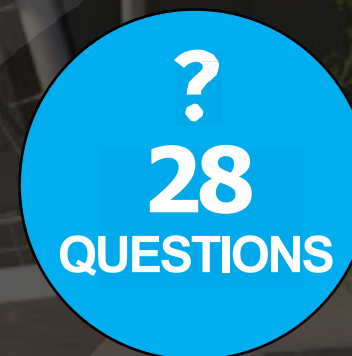


REGIONAL LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH - 2023 -



infostud.



REGIONALNI
SAJAM POSLOVA



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Dear partners,

Another regional job fair is behind us. I am pleased that you took advantage of this unique opportunity to showcase and highlight your company while contributing to addressing the employment challenges in times of economic stagnation that we currently face. The report before you summarizes the key activities and outcomes of your engagement at this event, all aimed at attracting talented candidates and enhancing the recognition of your company as an employer.

In the context of pervasive economic challenges, job fairs represent a golden opportunity for companies not only to find potential new team members but also to stand out as attractive employers. Your initiative to actively participate in such an event is undoubtedly indicative of the high awareness you possess regarding specific market circumstances and the need for a long-term strategic approach to recruitment and branding.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for the trust you have placed in us with your participation. Especially in these times, partnerships based on trust hold particular significance. We remain open, as always, to all your ideas and suggestions to continuously improve the support we provide to you.

Sincerely,



Sonja Četković
Director of Infostud



The Regional Labour Market Report is a comprehensive study conducted to understand the expectations of candidates from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and North Macedonia regarding employers. The research provides insights into the habits and expectations of candidates on key employment and work-related topics. The regional nature of the study allows for comparisons of differences and similarities in the expectations of respondents across the five participating countries. This year's report includes questions related to contemporary topics in advanced technology, particularly artificial intelligence and its impact on the labour market.

Leading job websites from the five countries in the region participated in data collection: **Poslovi Infostud (Serbia), MojPosao (Croatia), MojPosao.ba (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Deloglasnik (Slovenia) i Vrabotuvanje.com.mk (North Macedonia)**. The research was conducted during the largest online Regional Job Fair from October 24th to 31st. **Data was exclusively collected online through various channels: social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram), candidate newsletters from the mentioned job websites, banners, and notifications on these websites, as well as through the online platform of the Job Fair itself.**

The research was conducted as a standard opinion poll consisting of 29 questions, with specific groups of questions focusing on three demographic groups of respondents: employed individuals, unemployed individuals, and those who are currently still studying.



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR





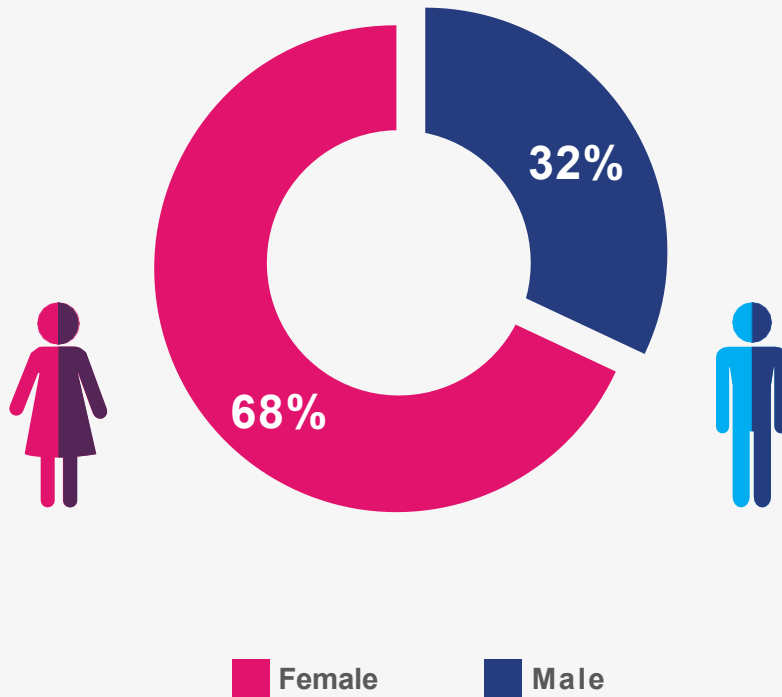
DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS



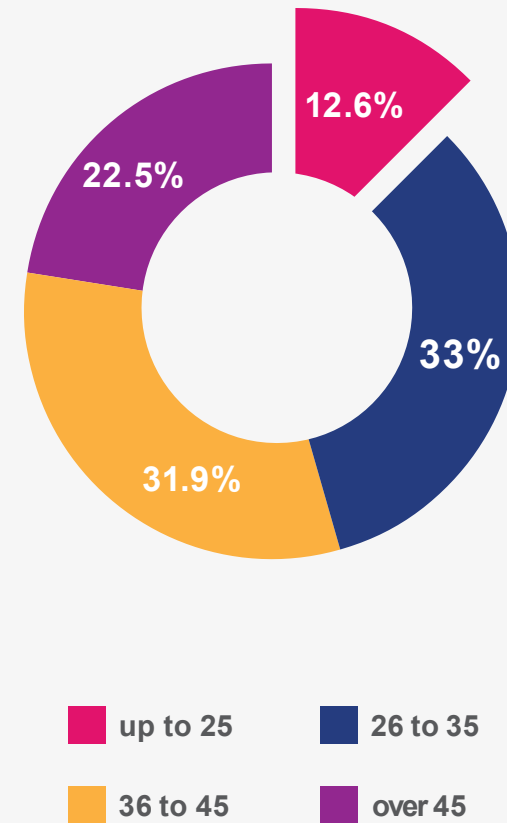
REGIONAL
JOB FAIR



Gender

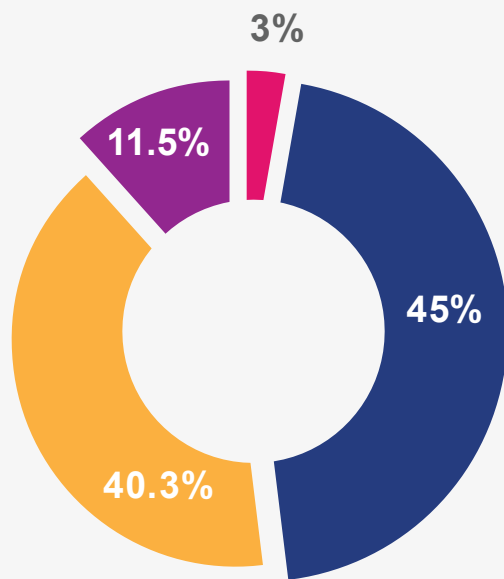


Age



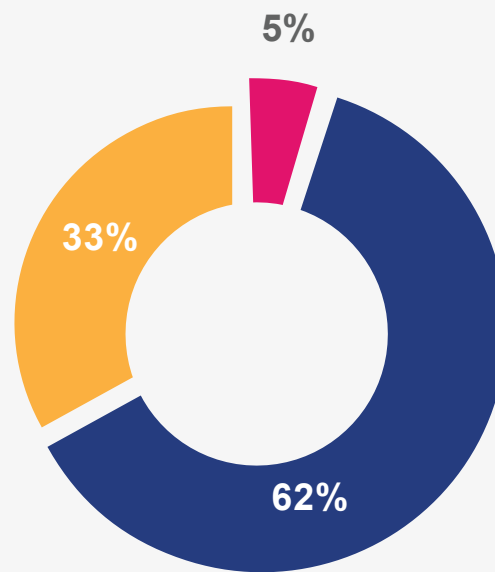


Education



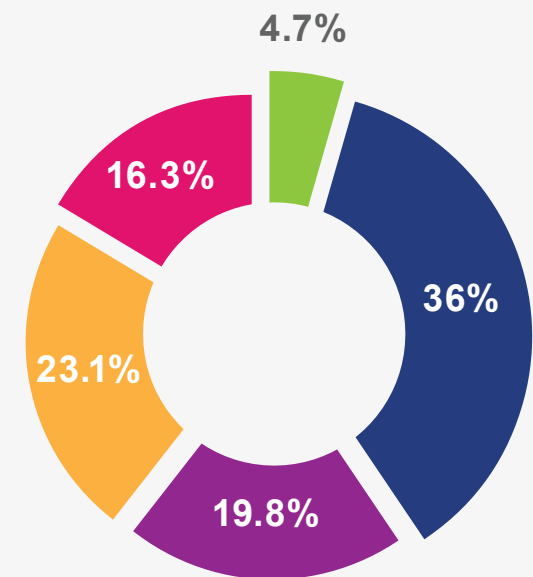
- Completed secondary school
- Completed higher education or University
- Completed primary school
- Master's degree doctorate

Employment status



- Employees in a company / self-employed
- Unemployed
- Still studying pupil/student

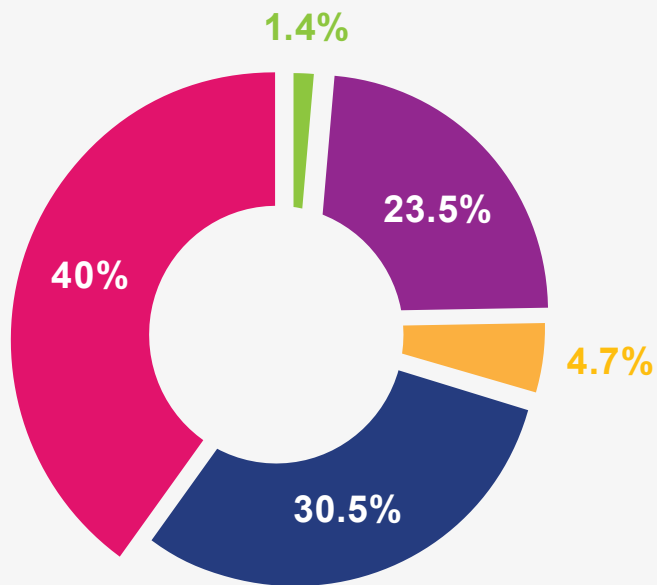
Position



- Operational
- Expert / specialist
- Administrative
- Lower and middle management
- Senior management / owner

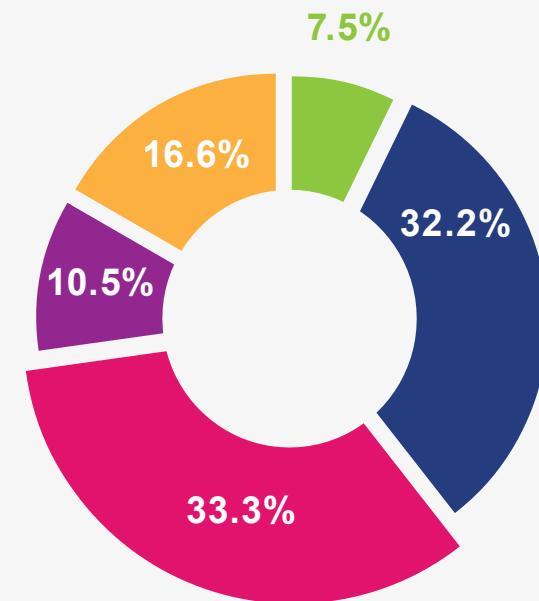


Countries



- Serbia
- Croatia
- N. Macedonia
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Slovenia

