

A person with blonde hair, seen from the side, is wearing a large professional headset with a microphone. They are operating a professional video camera mounted on a tripod. The camera has a small LCD screen on top showing a blue and green interface. The background is a blurred studio environment with warm lighting and some equipment.

# Gender aspects of employment and career in the media sector of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

Comparative analysis

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Fojo Media Institute, Stockholm and Kalmar  
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Cover foto: Caleb Oquendo

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This is a short version of the report. The full text with the detailed information on the results of the study in Ukraine and Armenia (in Russian) can be found by [this link](#). Results of the comparative studies conducted in Georgia and Moldova (in English) - [here](#), of the study conducted in Russia (in Russian) - [here](#).

# Preface



**Agneta Söderberg Jacobson,**

Gender Advisor, Fojo Media Institute

In your hand, you have the result of a research effort spanning over four years, and six Eastern European countries. Since 2016, Fojo Media Institute, together with local partners, has investigated media landscapes in Eastern Europe from a gender perspective, to find out how women and men in the industry perceive their work life: What are their options to have influence and a fulfilling career? What are the differences in beats and job satisfaction between male and female journalists? Is sexual harassment a concern that inflicts on professional practise?<sup>1</sup>

First out in the series of gender studies was Russia (2016), followed by Belarus (2017) and Moldova and Georgia (2018). In this report (2020) two more coun-

tries are included, namely Armenia and Ukraine. More than one thousand media professionals have shared their views and experiences and contributed to the research.<sup>2</sup> The result is a unique material that hopefully will inspire further research and action. Being a cross-regional study, it also allows for comparative analysis of six different countries that in part have a common modern history. All the participating countries were once a part of the Soviet Union, and have joint experience of dictatorship, censorship and news media replicating the Master's voice. This was also a time when women were formally equal to men.

Almost thirty years have passed since the Union was dissolved, and a wave of liberalisation swept across Eastern and

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<sup>1</sup> The design of the survey is based on UNESCO's Gender Sensitive Guidelines for Media Development.

<sup>2</sup> The studies on Russia, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine have been conducted by a research team from ISESP FCTAS RAS (Institute of Socio-Economic Studies of Population - Branch of the Federal Center of Theoretical and Applied Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences). The Belarus study was done by an independent consultant, Elena Jerdzeva, and is not part of the comparative analysis that is presented in this report. A summary of the findings from the Belarus study can be found in the end of the report.

Central Europe. This also opened up for another kind of women's movement and feminism. Interestingly enough, at this time, there was a considerable number of women who wanted to reclaim their traditional gender role and saw it as a privilege to become housewives. Gradually the understanding of gender equality has become more nuanced and accepted, while feminism is still a contested concept in all the participating countries (no feminist official policies to be seen like in Sweden).

One profession that has changed its gender profile is journalism. What was once a male dominated arena has gradually become more gender equal in numbers. The findings of this study indicate that women now make up the majority of media

professionals in all the countries covered by this study.<sup>3</sup> According to the experts interviewed, this is not the result of a growing sector with more women coming in, but rather about an outflow of men. The journalistic profession has become less attractive (to men) due to economic restraints (lower wages) and political pressures that make it harder to exercise independent journalism.

The study also confirms that women are taking on more decision-making roles, especially in regional and independent media. In Georgia and Moldova, women and men seem to be on equal footing. However, there is still a considerable gender gap in Armenia and Russia, especially when it comes to distribution of power in national media with high circulation/



Presentation of one of the gender studies in Moldova. Foto: Anders Berhmann, Fojo.

<sup>3</sup> In Georgia 74,2% of the respondents said they worked in media organisations where women make up more than half of the workforce (followed by Ukraine with 67%, Russia, 62,5%, Armenia 59,2%, Moldova 59,1%). In Belarus, women make up approximately 70% according to data shared by the respondents.

audience, likely related to the fact that the most influential media are still often managed by men. In addition, imbalance in job security and remuneration can be noted, where men have more stable terms of employment and are engaged in beats that pay more.

Sexual harassment is another area of interest related to working conditions in the media industry (and elsewhere). Here the #MeToo movement has had considerable impact. Overall, the research indicates that in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine 20 to 30 percent of the media corps have had first-hand experience of sexual harassment. Whereas, respondents in Armenia (6%), Georgia (12%) and Moldova (17%) reported lower levels of harassment.<sup>4</sup> Most respondents in the survey see sexual harassment as a

violation of human rights, whereas Russian respondents tend to see it more as a way of “making yourself a case in the media”.

The above describes some of the key findings from the research. Much more can be retrieved from this and previous reports in the series. All in all, the data gathered shows a multifaceted reality that needs to be acted upon in order to create gender equal media organisations, that are equipped to produce journalism of high quality to guide us all through an increasingly complex world. Lastly, a warm and heartfelt “thank you!” to all the media professionals who did the survey or were interviewed. Without your input, there would be no story to tell!

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<sup>4</sup> These low numbers should be investigated further to find out if the understanding of sexual harassment is in line with internationally agreed terminology.

# Methodology

The study devoted to the gender aspects of employment and career in the media sector of various countries was conducted using the following methodology:

- mass survey (questionnaire) distributed among employees in the media sector in Armenia and Ukraine - conducted in 2020;
  - secondary analysis of mass surveys (questionnaires) of employees of the media sector in Russia, Georgia and Moldova conducted in 2016 and 2018;
  - expert survey in the form of in-depth structured interviews with selected representatives of the media sector in Armenia and Ukraine conducted in 2020;
  - secondary analysis of expert surveys in the form of in-depth structured interviews with selected representatives of the media sector in Georgia, Moldova and Russia conducted in 2016 and 2018.
- in Moldova: 84 respondents: 53 women and 31 men;
  - in Armenia: 103 respondents: 71 women and 30 men. Two respondents did not state their gender;
  - in Ukraine: 222 respondents: 182 women and 39 men. One respondent did not state their gender;
  - in Russia: in 2016, 312 respondents: 170 women and 142 men; in 2018, 126 respondents: 83 women and 43 men.

The mass surveys were carried out on the basis of random targeted selection, using the “snowball sampling” method (a sample group is said to grow like a rolling snowball). Respondents of the surveys were media managers and/or journalists from the media sector in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine.

The total amount of respondents participating in the study was 973:

- in Georgia: 126 respondents: 64 women and 62 men;

The questionnaire for the mass survey consisted of 36 questions that allowed us to gather information about gender and age-related characteristics of the media employees, their education, motivations for joining the media sector, work satisfaction, as well as inquire into the respondents opinions on the gender aspects of salaries, opportunities and limitations in building a career while taking gender characteristics into account, presence or absence of gender discrimination, experiences of sexual harassment, hatred, threats and persecution that are related to the fulfilment of professional duties.

Despite the random character of the sample, the effort made to achieve a balance in terms of gender and diversity in age, mass media organization size, work experience and so on, allows us to state that the selection can be characterized as sufficiently wide in scope and diverse.

