revealing potential gender-based disparities.

Physical Safety

The physical dimension carries **50% weight in the safety index**.

0

Journalist Killings

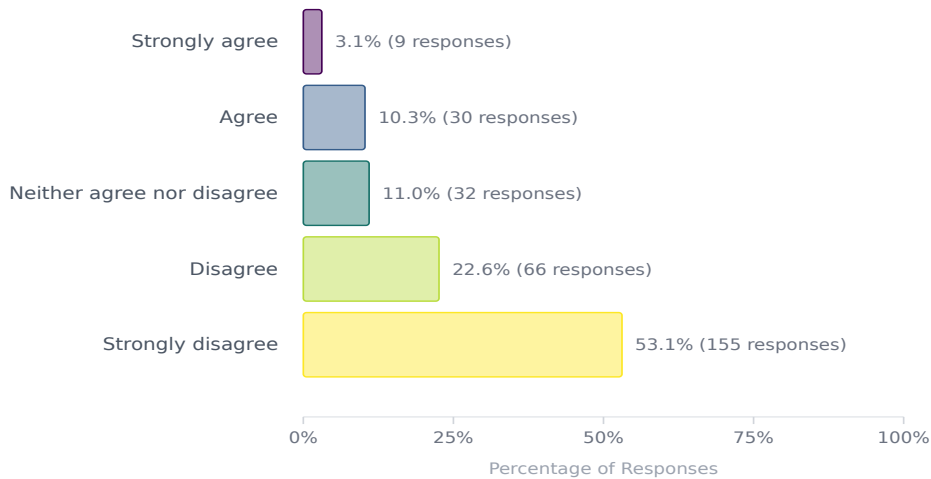
2016-2024

No journalist killings have been recorded in Estonia between 2016 and 2024.

Note: This indicator carries 35% of the weight within the physical dimension of the Safety Index, making it the most significant factor in this category.

Data sourced from UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.

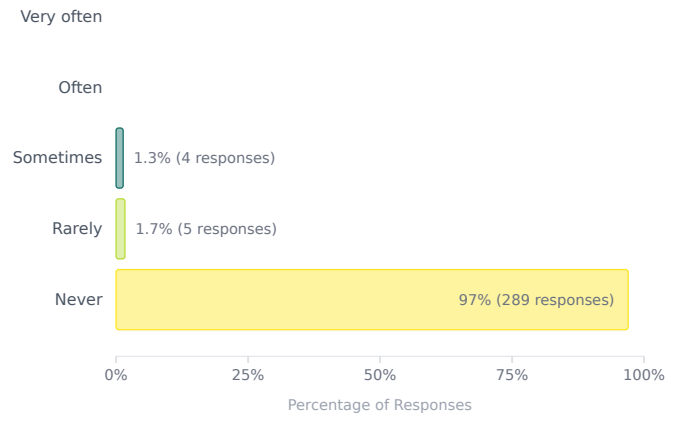
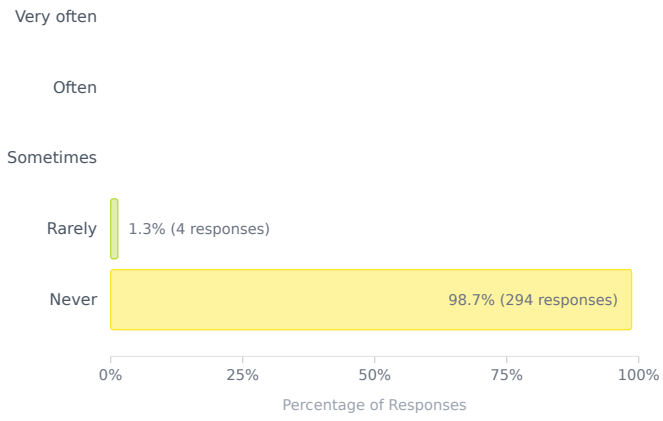
Responses to: "I am concerned about my physical wellbeing" (20% weight in physical dimension)