Regions in Serbia



- Belgrade and the surrounding area
- Vojvodina
- Eastern and Southern Serbia
- Central Serbia
- Western Serbia



RESULTS

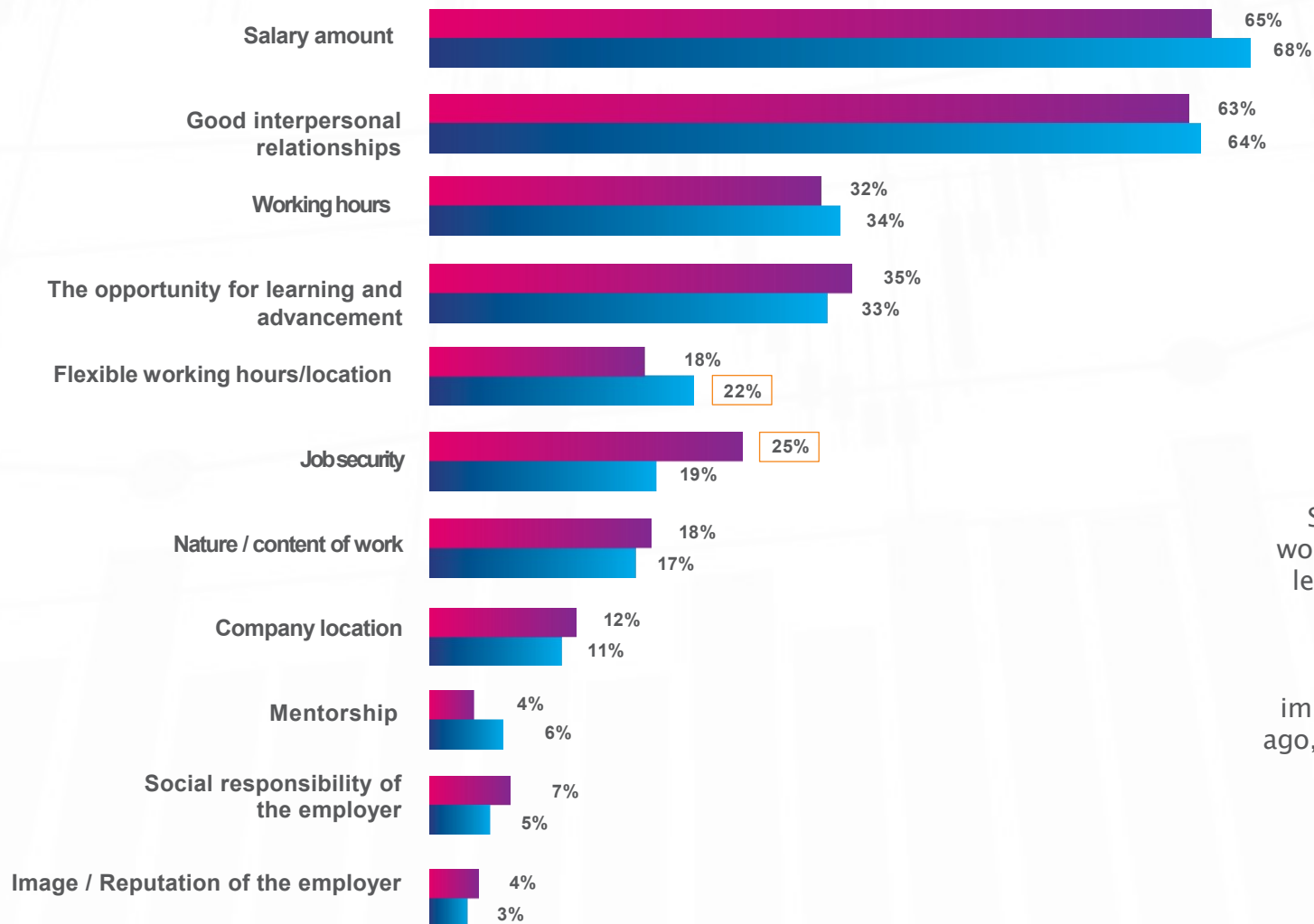
– ALL RESPONDENTS –



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR

 Serbia, 2023 vs. 2022

 What is most important to you at work / when choosing an employer?




Salary, interpersonal relationships, working hours, and opportunities for learning and advancement continue to be the most crucial factors.

Flexible working hours are more important now than they were a year ago, whereas job security has become less important.

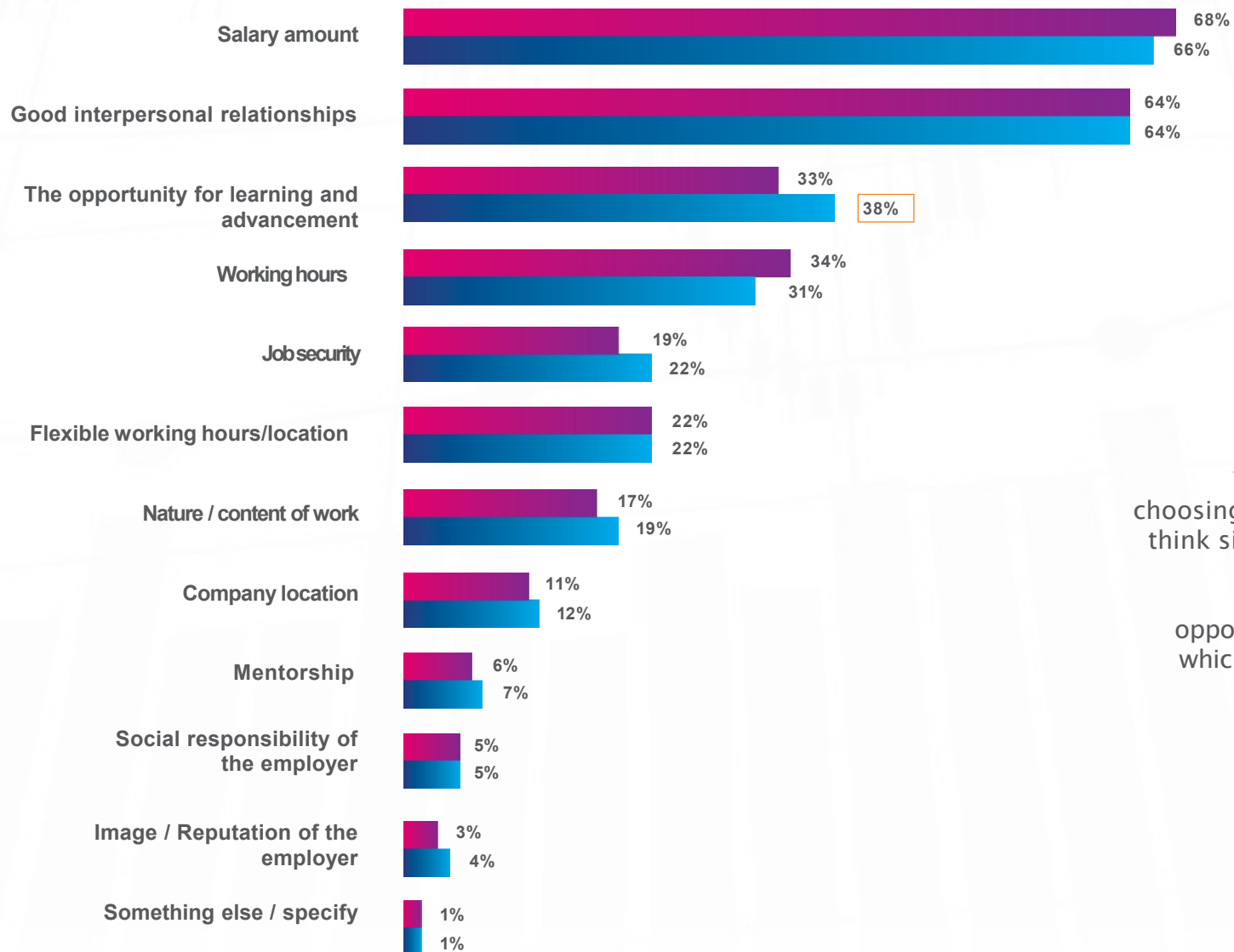
 Serbia 2022.

 Serbia 2023.

 Statistically significantly higher, at a 95% confidence level

 Region vs. Serbia


 What is most important to you at work / when choosing an employer?



There are no differences in criteria for choosing an employer; candidates from Serbia think similarly to candidates from the region.

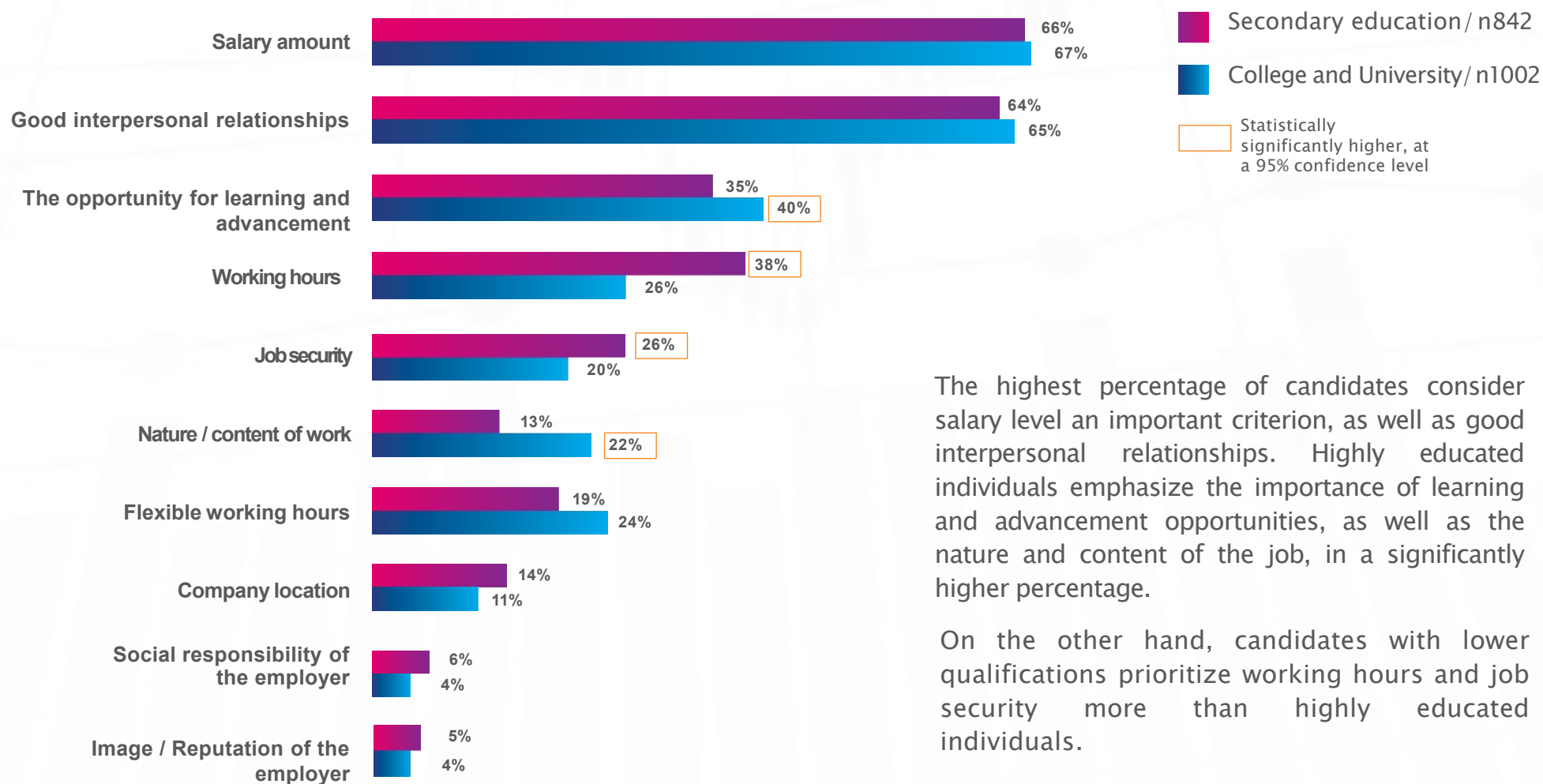
The only difference is in the criterion of opportunities for learning and advancement, which candidates from Serbia mention more than those from the region.