# Main conclusions

## Main conclusions of the study of gender-related issues in employment and career in the media sector of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

The study has made it possible to distinguish common and specific aspects of the media development trends that have an impact on the composition of staff and the content they create. Common trends in the media sector of all studied countries are:

**1. The impact of information technology that is expressed through a drastic reduction of print press** and traditional media's (most traditional media now have websites) need to compete with social media platforms, blogs, etc. The problem is that compared to official media outlets, most social media platforms do not have the "burden" of professional and ethical norms of traditional journalism (the need to factcheck, to provide different points of view, etc.), as well as basic standards of the quality of texts. Social media benefit from these aspects and manage to be faster - which is one of the key competitive advantages in modern society - than traditional media, and make them join the race, lowering their standards and almost switching to the "copy-paste" approach. In turn, it leads to the lowering of the qualification expectations for journalists and mass hiring of people that have little journalistic experience or even none (students). The decline in the requirements for the quality of materials and the qualification of those who create them allows traditional mass media to save money through lower costs for staff and salaries, which is extremely relevant in the conditions of limited financing.

Meanwhile, experts from all studied countries do not deny the role of the Internet as

a platform that provides space for social and political issues, as well as an opportunity for expressing opinions, including those that belong to professional journalists and that cannot be presented in official media for political reasons. Switching to blogging provides such journalists an opportunity to stay in their profession.

**2. Despite a drastic increase in the availability of the Internet, experts from different countries point out that TV remains the main source of information for the population,** whereas those people who state that they do not watch TV and therefore are not under its influence, live within an illusion, because TV channels and their products are more and more widely presented online. Moreover, TV is responsible for shaping the main discourse which is then discussed on the Internet. This tendency explains the desire of key political powers in the studied countries to have such a powerful information resource. In Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, various TV channels are controlled by the competing political groups. What makes Russia different is that a similar competition ended there in the beginning of the 2000s with the victory of the president who represented one of two key political groups against oligarchs slash TV moguls. TV has been under full control of the government and the groups that are affiliated with it since then.

**3. The political situation in a country has the most significant impact on the information context that is created by the media.** Arme-

nia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have experienced numerous changes of groups that took over power including via revolutions during the post-Soviet period. Wherein, the political clans that had to give up power did not disappear, but remained in a position of a relatively powerful opposition.

Existence of real political competition, competing political powers and power structures in these countries (a former and a current government in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, a president and a parliament in Moldova) leads to the division of the most powerful media among them. In Russia, conditions for real political competition have not existed since the beginning of the 2000s. An almost total control of the main information resources by the government shapes the agenda and the content of the materials (programs, reports, articles, etc.) in the media that cover the widest audience, and that are almost impossible

to distinguish from one another: a relatively limited number of experts appear in all major TV and radio channels and print media; social issues that worry the population the most are hushed up or varnished.

At the same time, based on the experience of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, one can see that competition among political elites is not enough for the agenda of the most influential media to reflect the needs of the society. There are several reasons. Firstly, there is a major gap between the elites and the interests of the majority of the population, which is typical for the post-Soviet area. And secondly, the battle between the competing sides makes the voice of the truly independent media almost mute.

Another difference between Russia, on one side, and Armenia, Georgia and Moldova and Ukraine, on the other, lies in the financing of

certain media by international organizations and their grants. When the majority of the most influential media is divided by political groups, many experts see financing from abroad as a guarantee of independency. There is proof that, for example, in Armenia, most journalistic investigations are mainly carried out by media that exist on foreign grants.

At the same time, experts have also mentioned the critical dependence on such sources of financing, which takes away the opportunity to discuss a true independence of such media. A very limited number of subscriptions and a weak advertising market cause the aforementioned dependency. Apart from that, a number of experts are concerned that grants weaken

the motivation to look for financing elsewhere, and make media financially insolvent if this support is ended. When a grant is available, legal and economic aspects of the existing media work practices lead

to not all employees, involved in the work funded by the grant, have official work contracts signed with them.

#### **4. A common trend in all of the studied countries is the feminisation of the media sector.**

There are several factors that facilitate this trend. Firstly, compared to the Soviet times, there is a drastic increase of opportunities in terms of education that allows working in media. Initial gender imbalance in favour of women that exists among students of relevant departments is then reflected in the staff composition of the sector. When women join media, they demonstrate professional and business traits (discipline, loyalty to a particular media outlet, etc.) that allow them to occupy various positions, including the managing ones on different levels.

Secondly, women master those types of journalistic work that used to be mostly done by

*“ Competition among political elites is not enough for the agenda of the most influential media to reflect the needs of the society ”*

men (cameramen, photographers, etc.) more and more. Technological progress plays a big role in this change, as devices become lighter and easier. However, there are certain specific features in different countries. For example, experts have pointed out that the quantitative majority of women in media in Russia occurred as a result of men leaving the sector due to the decrease of the media's influence in the 2000s and consequently lower salaries.

Thus, the situation in the media sector of the five studied countries has common traits. There are two main causes. Firstly, the growing availability of the Internet and technological opportunities for creating diverse content. And secondly, the democratization of the journalistic and other relevant educations. Another common trait is the aspiration of political and economic elites to control the information space or at least a part of it. Russia stands out among other countries in this regard, as there is no competition among powerful political groups. However, content suffers from artificial agendas, one-sided pre-

sentation of information and an abundance of fake news in all countries. On the one hand, this is the case due to a major gap between the interests of the elites, that were formed in the period of initial capital accumulation, and the needs of the population. And on the other, due to the population being easily manipulated (after getting used to trusting media in the Soviet times) by media that are used by the elites as the main control tool. The presence or the absence of political competition does not affect this trend.

The international in-depth study of the media sector carried out in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine that included gender-related issues made it possible to reach a number of conclusions regarding the situation in media in several countries, and various factors that are determined by it, as well as other specific factors and the main differences related to the employment of male and female media employees, their salaries, opportunities for career growth and professional self-fulfillment, work mobility etc.



Technology has been for a long time a limiting factor for women in journalism. Foto: Alexandr Grishin.

# Main conclusions

## Conclusions of the study of gender-related issues in employment and career in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine

If we rephrase the title of the scientific report into a question, as in “Do the conditions of employment and the opportunities for career growth for women in the studied countries correspond with the principles of gender equality?”, then the answer will be negative: no, they do not. A number of important violations of women’s labour and social rights that were detected by the study include career limitations. Even though, the majority of employees working in the media sector are women, executives are mostly men (“glass ceiling”).

For example, in Russia and Armenia, this was reflected in a “gender pyramid” of power and influence: the more power - the more men. The smaller influence of a media outlet has on its audience and the lower the position, the more women. Such gender allocation in employment leads to disproportions in salaries. On top of that, there is not only a gender gap in salaries where men occupy a better position, but there is often direct discrimination against women.