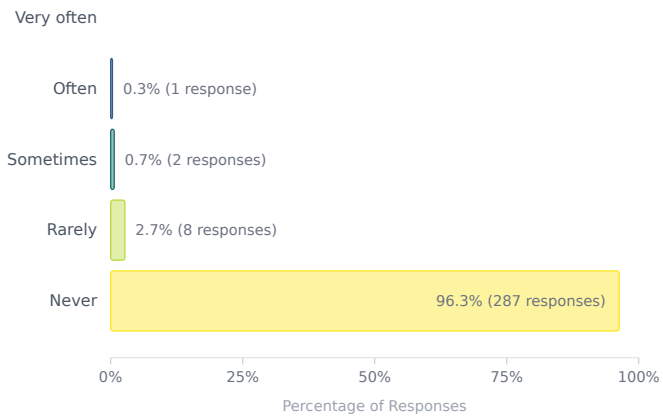
Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

Arrests, detentions or imprisonment (15% weight in physical dimension)

Sexual assault or sexual harassment (15% weight in physical dimension)



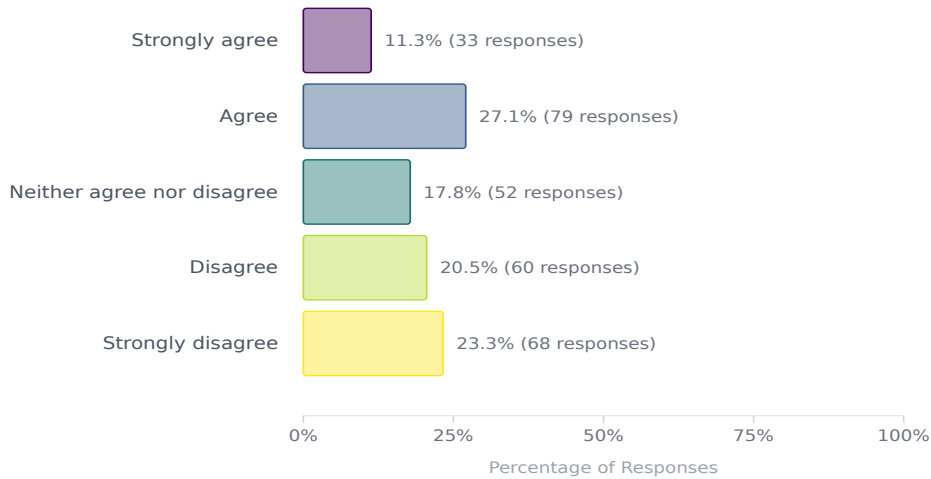
Other physical attacks (15% weight in physical dimension)



Psychological Safety

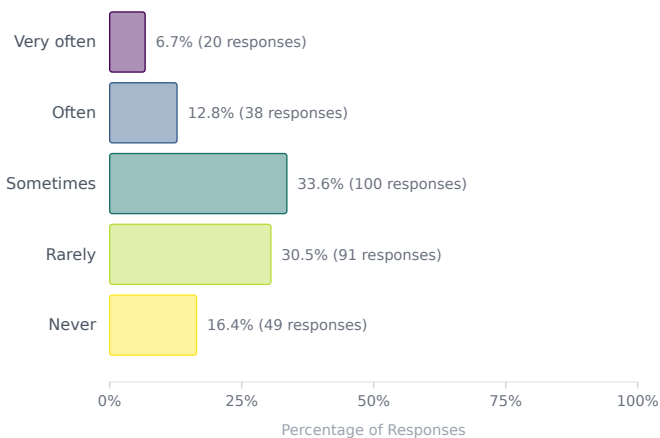
The psychological dimension carries **25% weight in the safety index**.