 Region
 Serbia

 Statistically significantly higher, at a 95% confidence level

 Education - Serbia

 What is most important to you at work / when choosing an employer?

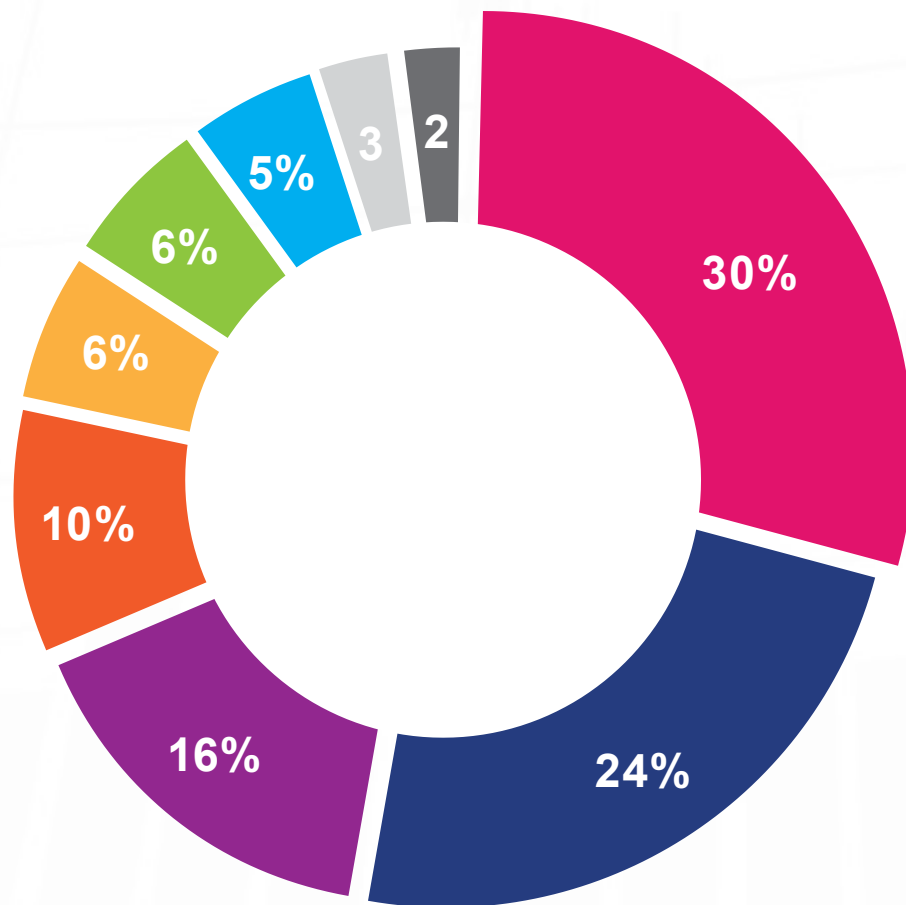











The highest percentage of candidates consider salary level an important criterion, as well as good interpersonal relationships. Highly educated individuals emphasize the importance of learning and advancement opportunities, as well as the nature and content of the job, in a significantly higher percentage.

On the other hand, candidates with lower qualifications prioritize working hours and job security more than highly educated individuals.

 Serbia

 What do you consider crucial for getting a job?



-  The knowledge and skills I possess
-  Motivation and willingness to work
-  Work experience
-  Good contacts and acquaintances
-  Political party affiliation
-  Good luck
-  Recommendation of influential people from the profession
-  Formal education
-  Something else

The knowledge and skills the candidate possesses, along with the motivation and willingness to be employed, are the two most important aspects – 30% and 24%, respectively, mention these two aspects as the most crucial.

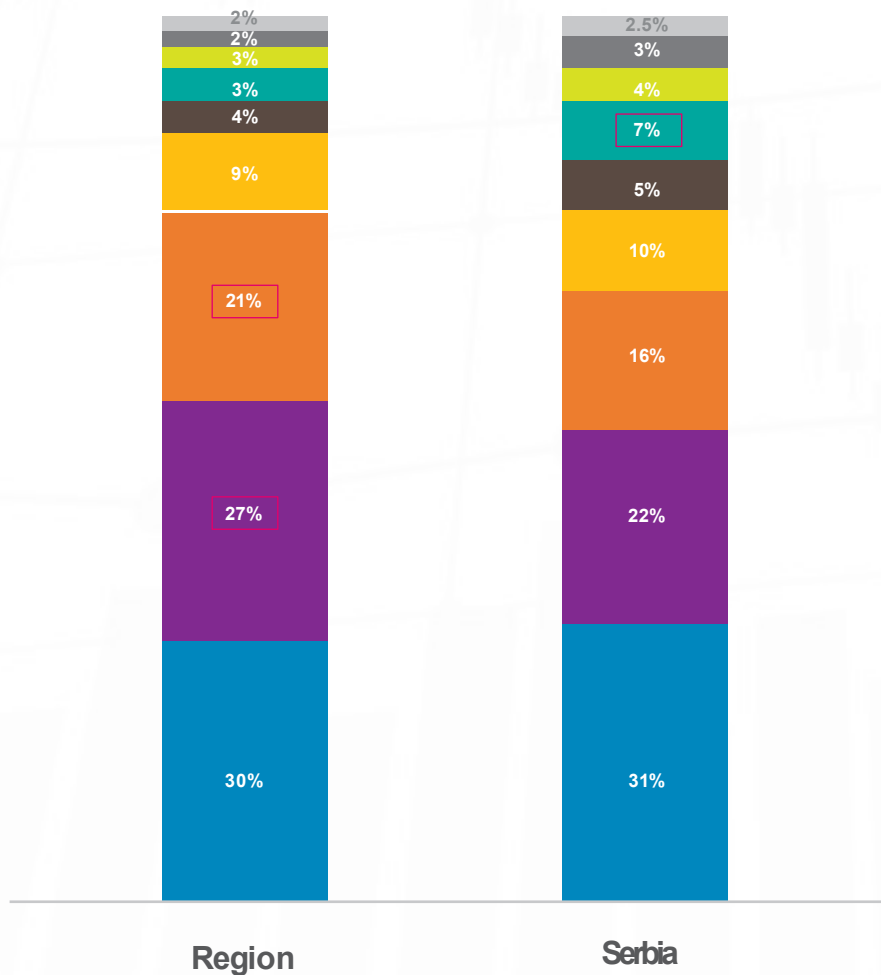
16% mention work experience, while 10% mention good contacts and acquaintances.



Region vs. Serbia



What do you consider crucial for getting a job?



- The knowledge and skills I possess
- Motivation and willingness to work
- Work experience
- Good contacts and acquaintances
- Good luck
- Political party affiliation
- Recommendation of influential people from the profession
- Formal education
- Something else

Statistically significantly higher, at a 95% confidence level

The knowledge and skills candidates possess are at the same level both in the region and in Serbia, with 30% considering this the most important factor for getting a job.

This is followed by motivation and willingness (less prevalent in Serbia as an answer), work experience (also less important in Serbia than in the region), and good contacts and acquaintances. In Serbia, political party affiliation is more frequently mentioned as an important criterion.



EXPECTED SALARY



Serbia



In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?