The hiring process in the media sector also has certain gender-related features. More men occupy standard (socially protected) work places. More women work as freelancers and through verbal agreements (therefore, without social and employment guarantees) which is especially disturbing due to a high number of young women working

in the sector. Limitations in professional fulfilment (“glass walls”) were also detected. Women tend to specialize in topics that are less well-paid, such as social issues, which is not always their desire.

When media employees were asked a direct question about the existence of gender discrimination in media, the majority of the respondents gave negative answers, even though widespread discriminatory practices towards women in the media sector were detected. To a certain extent, it can be explained by common gender stereotypes about the role of women and men in the family and society that are widespread in communities, including journalists themselves, which is something the study has proven. In such circumstances, gender segregation is perceived as a norm more than a violation of social and labour rights. It increases the probability of translating and recreating social norms and gender stereotypes

that limit women’s opportunities in terms of work and social impact through media.

These are some additional details about the results obtained within the study:

***“Feminisation of the media sector is not a result of women actively joining the sector as much as it is the result of a significant outflow of men.”***

**1. The feminisation of employment in the media sector is relatively obvious in all of the studied countries.**

It is proven by the fact that when the survey was conducted, the majority of the respondents of the study worked at media organiza-

tions where more than half of employees were women (59% in Armenia and Moldova, 63% in Russia, 67% in Ukraine, 74% in Georgia). According to most experts and the respondents of the survey, the feminisation of the media sector is not a result of women actively joining the sector as much as it is the result of a significant outflow of men.

Both experts and respondents think that low wages in the media are the key reason. However, despite the increasing employment of women in the media sector, the general tone and the agenda are still being set by men, because they occupy most of the executive positions in mass media. Moldova is an exception. Experts have recently noted changes there, as women occupy executive positions more often.

**2. The survey has indicated that in the age structure of media employees, youth and representatives of the most productive ages (30-44 years) prevail.** They constitute 75% of employed people in all countries apart from Russia, where the number is 68,1%.

The highest share of youth among the employees can be found in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine: one of three respondents is under 29. It determines a fairly high professional mobility for the employees of the media sector in the studied countries. In the beginning of the 21st century, the feminisation of the sector was related to the decrease of wages and prestige of the journalistic profession. However, a new generation has grown up within the past years. Also, it is important that the journalistic profession has changed a lot due to the technological transformation of the media sector and the information space. Today, apart from traditional skills, a deep understanding of technology is required. It makes the profession more appealing to youth. Thus, experts have pointed out that studying journalism is becoming more and more prestigious, and technological advancement actively attracts young people.

**3. Professional composition and gender specificity of employment in media in all five**

**countries have a lot in common.** The majority of creative and management-level employees of media in all studied countries have a degree in journalism. At the same time, this is a more widespread trend in Georgia, Moldova and Armenia (around 2/3 of all respondents) than it is in Russia and Ukraine (slightly less than half of all respondents). Meanwhile, the percentage of women who work in media with a relevant degree - in journalism, philology or linguistics - is higher than the percentage of men. For example, in Georgia, Moldova and Armenia, almost 90% of women have a relevant degree. Men enter the media sector with a non-relevant degree much more often than women. It might be related to the fact that men cover subjects that require special knowledge (economics, politics, sport, etc.) more often than women, whereas women cover social issues, culture and entertainment and work as technical editors and so on more often. Apart from that, we cannot eliminate a hypothesis that education-related requirements are less strict for men than for women because there are not that many of them in the industry.

**4. The job position structure in the media sector of the studied countries looks different.** In Georgia and Moldova, gender asymmetry was not detected. Men and women were represented equally on all levels: from the ordinary creative employees up to editors-in-chief and top managers. At the same time, leadership representatives of the largest media holdings and companies, where, according to an expert in Georgia, the highest positions are still occupied by men (approximately 60-70%) did not participate in our study, while the leadership of regional and independent media outlets consists of a large number of women, which has been reflected in our study.

Gender allocation among leadership positions in Armenia, Russia and Ukraine has fully proven the hypothesis about the existence of the “glass ceiling” in media. The more power there is, the more men there are — this is a very accurate characterization of the allocation of women and men in media in these three countries. On top of that, a “gender pyramid” of

power exists in Armenia and Russia where the percentage of women that occupy top executive roles is much lower than the percentage of men in similar positions. When it comes to employees that work in the studied media outlets in Russia and Armenia, one in two men occupies a top executive role, whereas only one third of women has the same status in Russia and one fifth – in Armenia.

At the level of middle-range executives, men prevail as well, but the gender gap is smaller there. And the majority of ordinary creative positions are mostly occupied by women. The “glass ceiling” hypothesis has not been proven correct in Georgia and Moldova because women and men have almost equal opportunities to occupy leadership roles there.

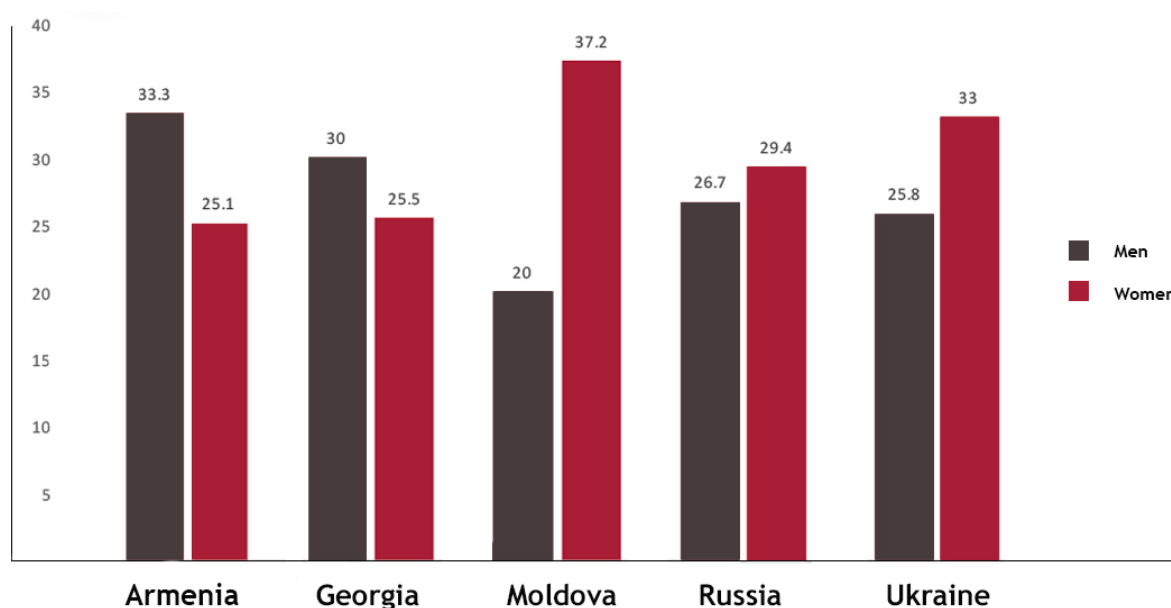
**5. The study of professional mobility of media employees in the studied countries has shown that ascending mobility is more widespread than the descending one.** Thus, professional growth in media is relatively widespread, but there are differences in terms of career growth opportunities for women and

men depending on the country. For example, in Georgia and Armenia, men build successful careers more often than women: in Georgia, 30% of male respondents and 25,5% of female respondents have been promoted within the past 5 years; in Armenia, the numbers are 33,3% for men and 25,1% for women.