Responses to: "I am concerned about my emotional wellbeing" (20% weight in psychological dimension)

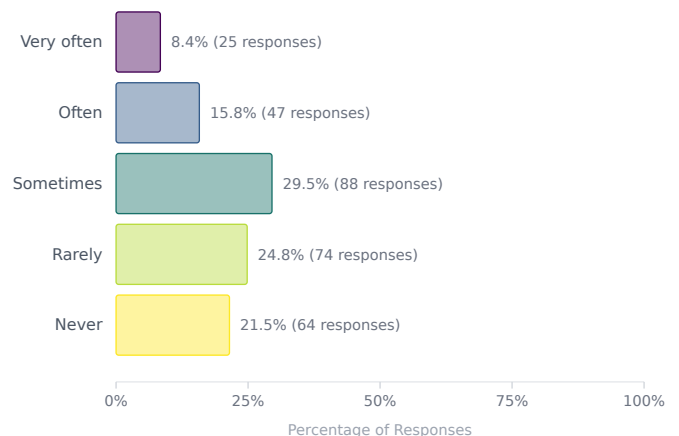


Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)



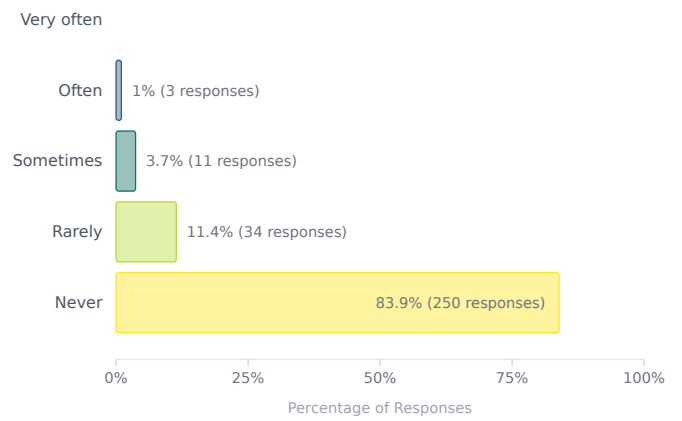
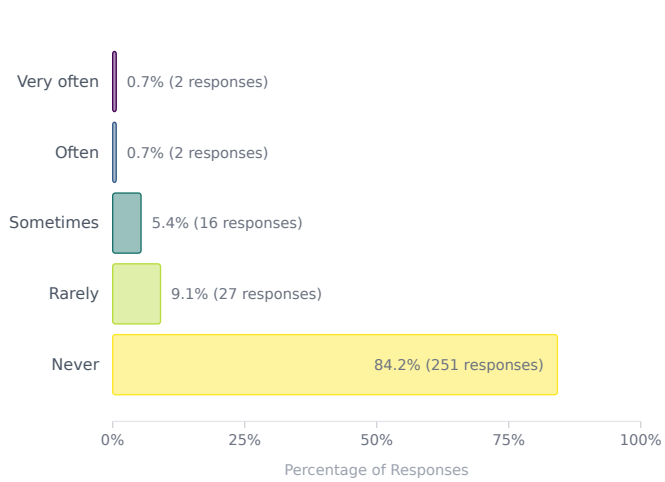
Public discrediting of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)



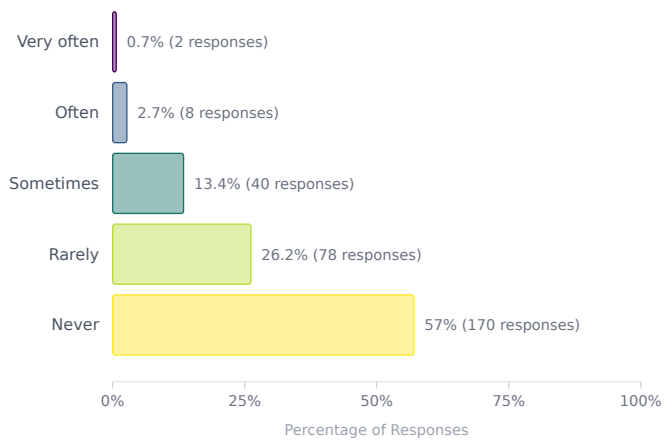
Legal actions against you because of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)