**Average salary
in Serbia**

990 eur



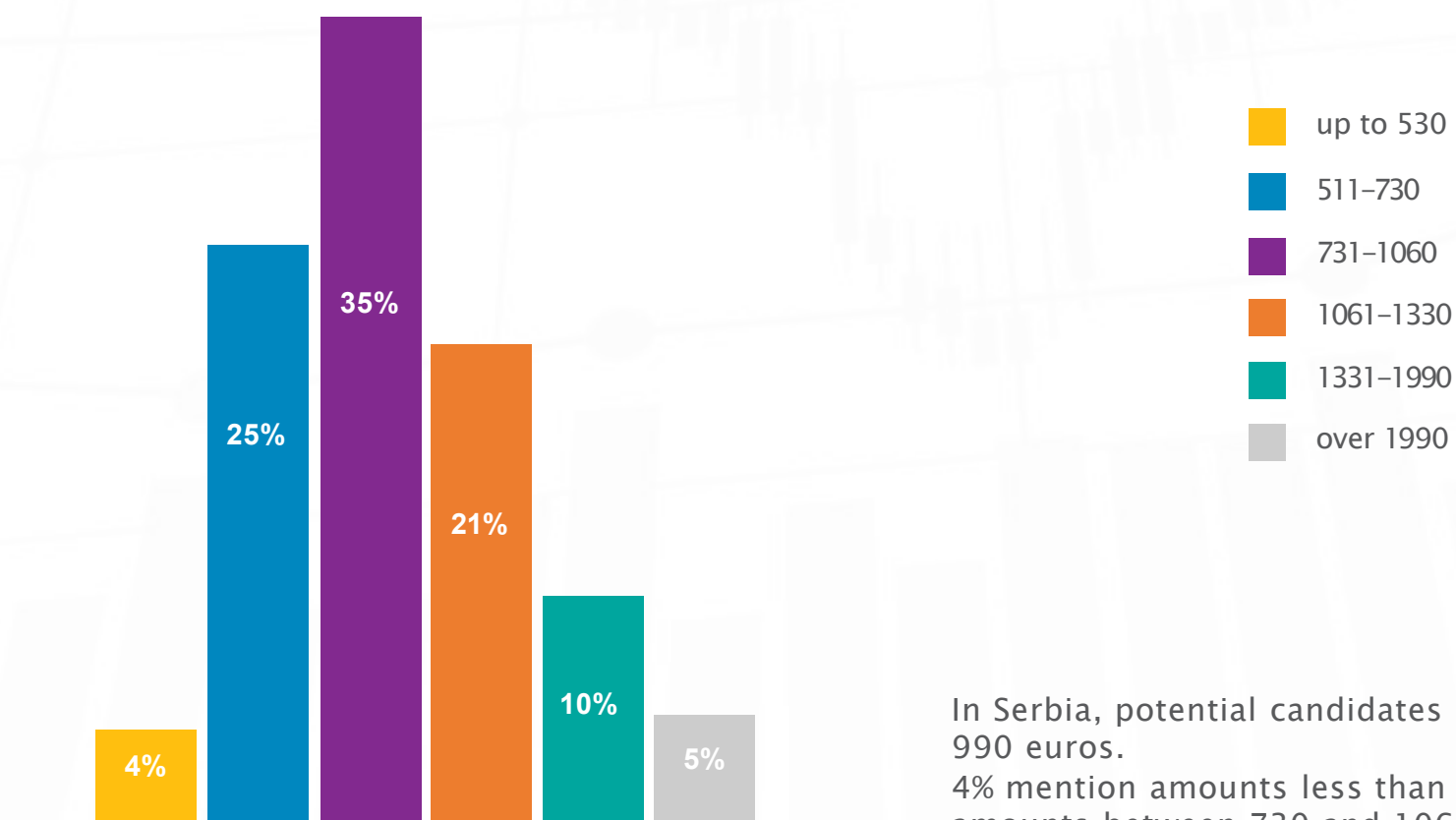
REGIONAL
JOB FAIR



Serbia



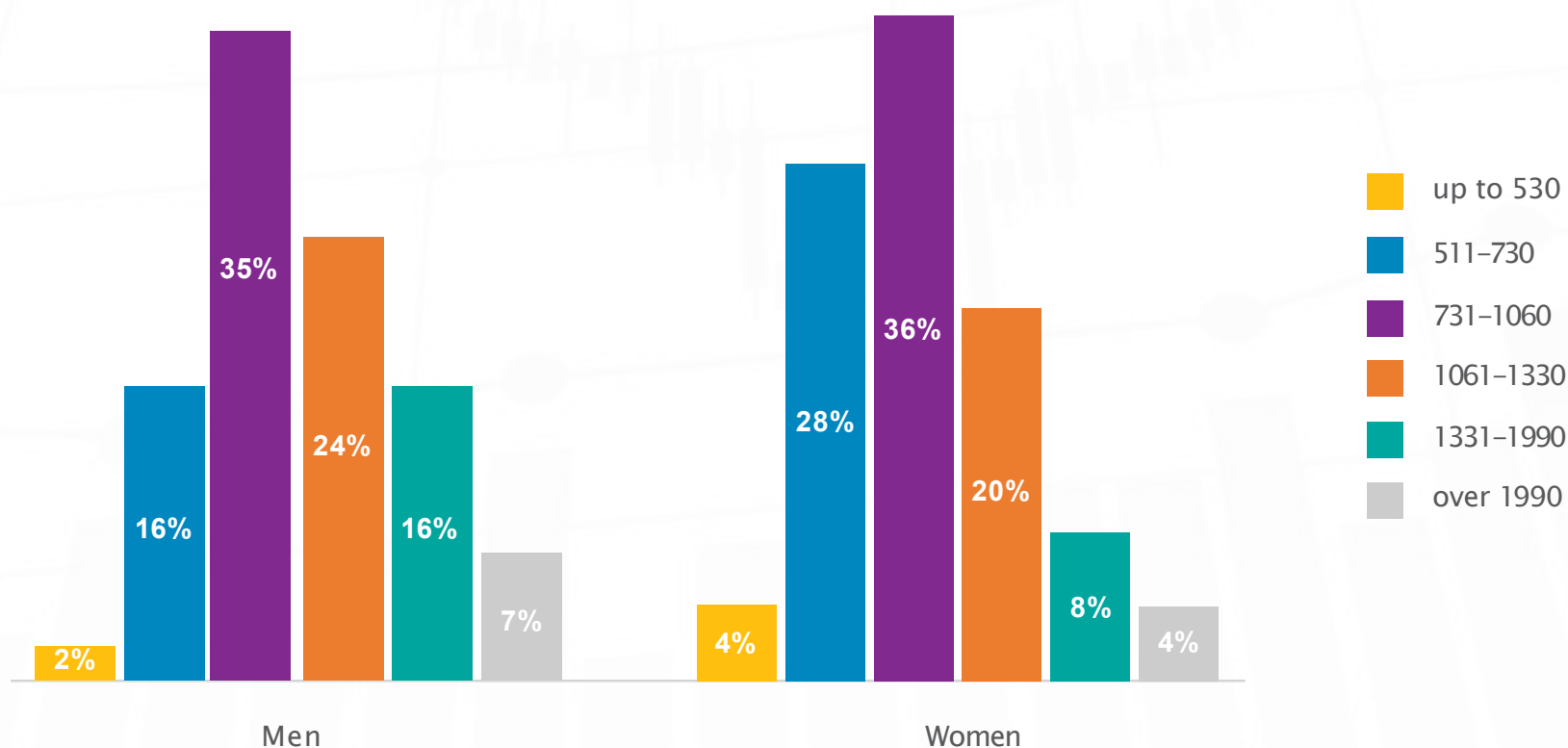
In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?



In Serbia, potential candidates expect an average salary of 990 euros. 4% mention amounts less than 520 euros, while 35% expect amounts between 730 and 1060 euros. Over 2000 euros is expected by 5% of candidates

 Gender- Serbia

 In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?



In Serbia, the average expected salary is 990 euros. Men have higher expectations than women – on average, men expect earnings of around 1100 euros, while women expect an average salary of about 930 euros.

In other words, a higher percentage of women expect a salary below 700 euros (32% vs. 18%), while more men anticipate a salary above 1300 euros (23% vs. 12%).

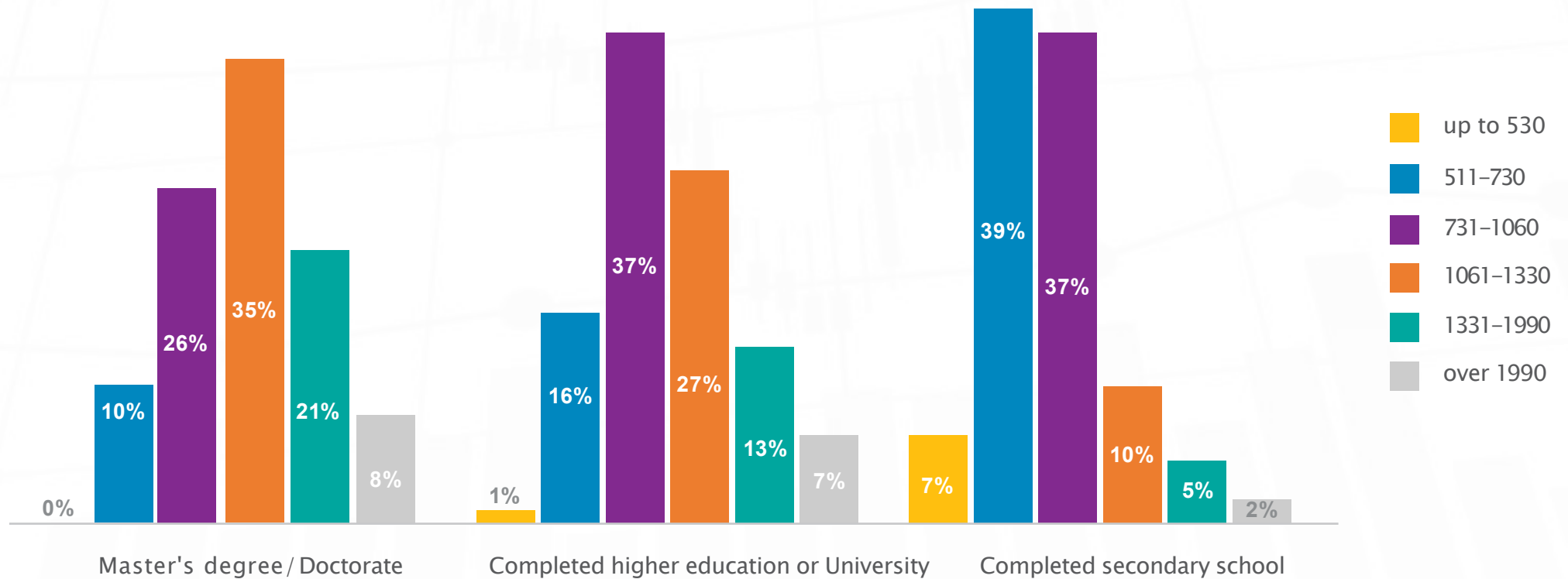
EXPECTED SALARY



Education
Serbia



In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?



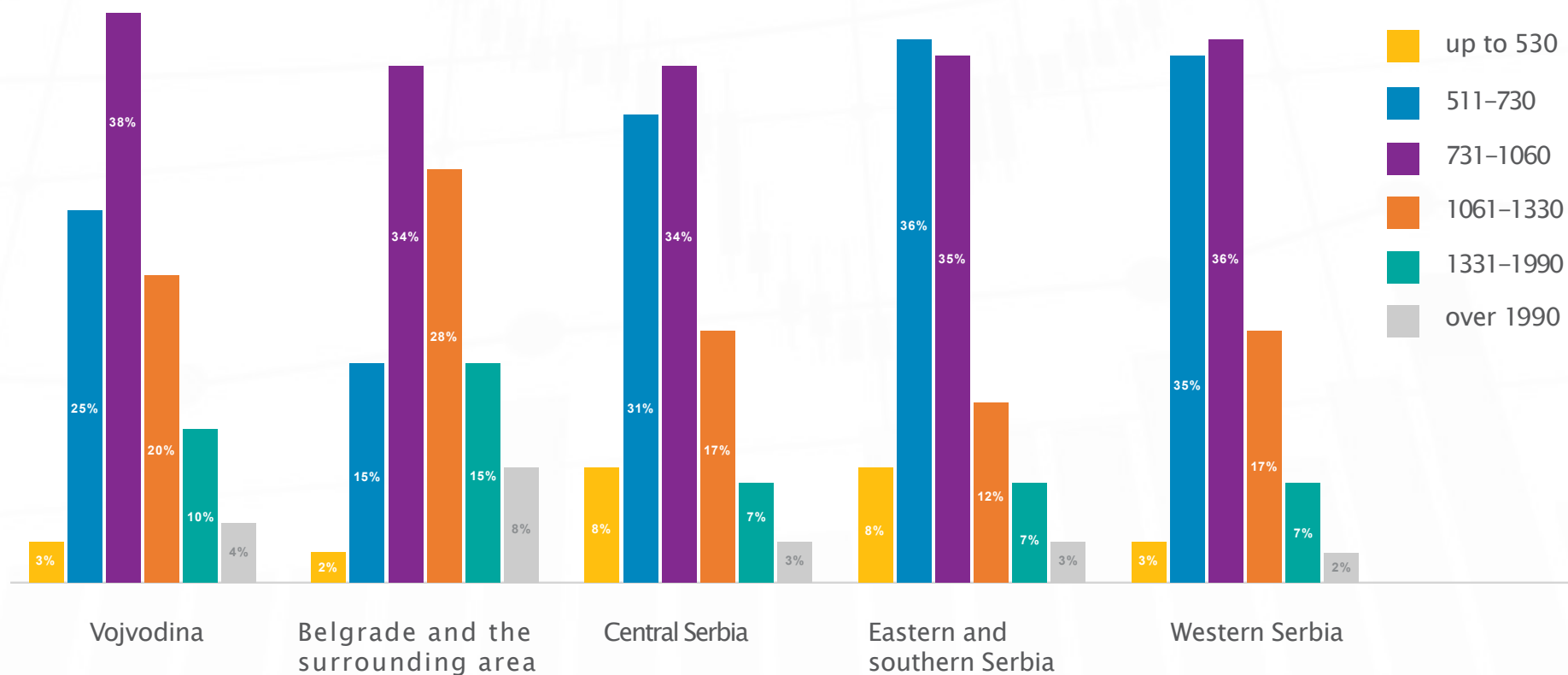
When it comes to education, there are no major surprises.
Those with higher education (as well as higher positions) have higher salary expectations.