These numbers can be the evidence of certain barriers that are created when it comes to women and their career growth. At the same time, in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, women make successful careers more often than men. In Russia, 26,7% of male respondents and 29,4% of female respondents have gotten promoted within the past 5 years; in Ukraine – 25,8% of men and 37,2% of women; in Moldova – only 20% of men and 37,2% of women.

Along with vertical mobility, horizontal mobility, when employees move from one organization to another, is also present. It is considered that men tend to do it more often than women because it is easier for them to find a new job. However, the study in Georgia has shown that women change jobs much more often

## Respondents who got promoted in the last 5 years (%)



than men: 2/3 of Georgian female respondents (66,7%) worked at a different organization 5 years ago, and this is the case for less than half of all male respondents (46%) there.

The respondents' projective attitudes were studied based on the question of whether they plan to continue to work in the media sphere. The absolute majority of the respondents in all countries plan to stay in the media sector (from 69,9% to 82,8%). However, in Moldova, media employees are less certain about it. Only 2/3 (69,9%) have given a positive answer. More than a quarter of all respondents in Moldova were uncertain about the answer to this question (26,5%). This is a sign of a certain instability in the media sector in this country. At the same time, this lack of certainty about the continuation of the career in the media sector was expressed by male journalists more (30,3%) than by female journalists (24,5%).

**6. Job satisfaction is an important characteristic of employment in the media sector. The results of the study have shown that the majority of men and women in most countries are satisfied with their jobs.** Two countries had a different outcome and stood out. Firstly, Georgia where 1/5 of female respondents (21,9%) and 14% of male respondents were not satisfied with their jobs in the media sector. Discriminatory phenomena can be hidden in this small gap in the answers given by men and women. In Ukraine, 1/5 of both male (21,1%) and female (19,2%) respondents were also rather unsatisfied with their jobs. However, since the results of the study have shown that there is no gap between male and female responses, it would be incorrect to reach a conclusion that there are discriminatory phenomena involved.

When it comes to characterizing employment in the media sector, the question of whether a job that is performed by a respondent matches their qualification is no less important. The majority of the respondents gave a positive answer to this question. The highest number of

positive answers was given in Moldova (82,7%) and Armenia (74,1%). Approximately 1/3 of respondents in Georgia, Ukraine and Russia believe that their qualification is higher. The situation in Georgia is the most critical: almost half of all female respondents (46,7%) believe that their qualification is higher than the jobs they perform, whereas only 19,7% of men have the same response there. In Ukraine, 1/3 of female respondents (33,3%) also thinks that their qualification is higher than the jobs they perform. However, there is a smaller gap between them and male respondents in the same situation (27,8%). The gap between women and men in terms of the correlation of their qualification and the jobs they perform can be considered one of the signs of gender disqualification in the media sector.

**7. Career opportunities in the media sector have specific gender-related features.** They were studied based on the expectations of the respondents regarding their promotion. In Armenia, Russia and Ukraine, employees in the media sector are relatively optimistic: more than half of them expect to be promoted within the next 5 years. Meanwhile, women from these countries believe in career growth and promotions more than men. Such an allocation may demonstrate the absence of explicit barriers for women in terms of career growth and promotion in Armenia and Ukraine. In Georgia and Moldova, the situation is different: a significant number of all respondents fear potential job demotion; this is relevant for men (17,8% in Georgia and 15,4% in Moldova) and women (15,2% in Georgia and 14,3% in Moldova).

Apart from that, media experts from Georgia and Ukraine have pointed out that when major media outlets are controlled by the government, the most important requirement for promotion in media is one's political loyalty.

Since men usually occupy the most important job positions at media outlets, men are the ones who get to build more successful careers

more often. This is an opinion of an expert from Moldova: “There is an inequality between politically controlled and independent media. And for some reason, it turned out that men are in charge of most politically controlled media outlets, whereas women lead the majority of independent media outlets”. Thus, when it comes to top executives at independent media outlets, there are both men and women (the latter is even more often the case).

#### **8. Topics that journalists work with usually match their interests.**

The majority of all male and female respondents work either in political or social journalism. In accordance with a stereotype about “female” and “male” professions, these thematic directions have a rather stiff gender asymmetry. In all of the studied countries, political journalism is the main topic for a quarter of male respondents who work as journalists in Russia and up to half of all male respondents who work as journalists in Armenia. At the same time, there are almost two times less women who deal with this topic in the majority of the studied countries: 13,2% in Russia, 12,3% in Ukraine, 20% in Moldova, 26,8% in Armenia. The only exception is Georgia, where politics is covered by an almost equal number of women (29,4%) and men (34,6%).

However, in all of these countries except for Russia, two times less men and women would like to be involved in political journalism. For example, out of 34,6% of men covering political journalism in Georgia, 20% would like to do it; and out of 29,4% of women covering political journalism in Georgia, only 11,5% would like to do so. The situation in Ukraine is similar: out of 34,2% male political journalists, only 12,3% would like to do it; and among women these numbers are 18,4% and just 8,5%.

Thus, the results of the study have shown that a lot of journalists who cover politics would choose a different topic if they had a choice. It might have something to do with a limited number of creative opportunities in this field, where journalists have to fulfill orders made by media owners and politicians.

The lack of discrepancy between the desired and the actual topic covered by journalists is common in Russia. It can be explained by the volume of the media sector which allows

journalists to choose media outlets that fit them and the absence of explicit discriminatory barriers when it comes to choosing a topic. According to the experts, the majority of employees

of independent media organizations in other countries are forced to cover several topics. Overall, gender-related discriminatory barriers when it comes to choosing a topic were detected in Armenia and Ukraine: some female journalists are forced to cover social issues which they are not interested in.

**9. Journalistic investigation is a rather exclusive form of journalism that is attractive in terms of professional potential and, in many cases, payment, that is desired by many but is not available to them.** In all of the studied countries, there are more journalists who would like to engage in investigative reporting than those who get to focus on it right now. At the same time, in Georgia, Armenia and Russia, our study detected no discrimination towards women in terms of access to this promising form of journalism. Women and men are represented in this field equally.

However, men do prevail in Ukraine and Moldova. In Ukraine, almost 1/3 of male respondents (28,9%) perform investigative reporting compared to 12,3% of women, in Moldova the

*“ In Armenia, Russia and Ukraine, more than half of employees in the media sector expect to be promoted within the next 5 years.”*

numbers are 17,2% for men and 6% for women. Meanwhile, twice as many men and women would like to participate in journalistic investigation, whereas almost half of the men involved in it in Ukraine would like to change their topic. It might be connected to danger and murders of journalists who worked at “Ukrainian Pravda” that have not been investigated, as well as threats that journalists receive and which are going to be covered further in the report.