Stalking (16% weight in psychological dimension)

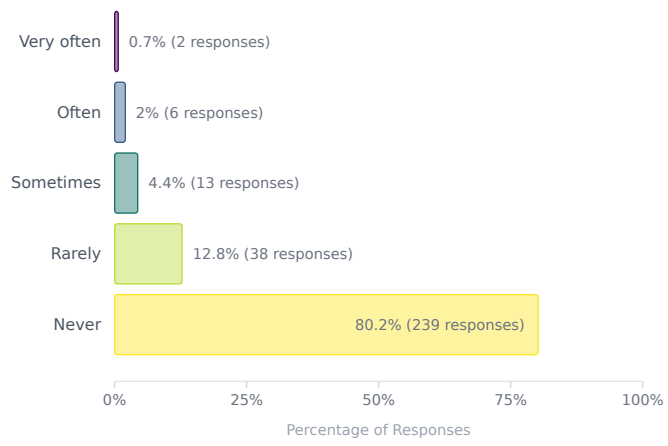
dimension)



Other threats or intimidation directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)



Workplace bullying (did not contribute to calculation)

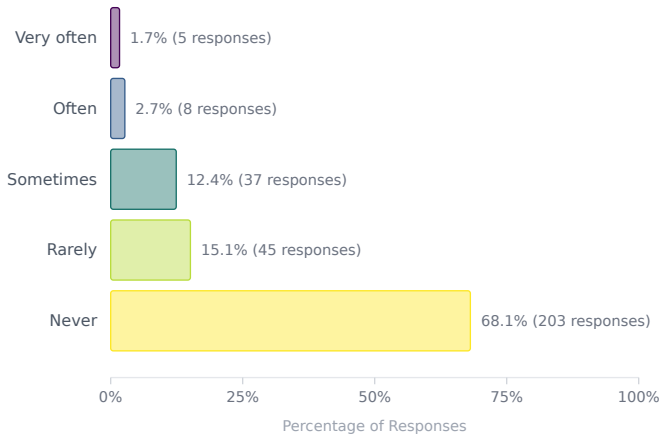


Digital Safety

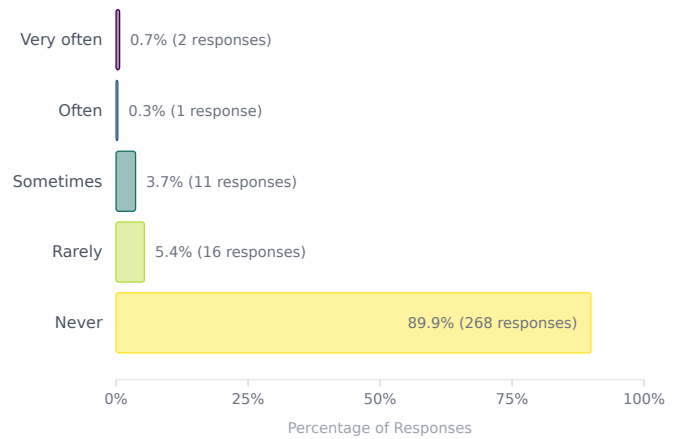
The digital dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

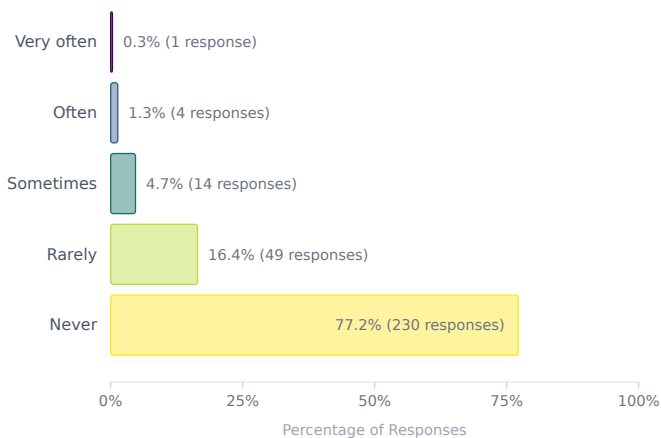
Surveillance (50% weight in digital dimension)



Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites (50% weight in digital dimension)



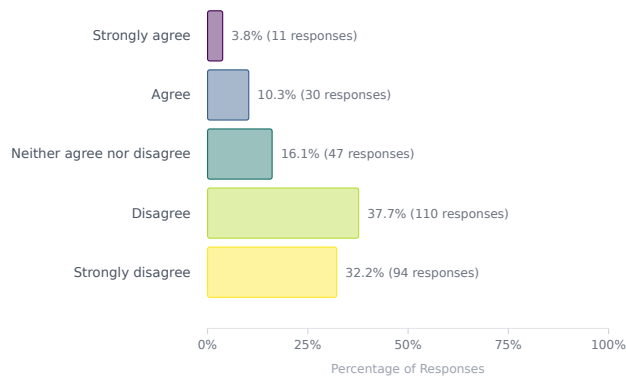
Others disseminating your personal information (did not contribute to calculation)



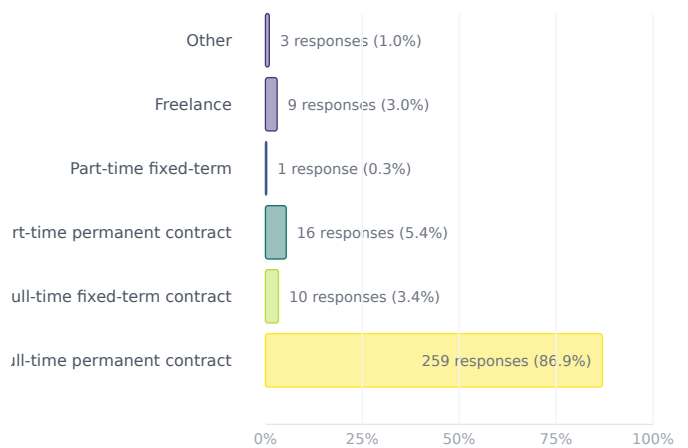
Financial Safety

The financial dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

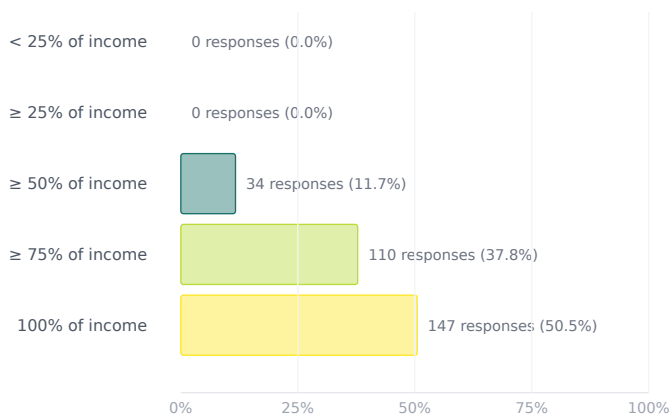
Responses to: "I am worried about losing my job in journalism within the next 12 months" (20% weight in financial dimension)



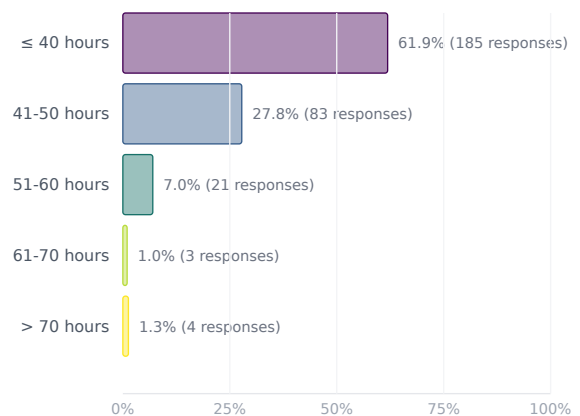
Responses to: "Which of the following categories best describes your current working situation as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