Serbia and its regions



In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?



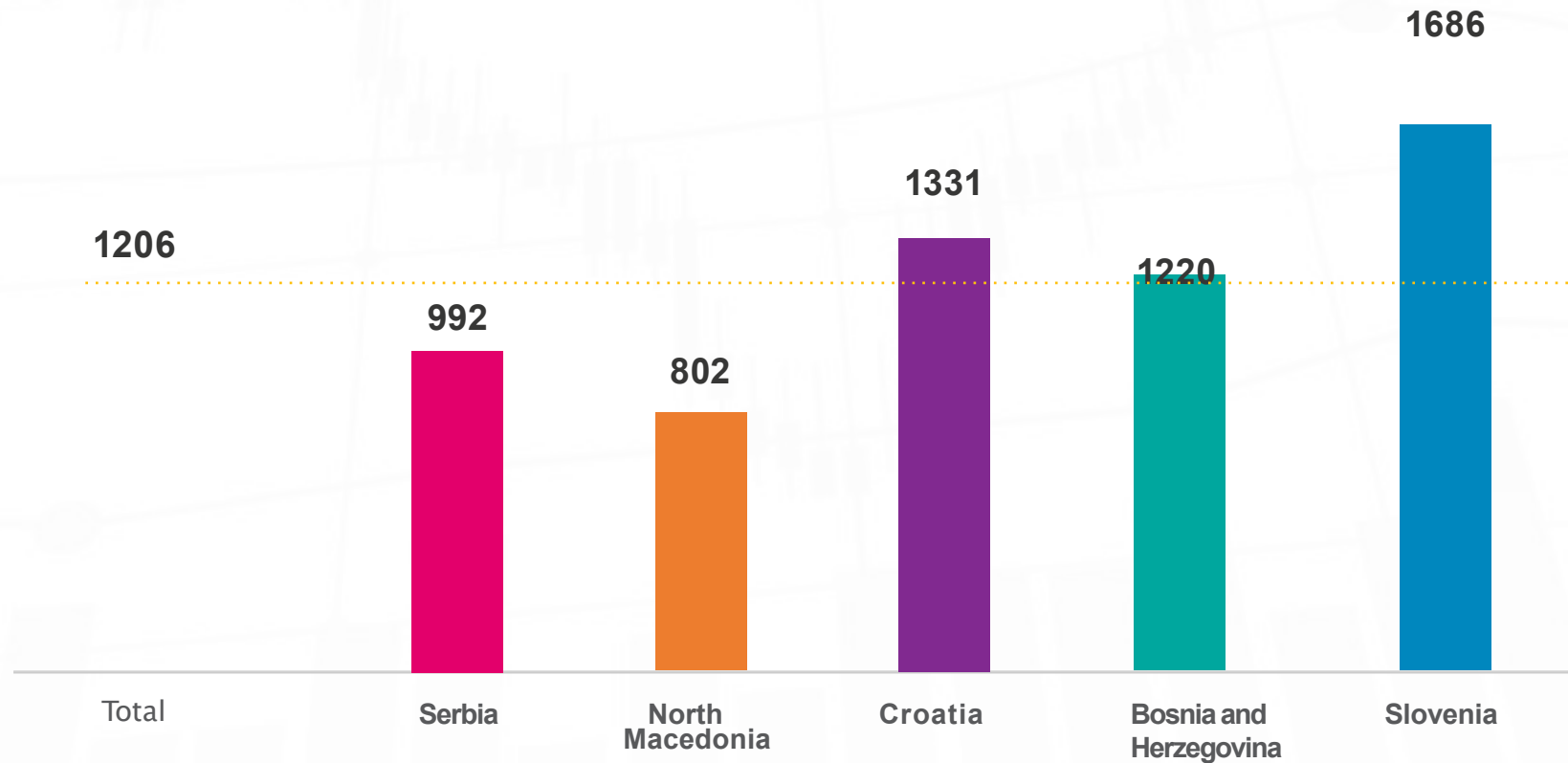
Similar to previous findings, this research also observed varying expectations among respondents based on the region they live in within Serbia. The highest expectations are in Belgrade, followed by Vojvodina.



Region



In your opinion, what should be the monthly net salary for your position?



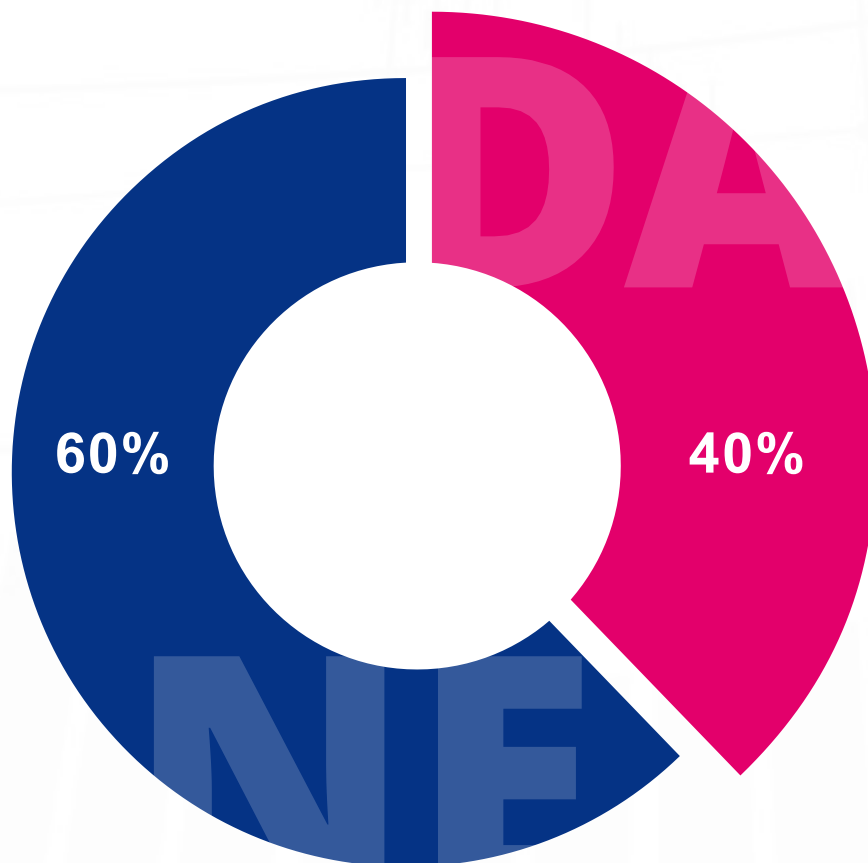
On average, candidates in Slovenia have the highest expectations, around 1700 euros on average. On the other hand, the lowest expectations are in North Macedonia, 802 euros. Croatia is closest to Slovenia, with an average expected salary of 1330 euros, followed closely by Bosnia and Herzegovina with 1200, while candidates from Serbia are at the threshold of 1000 euros on average.



Serbia



Have you changed (found) a job in the past two years, since the beginning of the COVID epidemic?



40% of respondents state they have changed or found a job in the last year and a half.

Regarding the region, 44% of employed individuals in Croatia have changed jobs. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there has been the least turnover, with 34% changing jobs.



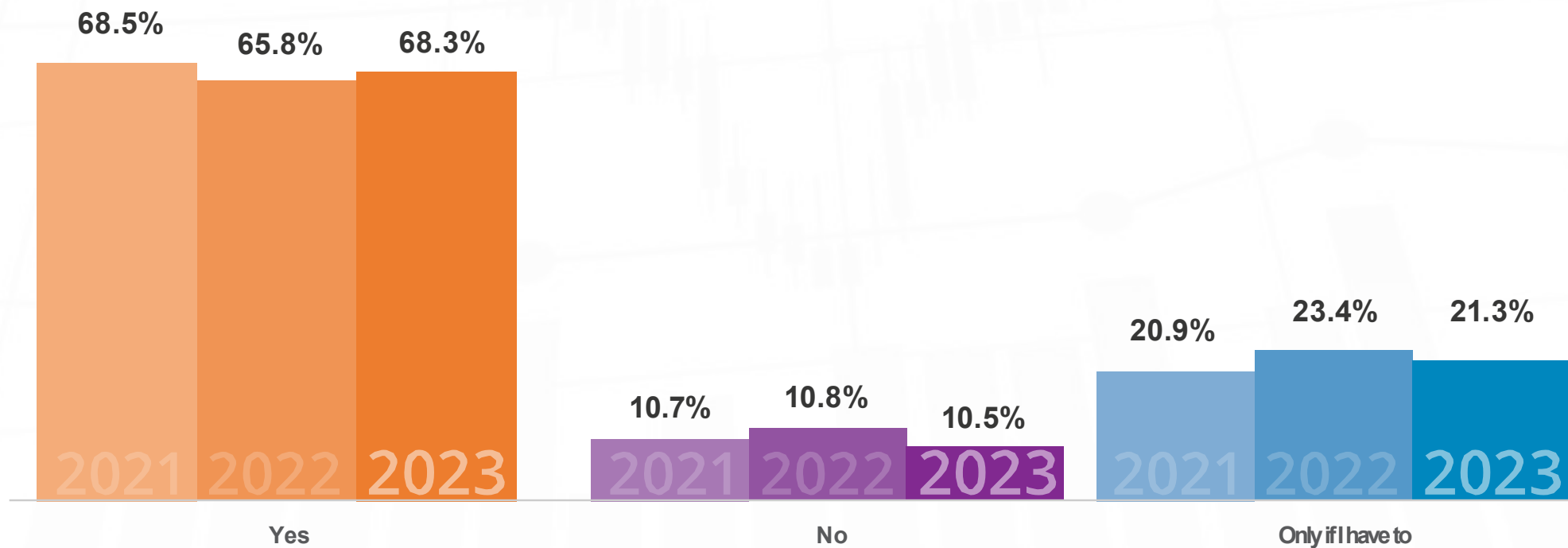
EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR

 Serbia, 2023 vs. 2022 vs. 2021

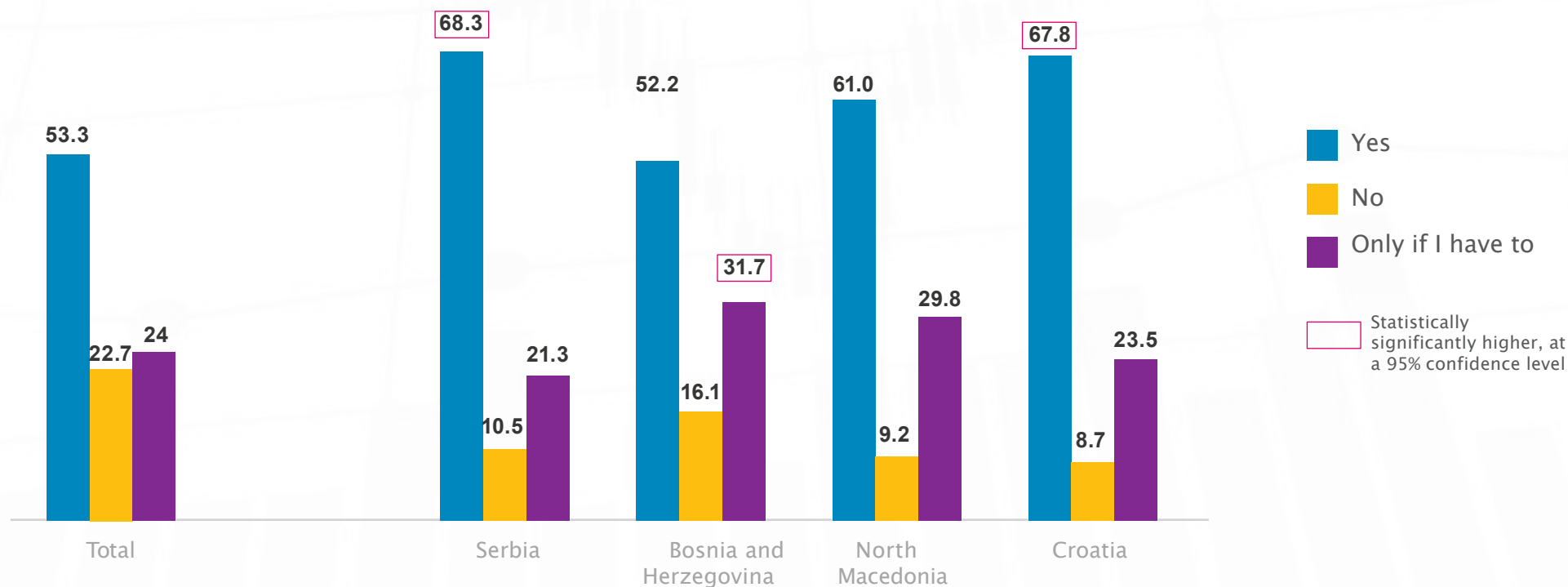
 Are you planning to change jobs in the next year?