**10. Our study indicates that hostility against media employees is a relatively widespread phenomenon in all of the studied countries.**

Respondents from Moldova and Ukraine have mentioned it more often than others. Based on the data from our study, around 3/4 of all respondents from these two countries have faced hostility. In Armenia and Russia, around 60% of all respondents have experienced hostility while performing their professional duties. Georgia is right behind them.

In all of the studied countries, the majority

of the respondents who work in media outlets have experienced threats or some other expressions of hostility or hatred sporadically - once or from time to time. Nevertheless, it should be noted: around 10% of all respondents from all countries have chosen the “yes, often” answer when asked about this. In all of the studied countries, there are certain gender-related differences in this regard. A common trend is that women mention more often that they have no experience in facing any kinds of expression of hatred related to professional duties.

Data obtained through the survey conducted among journalists in five countries matches the opinions expressed by the experts that represented these countries. Recent political events in Armenia, as well as constant political battles in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have unavoidably had an impact on the public atmosphere, which has a direct effect on journalists who work in it. Experts have mentioned mass public events during which journalists had faced threats or even physical violence; orders



Feminisation of the media industry is a trend in all the studied countries. Foto: Publishing house “Svobodnaya Pressa”.

from the government offices; verbal abuse by the representatives of the opposing powers that are shared online.

According to the experts, the situation in Georgia and Armenia has been recently improving. However, the pressure on journalists in Moldova, on the contrary, is getting more intense. Apart from that, Ukrainian experts have pointed out a trend, which also exists in other countries, – the usage of anonymous trolls and bots in order to bully those journalists who express a point of view that does not match the one that people in power prefer.

### **11. Gender discrimination in the media sector has been one of the central topics of this study.**

More than half of all respondents in five countries deny the existence of gender discrimination. The number of those who deny it is especially high among men (more than 70% in Moldova, Russia and Ukraine). There are more women than men among those respondents who acknowledge the existence of gender discrimination in the media sector. This gap is especially big in Ukraine and Russia: there are almost three times more women than men who gave that answer. In Ukraine, 40,3% of women and 13,2% of men admit that gender discrimination exists; 33,1% of women and 12,9% in Russia, 35,9% and 24,1% in Georgia, 37,7% and 23,3% in Moldova.

Therefore, two and a half times more women than men acknowledge the existence of gender discrimination in Ukraine and Russia; one and a half times more women than men acknowledge the existence of gender discrimination in Georgia and Moldova. Armenia is the only country in the study where an equal number of women and men acknowledge the existence of gender discrimination. Evidently, such discrepancies are connected to the fact that women's labour rights and professional interests are violated at work more often, which is why they are more sensitive to these issues. In addition, the majority of women know this not by hearsay, but from personal experience.

Women have mentioned the same areas of discrimination as the most painful in all five countries: salary issues (from 25,6% in Armenia to 57,1% in Moldova) and limited opportunities to occupy executive roles (from 35,6% in Armenia to 44,8% in Russia). Meanwhile, in Georgia and Moldova, men have found this question to be the key reason for gender discrimination (84,0% and 83,3% respectively). Women from all five countries rated the absence of opportunities for career growth at number three among other discriminatory practices in the media sector from 21,1% in Armenia to 37,5% in Russia).

To sum up, it is possible to state that the main reason for gender discrimination in the media sector in all studied countries apart from Moldova is the existence of the “glass ceiling” which prevents women from building careers and occupying executive roles.

### **12. Gender aspects of choosing experts for mass media outlets have been studied based on the survey where respondents were suggested to state how often women are invited as experts and if it occurs rarely, then why.**

The most common answers were: “more rarely than men” and “as often as men”. The “more often than men” option did not get even 10% in any of the countries, whereas in Armenia and Moldova, not a single male journalist chose it. More than half of female journalists (50,8% - 57,2%) in the studied countries think that women are invited as experts less often than men. The highest number of journalists (69,0%) who think that gender disproportion in favour of men exists in media was detected in Armenia. The views of Armenian journalists, both female and male, on the issue of inviting women as experts in media outlets are the most pessimistic compared to all other studied countries (54,9% and 69,0% respectively).

Moldavan journalists have a similar position: 60,0% of male journalists and 54,7% of female journalists think that women are invited to be

experts in media and cover significant events less often than men. On the contrary, Georgian journalists (especially men) have shown the most optimistic opinion on this topic. To sum up, it is possible to say that the “female view” on significant issues of today is presented in media of different countries unevenly and insufficiently. The fact that women are invited to be experts in media outlets less often than men can be seen as a manifestation of gender discrimination.

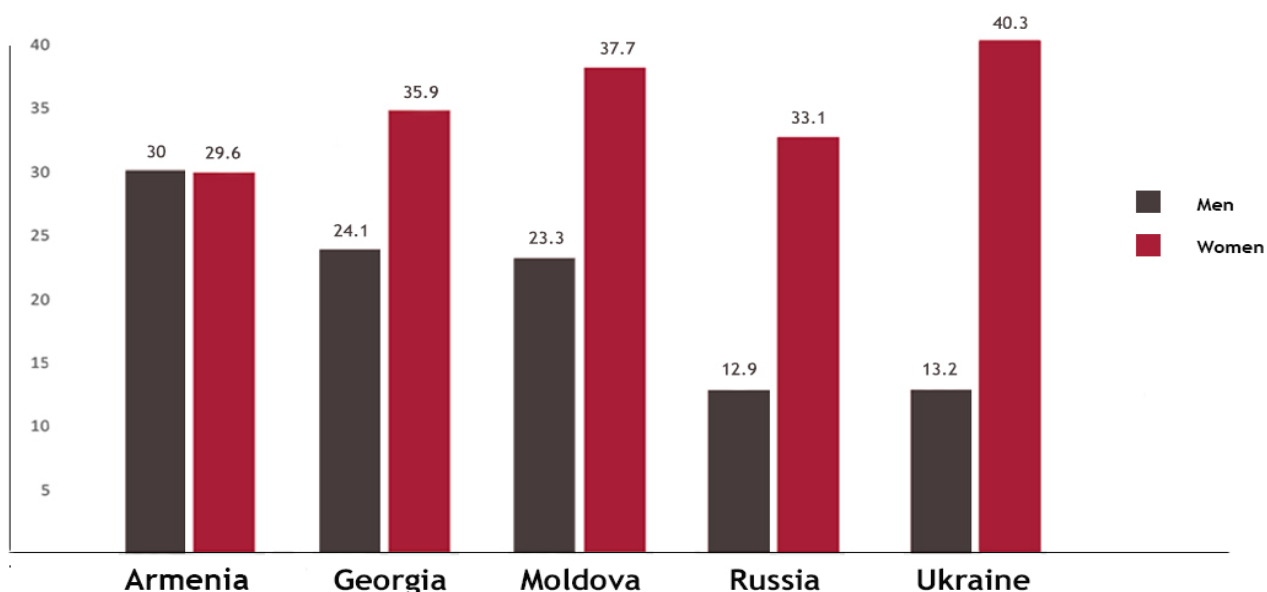
The most widespread arguments for inviting women as experts in media outlets less often than men among respondents can be summed up this way: firstly, male experts are better, and secondly, there are more of them, and it is easier to find them than female experts who are less visible and known. This is a typical sexist position which defends old-fashioned rules and norms of selecting experts for media outlets. It does not take into consideration the need of diversity in terms of how information is presented in media which increases objectivity, credibility and integrity in the coverage and analysis of significant events.

