

## **Journalists' Trade Union of Azerbaijan (JuHI)**

### **announced the final report on journalists' social condition in Azerbaijan for 2014**

**JuHI Press Release. BAKU, January 12, 2015.** The Journalists' Trade Union of Azerbaijan (JuHI) has completed its investigation on journalists' social condition in Azerbaijan for 2014. **Mushfig Alasgarli, Chairman of JuHI** stated that the survey was conducted among 25 national newspapers, 5 information agencies, 5 news portals, as well as 10 weekly newspaper (7 regional, 3 national), 5 TV Channels (3 regional and 2 national) that have potentialities to influence on public opinion and stable circulation (**in total 50 editorials were covered**).

Participants of the inquiry answered the questions related to their **monthly incomes; legalization of labour contracts; undergoing of social and health insurance, as well as the journalists' challenges** and so on.

The following results were achieved:

#### **1) On daily newspapers, information agencies and national broadcasting TV channel:**

- Improvement was observed in the process of signing individual labour contracts with employees: in 97% editorials the individual labour contract is applied. In comparison with the previous year it increased for 2%/. But it doesn't mean that the labour contract is applied in all editorials. Averagely in best case, only 60% of collaborators in editorials have labour contract, and the remained 40% employees are acting without labour contract according to verbal agreement between the owners and employees.

The amendments made in the Labour Code according to Decree signed on February 3, 2014 on legalization of labour relations through Electronic Information System, and this document is considered as the successful step of last years made in this field. According to this amendment an employee will be able to get information from the Electronic Information System on how long the owner provides his/her labour rights and how he/she can protect his/her labour rights.

- The symbolic essence of labour contracts is the actual problem of 2014; in majority of editorials the labour contract is failing to indicate the realities on salary and other related issues;

- The health insurance is not implemented or it is at the minimum level; only in 2 editorial offices health checking up campaign is applied.

#### **2) In comparison with previous years, serious salary increase is observed in journalism:**

a) Monthly earn of journalists working for national broadcasting TV channels, information agencies, daily newspapers and popular news portals reached 500-600AZN (93% of interviewees) (1AZN is approximately 1Euro). Few of the interviewees in this category (2%) get 350-450 AZN; and the remained part (5%) earn 600-700 AZN and more.

It should be stated that it was increased for 15% in comparison with the previous year.

b) Increase of journalists' monthly income working for national weekly newspapers was symbolic in comparison with the previous year. The average monthly income of journalists falling under this category varies between 250-300AZN.

- **Situation in the regions:**

Serious increase in monthly income of journalists working for regional broadcasting companies and newspapers is not registered.

a) The average monthly income of journalists working for regional newspapers is 150-250 AZN.

b) Monthly income of regional journalists and regional representatives working for regional broadcasting TV channels varies as 250-400AZN.

Minimum standard of living in Azerbaijan for 2014 is 125AZN.

**3) The interviewees expressed their opinions on some factors positively influencing on journalists' social situation in 2014:**

- Through the contest for individual journalists' works organized by the State Support Fund for the Development of Mass Media Means under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan many journalists were awarded with honorarium and this is the main factor positively influencing on journalists' social situation. It should be stated that due to the award received from the State Support Fund for the Development of Mass Media Means almost 336 journalists could earn additional material income.

- The other positive point in media sector is increase of new job places or keeping the existed job places. The tendency started in 2011-2012 was also continued in 2014.

- Journalists also were among those who were pardoned due to the Decree signed by the President of the Azerbaijan Republic and this act is among the factors that had great sympathy with the journalists.

**4) Interviewees underlined the most important challenges disturbing them. The urgent problems are the followings:**

- Impose the medical insurance;
- Access to information sources is not satisfied; unprofessional activity of information service at certain official bodies;
- Problems related to protection of copyright;
- Insufficient number of trainings on improvement of professionalism among journalists;
- Suppression of activities of “Ayna-Zerkalo” newspaper, “Mediaforum” news website and Liberty Radio Station Baku Office in 2014 are the issues that the journalists concerned about.

*For more information, please contact **Mushfig Alasgarli, Chairman of JuHI***

*Email: [mushfig.juhi@gmail.com](mailto:mushfig.juhi@gmail.com)*

*Tel: [+994 50-324-6530](tel:+994503246530)*

**JuHI Press Service**