2 out of 3 employed candidates plan to change jobs in the next year, as in previous years.

 Region vs. Serbia

 Are you planning to change jobs in the next year?

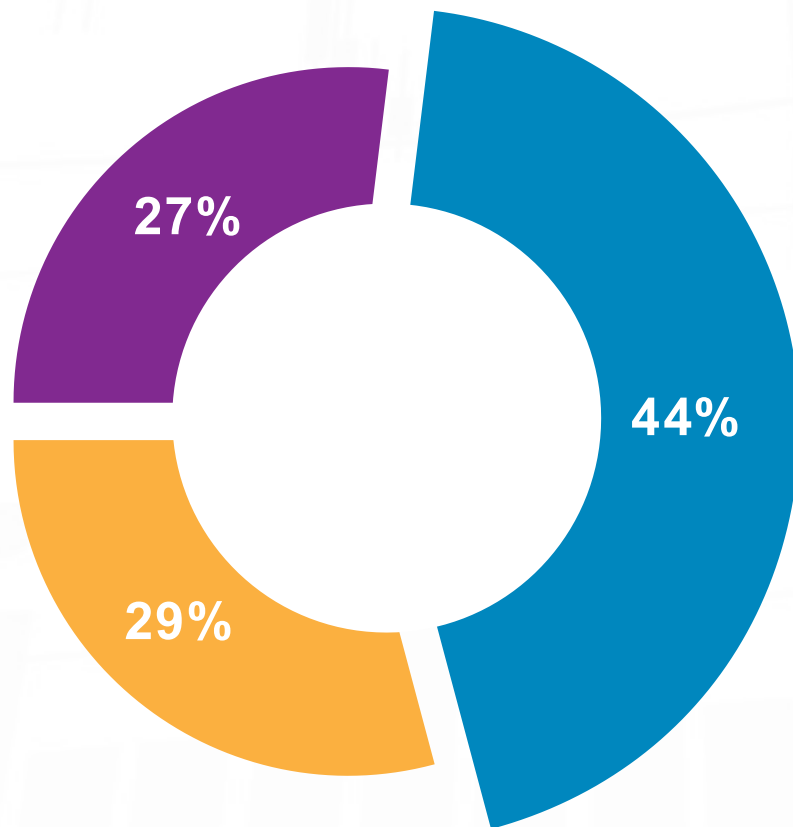


In Serbia and Croatia, there are more candidates considering a job change in the next year than in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia.

On the other hand, they differ in terms of the impression that they will only change jobs if forced to do so; more candidates say so in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia, indicating that there are more options in Croatia and Serbia.

 Serbia

 Are you afraid of potentially losing your job in the next year?

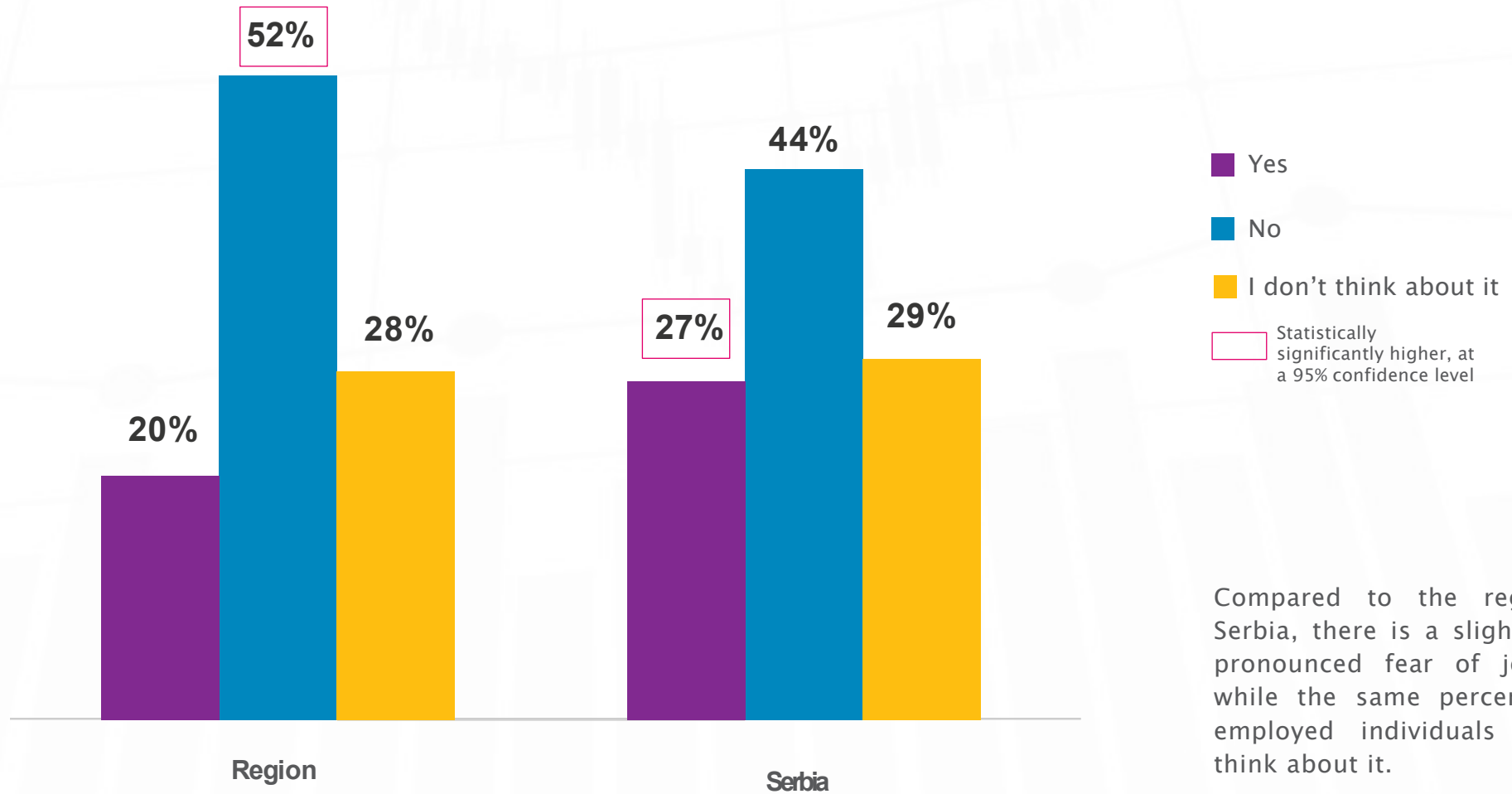


 Yes  No  I don't think about it

Somewhat less than half, 44%, of currently employed respondents say they generally do not fear potentially losing their job in the next year. 29% don't think about job loss, while 27% express fear of losing their job in the next year.

 Region vs. Serbia

 Are you afraid of potentially losing your job in the next year?



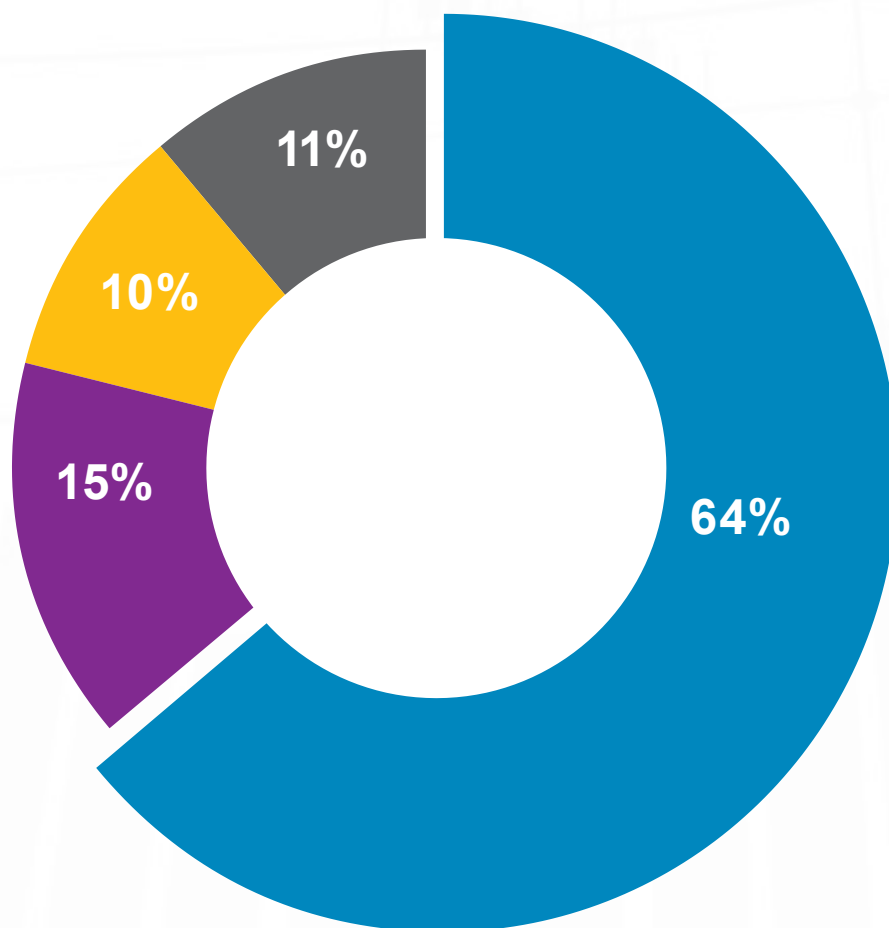
Compared to the region, in Serbia, there is a slightly more pronounced fear of job loss, while the same percentage of employed individuals do not think about it.



Serbia



Due to the globally unfavorable economic situation, what do you expect to happen to the labour market?