Apart from that, this was another reason for the underrepresentation of women as experts in mass media outlets: “There are simply more men who occupy executive roles than women”. As a result, gender inequality among women and men in power and decision-making is being consolidated in the media sector and then is reproduced in the society via media.

### 13. Violation of labour rights and social guarantees of media employees demonstrates a clear gender bias.

In 3 out of 5 studied countries, there are more men who occupy socially protected work positions in media than women. In Moldova, 86,7% of men work under employment contract, and for women the number is 75,5%. The difference is significant – 12,2%. In Russia, 90,7% of men work under employment contract, and for women the number is 85,4%. The difference is 5,3%. In Armenia, 76,7% of men work under employment contract, and for women the number is 74,3%. The difference is 2,4%. In these countries, a higher number of men occupy socially protected positions than women. As a result, the level of social security that female journalists who work in the media sector in Russia,

## Respondents who admit the existence of gender discrimination in media industry (%)



Moldova and Armenia have is lower than the one of their male colleagues.

In Georgia, the number of men and women who work under employment contract is almost identical (75,9% and 76,2% respectively). However, there are more men among freelancers and there are more women among those who work in conditions of irregular employment and through oral agreements. Thus, female journalists in Georgia are also less socially protected than male journalists. In Ukraine, there is low social protection among women and men because 40% of the respondents do not work under employment contracts which guarantee social protection. Instead, they occupy irregular positions without any social guarantees.

**14. Gender stereotypes (prejudice and old-fashioned norms) are tightly connected to gender discrimination because they are the basis of discriminatory practices towards not only women, but also men.** Apart from that, the issue of gender stereotypes is important within the framework of studying the media sector because there is danger that journalists might contribute to the reproduction and distribution of gender stereotypes and old-fashioned norms and rules in society; not necessarily consciously, but through the way they choose topics, the kind of comments they provide, as well as the general tone of the content they produce.

Within the study, we aspired to see common and specific aspects in the attitude of journalists and experts from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine towards gender stereotypes in media and society of the studied countries. The views of respondents who agree with the stereotypes were marked as “patriarchal” and those that were against stereotypes were marked as “progressive”.

The survey within the study has shown that journalists from Georgia, especially men, have the most progressive views on the role of women in the family and society. 87,0% of Georgian

male respondents and 71,7% of Georgian female respondents do not agree with the traditional views on the role of women.

Ukrainian female journalists (but not Ukrainian male journalists) also have progressive views on this issue. 77,0% of them think that the role of a woman should not be limited by family responsibilities. Russian journalists have the most patriarchal views: 64,9% of men and 58,2% of women share this point of view there.

The largest discrepancy among the views of female and male journalists on this stereotype was detected in Ukraine and Georgia. In Ukraine, only 23,0% of women supported it, but almost twice as much men did – 41,7%, to be exact. In Georgia, on the contrary, women's views turned out to be more conservative than men's. Only 13,0% of male journalists agreed with it, and more than twice as much of female journalists did (28,3%). In Moldova, Armenia and Russia almost equal numbers of female and male journalists were for and against the stereotype about the role of women in the family and at work.

In order to understand the reasons behind journalists from Russia having the most patriarchal views on the role of women, we conducted a brief analysis of Russian social politics on this issue. Gender politics has changed a number of times in Russia: from the official Soviet politics on the equality of women and men in society (which was written down in all of the Constitutions from the 1918 up to today) to the modern social politics within the framework of which gender equality is not eliminated, but in reality, there is a focus on preserving family values and traditions. The latest edition of the Constitution of the Russian Federation which has already been accepted by the State Duma, but has not been voted for by the national referendum yet, has a special point about “preserving traditional family values” (p. 114, part 1, point “c”).

And even though progressive journalists, as well as representatives of Russian science and

culture have stated that they were against such changes in the Constitution of the Russian Federation, it will probably have no impact on the situation. When it comes to the media politics, it is necessary to take into account that Russian journalistic community is heterogeneous: there are progressive journalists and a significant number of journalists who fulfil orders made by the government and distribute propaganda focused on the “traditional family values”. As our study has shown, more than half of respondents from Russia support the stereotype about the family being the main mission for women.

Apart from the stereotype about the role of women in the family, we have also studied two stereotypes about professional and family-related roles of men. The study has shown that when it comes to the statement that “for men, work is more important than family”, Georgian male and female journalists have demonstrated the most progressive views again. 94,5% of men and 74,6% of women said that the role of a man was not limited by work. In other countries, apart from Russia, the majority of respondents also share this position (from 67,9% in Moldova to 83,8% in Armenia). The answers provided by Russian journalists were once again heavily influenced by the old-fashioned views, but now they were about the role of men. Almost half of all respondents, both men and women, supported the conservative stereotype about work being the priority in the lives of men (48,8% of men and 56,3% of women).

The way journalists from different countries perceive the stereotype of a man as the breadwinner slightly differs from what is seen above. However, Georgian journalists had the more progressive views again: 86,1%, on average, did not support it. Meanwhile, Russian

journalists had the most traditional views again: 59,6%, on average, supported it. In Ukraine and Armenia, the majority of respondents (male and female) did not share this stereotype (from 66,7% among Ukrainian men to 79,7% among Armenian women). The largest discrepancy between views on the role of a man as the provider was discovered in Moldova, where more than half of male journalists (53,3%) share this stereotype, but two times less women support it (29,9%). It is possible to assume that male journalists demonstrate their attachment to the traditional myth, whereas women are realists who see that in current circumstances with low salaries, men cannot and should not aim to be breadwinners in families.

Since Russian journalists have demonstrated the most stereotypical views once again, it is possible to conclude that gender stereotypes about the roles of women and men in the family and at work are much deeper in Russia than in other studied countries.

***“ In three out of five studied countries, there are more men who occupy socially protected work positions in media than women.*”**

And finally, regarding two final stereotypes from the survey - that women basically do not tend to build careers and do not want to take responsibility

and be leaders - journalists (male and female) from all five countries have demonstrated the highest level of unity in their views and have not supported these stereotypes. The overwhelming majority of respondents from all studied countries (around 90%) have provided negative answers to the questions about these stereotypes. Apparently, when it comes to professional fulfilment of women, journalists from all countries were affected by real life that they see around themselves, especially in the feminised media sector, instead of conservative gender stereotypes. Thus, based on the results of the survey, it is possible to conclude

that under the influence of the real life, a lot of old-fashioned stereotypes and norms about the professional roles of women disappear from the minds and lives faster than those stereotypes that are connected to the social roles of women and men in the family.