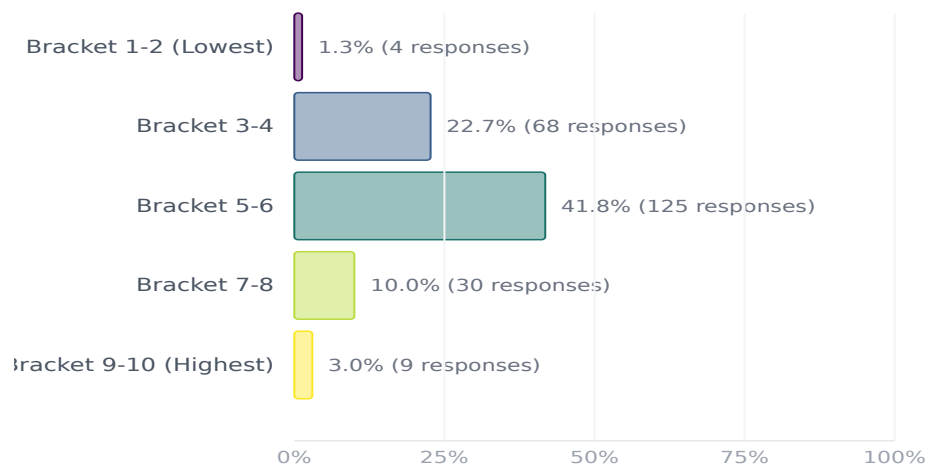
Responses to "Approximately what percentage of your overall work-related income comes from your work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "How many hours a week on average do you work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "In which of the following categories does your salary as a journalist fall?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



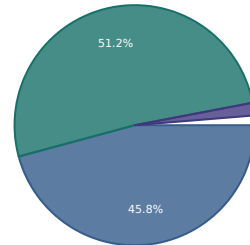
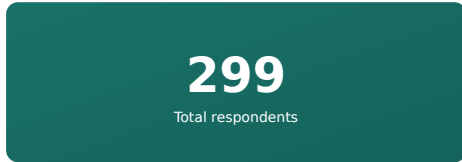
Options are given on a 10-point scale specific to each country.

Demographics

This section contains demographic information about survey respondents from Estonia.