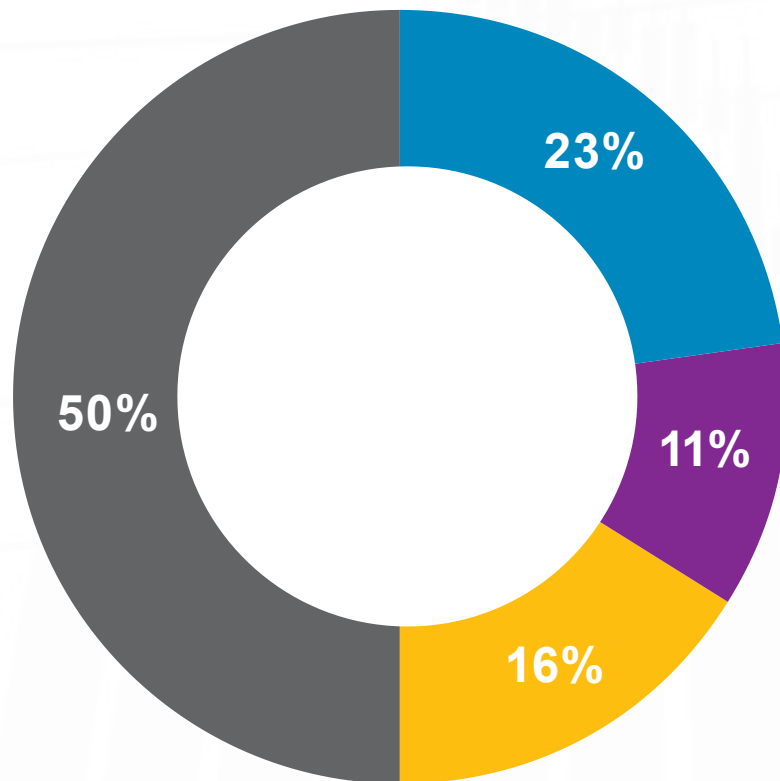
- Some jobs will be more in demand than before, while others less so
- There will be fewer job offers
- There will be more job offers
- The job offer will not change

2 out of 3 employed individuals are rational about this issue, believing that some jobs will be more sought after while others less, implying that the overall offer will remain the same.

15% believe the offer will be lower, and 10% believe it will be higher.



? Does your salary keep up with inflation, or have you received a raise this year?

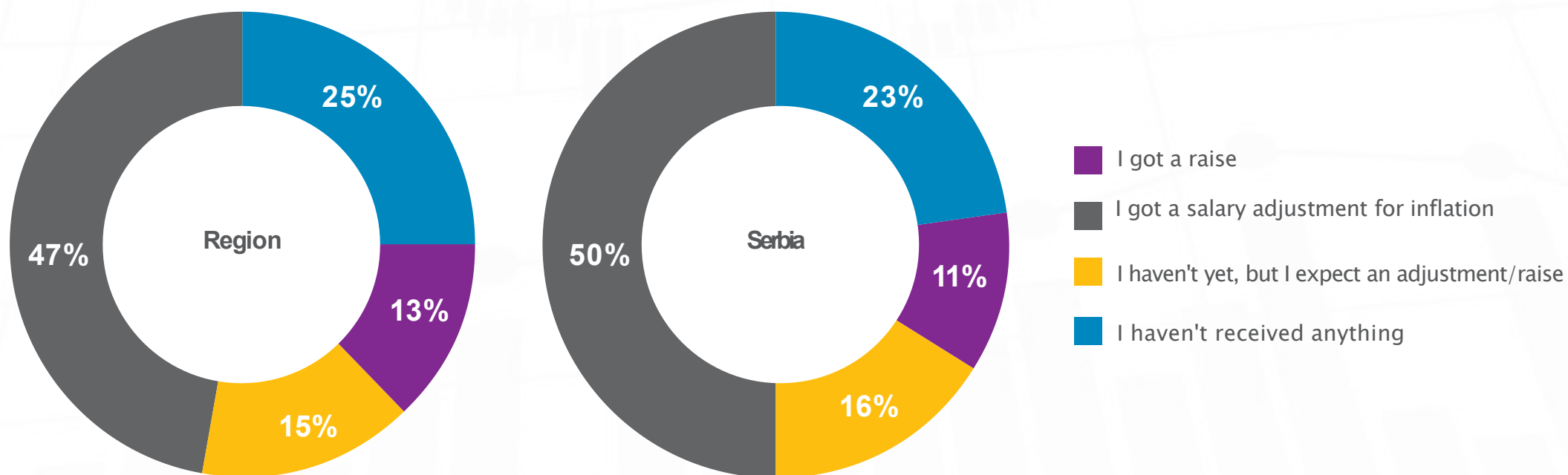


- I got a raise
- I got a salary adjustment for inflation
- I haven't yet, but I expect an adjustment/raise
- I haven't received anything

Salaries haven't been rising in line with inflation after all. Only 23% of respondents received a raise this year, and 11% had an adjustment in their salary according to inflation. This means that 2 out of 3 employed individuals were left without an increase.

 Region vs. Serbia

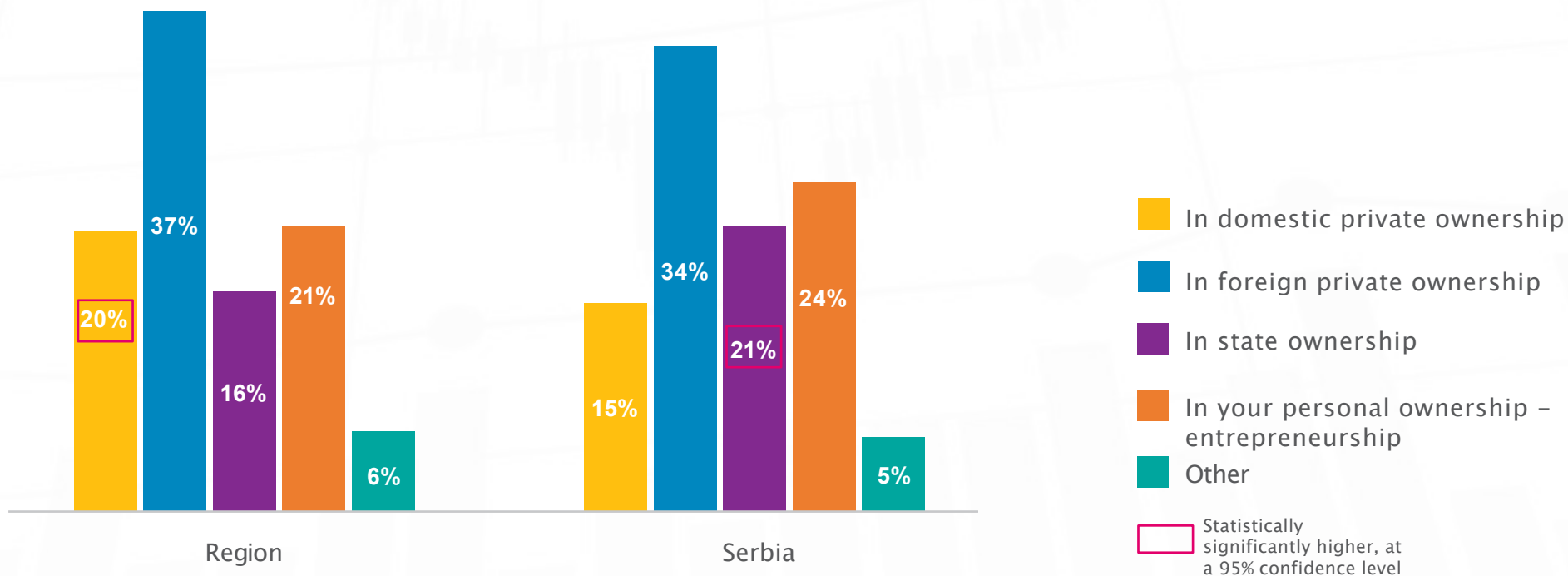
 Does your salary keep up with inflation, or have you received a raise this year?



The rate of received raises is higher in the region than in Serbia. On the other hand, it is also expressed that employees in Serbia have not received any form of support.

 Region vs. Serbia

 You would prefer to work for a company that is:



In the region, there's more trust in domestic owners compared to Serbia, while in Serbia, there's a greater preference for working in state-owned companies.

Both in Serbia and in the region, there's agreement regarding foreign private ownership – for over a third, that's the place they'd prefer to work.



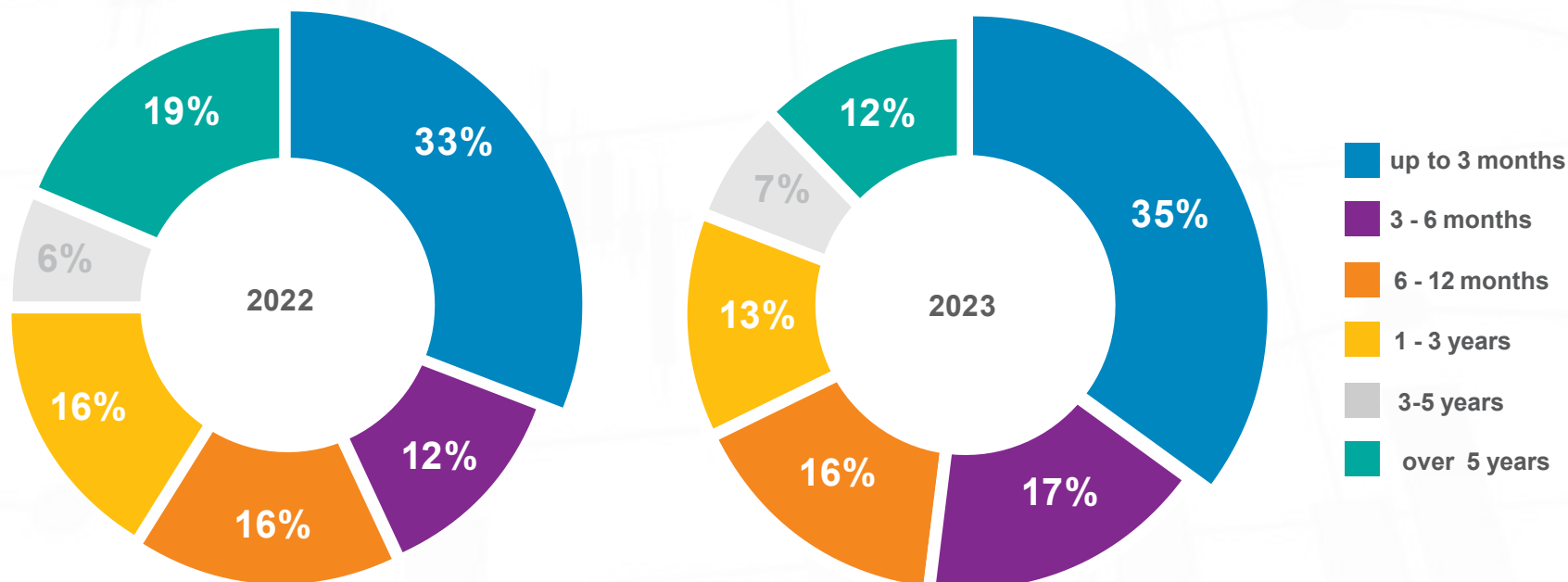
UNEMPLOYED RESPONDENTS



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR

 Serbia 2022 vs. 2023

 How long have you been unemployed?