#### **15. Gender aspects of choosing leaders and colleagues.**

The study has disproved a widespread stereotype that most employees prefer to have men as leaders and colleagues. In Moldova and Georgia, men and women were the most tolerant towards the gender of the potential (if they had such a choice) manager: more than 70% of male journalists and around 80% of female journalists said that it did not matter to them. In Russia, on the contrary, only 38,9% of female journalists and a little bit more than half of male journalists (51,8%) stated that gender of the leader did not matter to them. In Georgia, men and women (24,6% and 15,0%), and in Moldova, only men (23,3%) chose the female leader more often. The option to have a female leader was the least popular among female journalists from Moldova (5,9%) and Russia (9,6%), as well as male journalists from Russia (6,5%). The number of journalists of both genders who preferred to have a male leader was the highest in Russia (51,5% among women and 41,7% among men). To sum up this number mosaic about a potential manager, it is possible to conclude that the majority of journalists from all countries think that professionalism is the main trait of a leader in media, not gender.

When it comes to gender of colleagues, male and female respondents from all five countries demonstrated a high level of tolerance: 70% of them responded that the gender of their colleagues did not matter to them. It means that there is less and less space for gender stereo-

types in the teams in the media sector, and that for more and more journalists, gender of their colleagues does not matter.

**16. Sexual harassment at work was studied in terms of the personal experience of female and male journalists, and their ethical and professional evaluation of this phenomenon,** as well as the reflection of this issue in mass media of the studied countries.

Prior to analysing the discoveries of the study, it is necessary to mention that a significant event connected to this issue took place less than a year ago. In July 2019, Convention 190 aimed at eliminating violence and harassment at work was adopted at the International Labour Conference which was devoted to the

100th anniversary of the IOL. This Convention recognized “the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment”.

At the conference, 349 countries voted

for adopting Convention 190, including Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; 17 countries voted against it, and 34 countries abstained from voting, including Russia. The official IOL website does not have any information on Armenia’s vote.

The overwhelming majority (from 77% to 90%) of all respondents from the media sector in all studied countries has never experienced sexual harassment at work. However, when it comes to female journalists, the situation is less positive: a low number of sexual harassment cases has only been detected in Armenia (5,7%). The issue of sexual harassment at work is the most relevant and intense for female journalists in Russia and Ukraine where 1 in 4 women is familiar with it not by hearsay, but from personal experience (28,9% and 25,8% respective-

*“ Journalists have learnt how to write materials about sexual harassment, but they are not ready to discuss and solve this issue in their own journalistic organizations.”*

ly). The number of women who were sexually harassed at work is relatively high in Moldova (17,0% of women) and slightly lower in Georgia (12,5%). Thus, the survey has proved that women are the victims of sexual harassment in most cases.

There are two ways to explain the significant discrepancy between countries in this regard.

On the one hand, different countries do have different levels of professional culture at work and a different attitude towards women in society, in general. On the other hand, for example, in Russia and Ukraine, this issue is not taboo anymore due to particular circumstances. In Ukraine, it is the result of women and feminist organizations' work focused on counteracting harassment. In Russia, this topic stopped being suppressed after an incident among Russian media and the State Duma. As a result, female journalists reported this issue openly in the survey.

When asked who was guilty of sexual harassment, female journalists from all countries responded by choosing the option of those employees that occupy leadership roles more often than any other (30,5% in Ukraine, 28,6% in Georgia and Moldova, 24,1% in Russia).

Overall, the results of the study have shown that the journalistic profession is quite dangerous for women, because they risk being subjected to sexual harassment literally everywhere: by colleagues or superiors at the office, as well as while performing their professional duties. This is why it is necessary for the journalistic communities in all of the studied countries to find ways and mechanisms for protecting the rights and dignity of female journalists. The study has also included a question on the ethical and professional attitude of journalists towards sexual harassment in different countries.



Most journalists from all the studied countries believe that professionalism, not gender is the key characteristics for a leader in media. Foto: Anton Suryapin.

The overwhelming majority of respondents in all five countries (from 83,3% in Armenia to 98,0% in Moldova) perceive sexual harassment as a violation of human rights and personal dignity. Russian journalists see the issue of sexual harassment differently. One in 5 Russian male journalists (21,6%) does not see sexual harassment as a violation of human rights and personal dignity. Instead, they consider it to be a way to “make noise” in media outlets. Russian journalists chose this option in the survey 7 times more often than their colleagues in Georgia (3,5%). In Moldova and Armenia, not a single male respondent chose this option. Russian female journalists also expressed the opinion that sexual harassment is a way to “make noise” in media outlets more often (8,1%) than their female colleagues in Armenia (1,4%), Moldova (2,0%) and Ukraine (2,9%). There appears to be a contradiction between a high number of Russian journalists who mentioned sexual harassment in the survey and a relatively low level of understanding of this phenomenon as a human rights violation. Based on what we have seen in the Convention 190 developed by ILO, such an attitude to-

wards sexual harassment partially comes from the “top”. Probably, a number of Russian journalists who serve social orders of the government is relatively high even though progressive Russian media have a different opinion, as it has been demonstrated above.

Information that was gathered through in-depth interviews is an interesting and important supplement to the materials that were obtained through the survey on sexual harassment. According to the experts from Ukraine and Georgia, the biggest issue is that journalists have learnt how to write materials about sexual harassment, but they are not ready to discuss and solve this issue in their own journalistic organizations. In the opinion of the experts, the ongoing change in how sexual harassment is being presented in media outlets is the biggest accomplishment of the past few years: “Victim-blaming used to be widespread, women used to be described as “guilty”, but today, media outlets realize more and more that the victim is not guilty, the rapist is, the society is. The way the information is presented has changed”.

# Recommendations

The comparative study that took place in 2020 has shown that a significant part of issues that were discovered in the media sector of Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine are connected to the socio-economic and political situation. Thus, it has an impact on all women and men in all of these countries, not just those that are employed in the media sector.

Therefore, in order to provide gender equality in the societies of the studied countries, media employees need to promote this agenda through media and make solving these universal problems a priority:

- to facilitate gender equality in all areas of society's life and the state, and to create conditions for promoting women to the level where decisions are made;
- to facilitate the formation of a strong civil society, in the absence of which media outlets turn into a manipulation tool used by politico-economic elites;
- to facilitate freedom of speech and to provide a higher level of independence of media from the influence of government and business;
- to assist adopting, promoting and implementing ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment (190).

It is impossible to solve universal problems without initiative and activity on other levels. It is difficult to exaggerate the role that media outlets can play in this process. The advantage of the comparative study is that it allowed us to discover issues related to gender inequality that are common for all of the studied countries, as well as find out about initiatives

that are focused on solving them that are already implemented at individual media outlets.