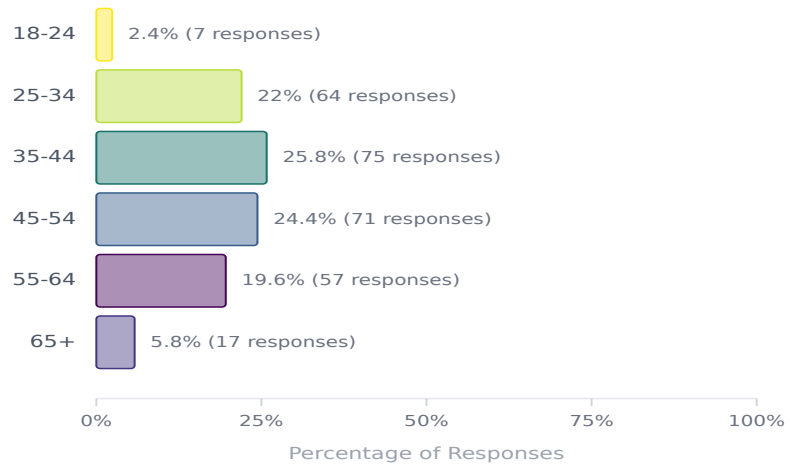
Gender Breakdown of Respondents

Survey Participation

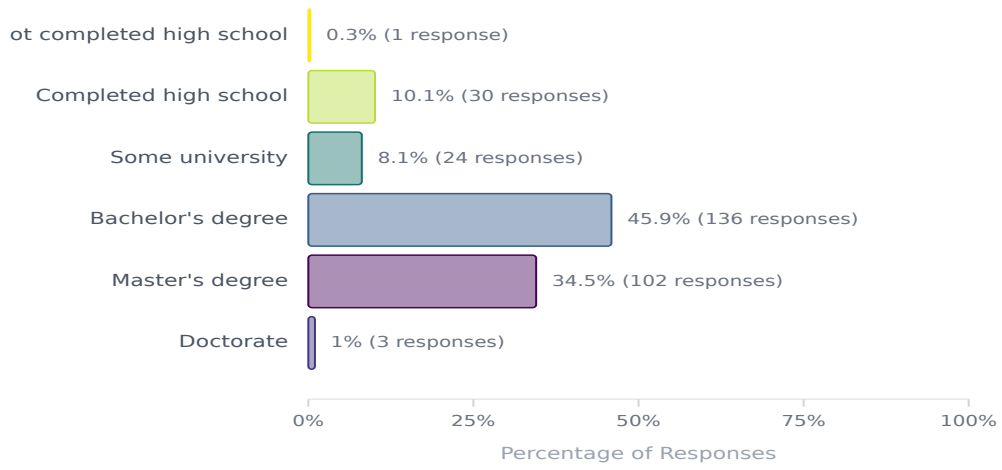


Male (137, 45.8%) Female (153, 51.2%) Other (5, 1.7%)

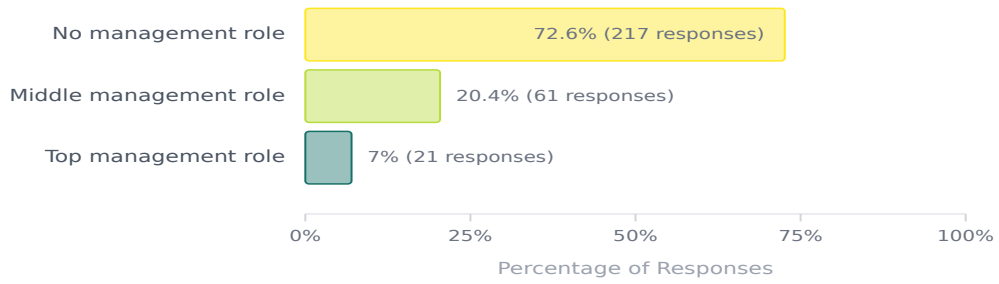
Age Distribution of Respondents



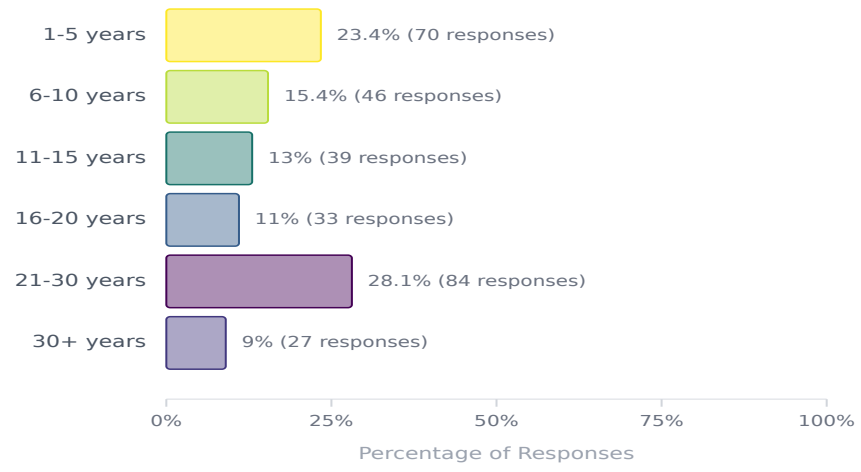
Education Level of Respondents



Workplace Position of Respondents



Years of Experience as Journalist



For more detailed information about the methodology and complete findings, please visit the full country page at: <https://safetyofjournalists.org/index/country/estonia>

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