The experience of Ukrainian journalistic organizations in promoting women at media organizations and female experts covering significant events in media is especially valuable. Thus, it is advisable for journalistic communities and organizations in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Russia to study and adopt the experience of their Ukrainian colleagues focused on achieving non-discrimination and gender equality in media:

- to develop documents on female leadership and to write down particular steps towards eliminating discriminatory barriers on the path to career growth for women and add them into organizational and editorial policies (the experience of StarLightMedia that developed "10 principles of female leadership");
- to create databases of women who are experts not only in culture and welfare, but also in politics, digital economics, industrial sector, information and communication technology, financial sector, army, etc; and then promote these experts in media in order to cover relevant and significant events (the experience of a female media organization "Povaga" that developed a database "Ask a woman", and that is involved in promoting female experts in media outlets).

The strategies that would facilitate the elimination of gender inequality and could be realized on the level of professional

# Recommendations

journalistic organizations and communities in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, can include the following:

- to inform media employees of the studied countries about the results of this study and the identified common and specific issues of the employees within the media sector through websites of the journalistic organizations of these countries;
- to organize roundtables, workshops, discussion platforms and forums online in order to discuss issues of gender inequality, identified in the comparative study;
- to organize workshops and training programs, aimed at teaching methods of social and labour rights defense, studying labour legislation, and enabling a successful achievement of an individual and collective defense of rights in the field of social and labour relations;
- to facilitate sharing and promoting role models represented by successful women who built their careers in politics, science, business and other sectors - by using traditional and digital media;
- taking into account the important role that self-organisation and self-regulation plays for journalists, editorial teams should organise special educational events focused on teaching journalists how to write tolerant texts that do not include discrimination and gender stereotypes, in other words
  - to teach journalists how to create non-discriminatory content;
- to create a framework, possibly within the ethics commissions that already exist, where female journalists could submit complaints regarding sexual harassment at work to protect their rights and dignity;
- to organize informative and educational events and campaigns, aimed at gender education for the population, including by clarifying the role and the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes on all aspects of family and social life of men and women;
- to promote the ideas of gender equality in society, media must begin with themselves by developing and writing down gender equality and non-discrimination policies for their organizations and editorial teams aimed at eliminating barriers on the path to women's career growth, sexual harassment at work, as well as other issues regarding gender equality.

# Summary of the study in Belarus

Fojo Media Institute's study "Gender in the Media Landscape of Belarus" was conducted in 2016 in order to analyze the gender balance in media and the extent to which the media content is gender sensitive. Since the study was conducted with a different methodology, its results were not used for the comparative analysis this year. You can find its short summary below. The author of this study is Elena Jerzdeva.

The report on "Gender in the Belarusian Media Landscape" was undertaken to inform actors in the local media industry of the current status on gender equality in Belarus media and to shed light on the relative position of women in the industry. Furthermore, the study examines gender representation in media networks and other professional bodies, as well as the level of gender sensitivity in media content.

## **This research collected data in the following ways:**

- A questionnaire completed by 94 people working in the media, of which 60 percent were women
- 4 gender-mixed focus groups in different regions of the country.
- 10 in-depth interviews with both male and female journalists.

## **The main issues of the research were:**

- The representation of women in the media, including in leading positions.
- The problems in combining work and family obligations.
- Providing gender equality in the workplace
- Sexual harassment and threats in the workplace.
- Possibilities for education and career.
- The media representation of different genders.

## **Key findings**

- In Belarus, both men and women have equal possibilities to study journalism.

However, it is women who mainly study journalism, further promoting the feminization of the profession.

- Due to the patriarchal nature of family structures, it is difficult for female journalists to acquire leading positions in the media due to the necessity in combining family and work responsibilities. This means women are working "double or triple", as they try to balance family demands whilst simultaneously pursuing a full-time career.
- Belarus legislation supports the merging of family and work obligations, but is proving much harder in practice. Social conventions provide many obstacles in putting this lifestyle into full effect, with the lack of paternity leave being one such example.
- In Belarus more than 70 percent of those working in the media are women. The number of women producing media content is increasing.
- Women are well represented in middle management positions, but men still dominate positions at the highest level, with the highest wages.
- Journalism is a low-income profession in Belarus. Many journalists, both men and women, must take on extra jobs in order to provide the necessities for their families.
- Journalism is not considered a prestigious profession – wages are low and it is difficult to realize ambitions. This is why men are leaving this area; journalism is becoming an industry in which mostly women work.

- Whilst the average wage for men and women in Belarus is the same, women mostly acquire low-income jobs. Instead, male journalists attain the well-paid jobs due to social structures impacting equal gender opportunities.
- Only 22 percent of female journalists consider their chances of employment and career “good”.
- Pregnancy and maternity leave are not obstacles for a career. Many women continue to work at home, reducing job hours. 60 percent of female journalists said that their employer helps them “well” or “very well” when they return to work after maternity leave.
- Gender discrimination is forbidden in Belarus. However, when applying for jobs female journalists with children are discriminated against more than male applicants with children. This is due to women being considered the primary caretakers of children.
- More than 20 percent of the female journalists were subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace. The culprits were mostly people the journalist had come into contact with whilst carrying out their professional duties.
- More than 90 percent of the editorial offices lack policies that counteract sexual harassment, or provide channels to report it.
- Both women and men are well represented in the trade unions.
- More than half of the interviewees claim that the media environment they work in does not have a gender policy.
- Addressing various social, cultural, educational and environmental problems are the most common topics covered by female journalists.
- However, the share of content produced by female journalists that deals with politics and economics is starting to increase.
- Women are seldom portrayed as experts on economics and politics in the news.
- The images of men and women in Belarusian mass media encourage the preservation of gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms in family life.
- In the media women are often either referred to in sexual terms or as mothers, as the “custodians of the family hearth”.
- Belarusian media mostly describe gender identity and family dynamics in a normative manner. The society of LGBTQI is rarely portrayed in the media. On those few occasions, portrayals are often deeply embedded with prejudice.
- The language in Belarusian media (and in the Belarusian society in general) is male-oriented.
- Many journalists are themselves ingrained with different stereotypical characteristics which are likely to be projected into media content.
- Misogynistic statements were common also among female participants in the focus groups, this indicates that also female media professionals carry harmful gendered stereotypes that might affect the media content.
- Many of the interviewees think there are no gender problems in Belarus, or that gender problems exist but are not as critical as the current economic or political problems the Belarusian society face.
- Most of the female and male journalists take part in professional training activities. Almost 80 percent of the interviewees underline the fact their employers give them the possibility to take courses or improve their knowledge. These possibilities are equal for both female and male journalists.
- Training courses mainly concern journalist skills. Only 20 percent of the interviewees have attended training concerning gender problems and many had not heard of such courses.
- Most of the participants from the focus groups think that training concerning gender sensitive content is important and useful.