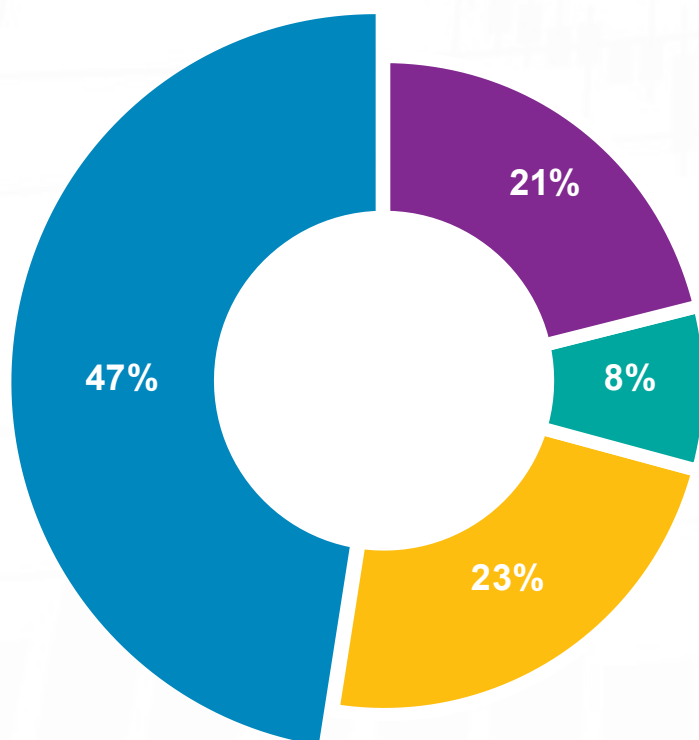
35% of the unemployed are 'fresh,' it hasn't been even 3 months since they've been in that status, while 68% are within a year. On the other hand, 12% of the unemployed respondents have been in this status for over 5 years, i.e., 32% for over a year.





Compared to last year's research, there aren't significant differences, but it can be said that there are more who have been recently unemployed compared to those who have been unemployed for a longer period.

The situation in the region is similar – candidates are unemployed for a very similar duration before finding a new job opportunity.

 Serbia

 To what extent has the job offer changed since the outbreak of the epidemic?



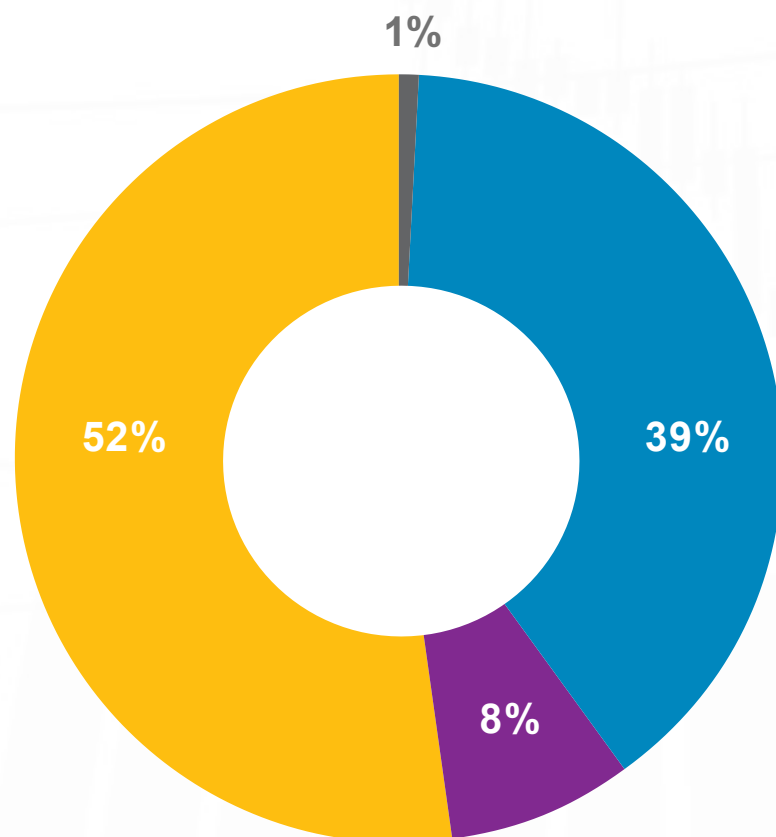
-  Some jobs are in higher demand than before, and some less
-  It hasn't changed
-  The job offer is smaller
-  The job offer is larger



Serbia



What kind of job are you looking for?



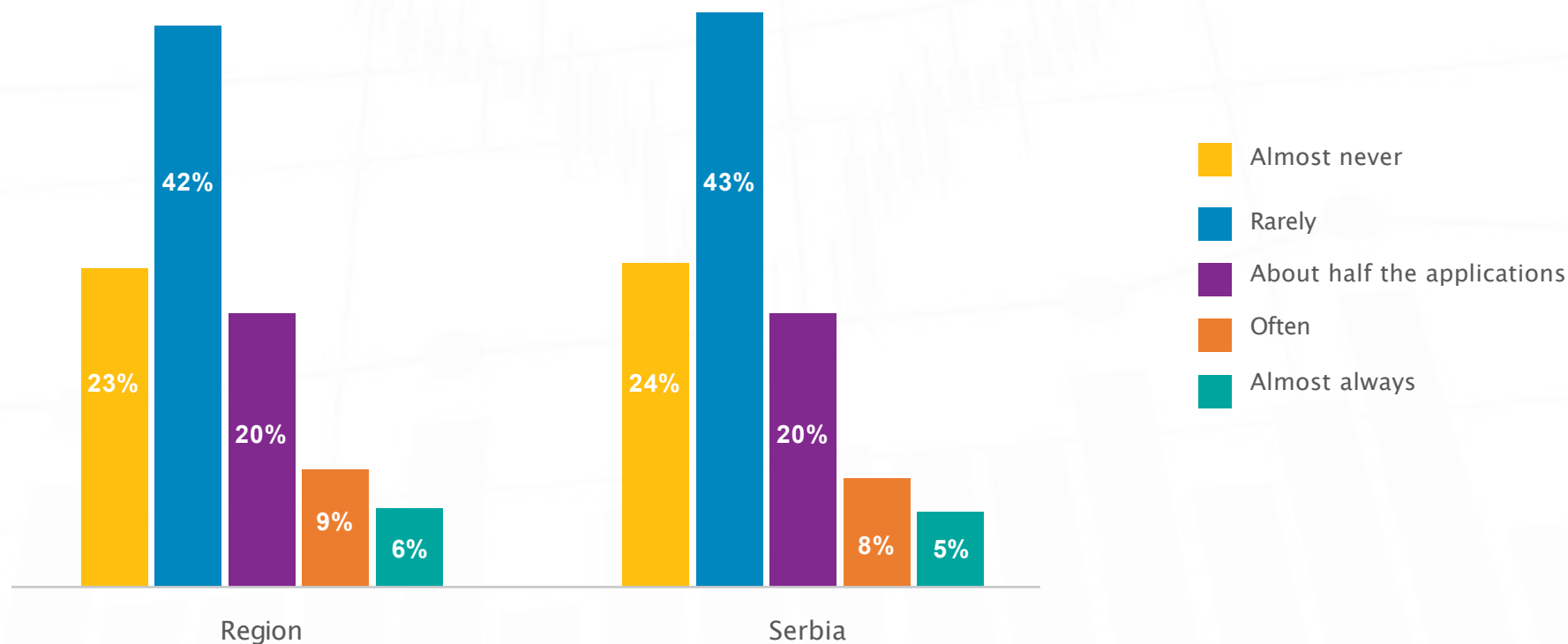
- A job in the field
- A job outside the field
- Any kind of job (related to the field or not)
- I'm not looking for a job

Half of the unemployed candidates, 52%, are willing to accept a job regardless of whether they have been educated for that field or not. On the other hand, 8% of respondents are consciously seeking a job that is not in the field they were trained for.

It's similar in the region, with North Macedonia having more people searching for any job (57%), while only 26% stick to jobs in their field.

 Region vs. Serbia

 Do you receive a response from employers when applying for a job?

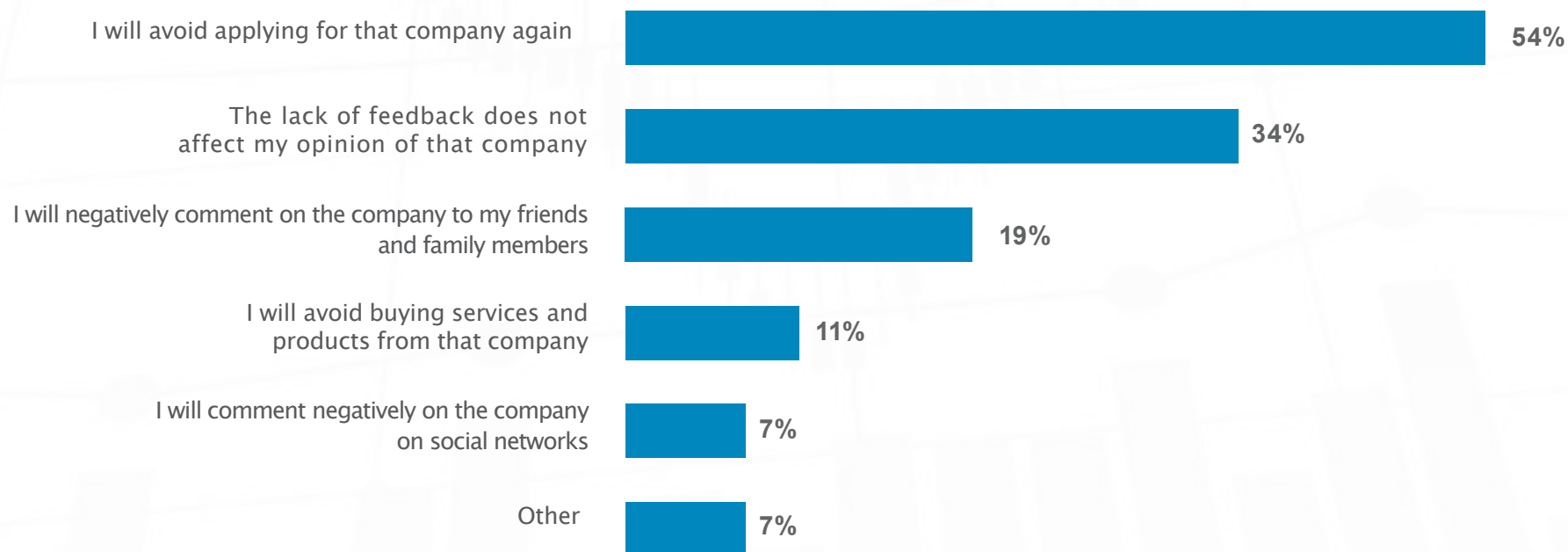


The situation is not great both in the region and in Serbia. 2 out of 3 candidates rarely or never receive feedback.

Such a scenario can affect the candidate's perception of potential employers.



How does the lack of application feedback affect your opinion of the company?



The absence of feedback, as it's not so uncommon, is somewhat normalized, with 34% of candidates not holding it against the employer and it doesn't affect their opinion. However, the majority of respondents expressed some level of negativity toward this practice.

The impact of such a practice on candidates is evident, with a significant 11% intending to take radical steps by avoiding products and services from that company.



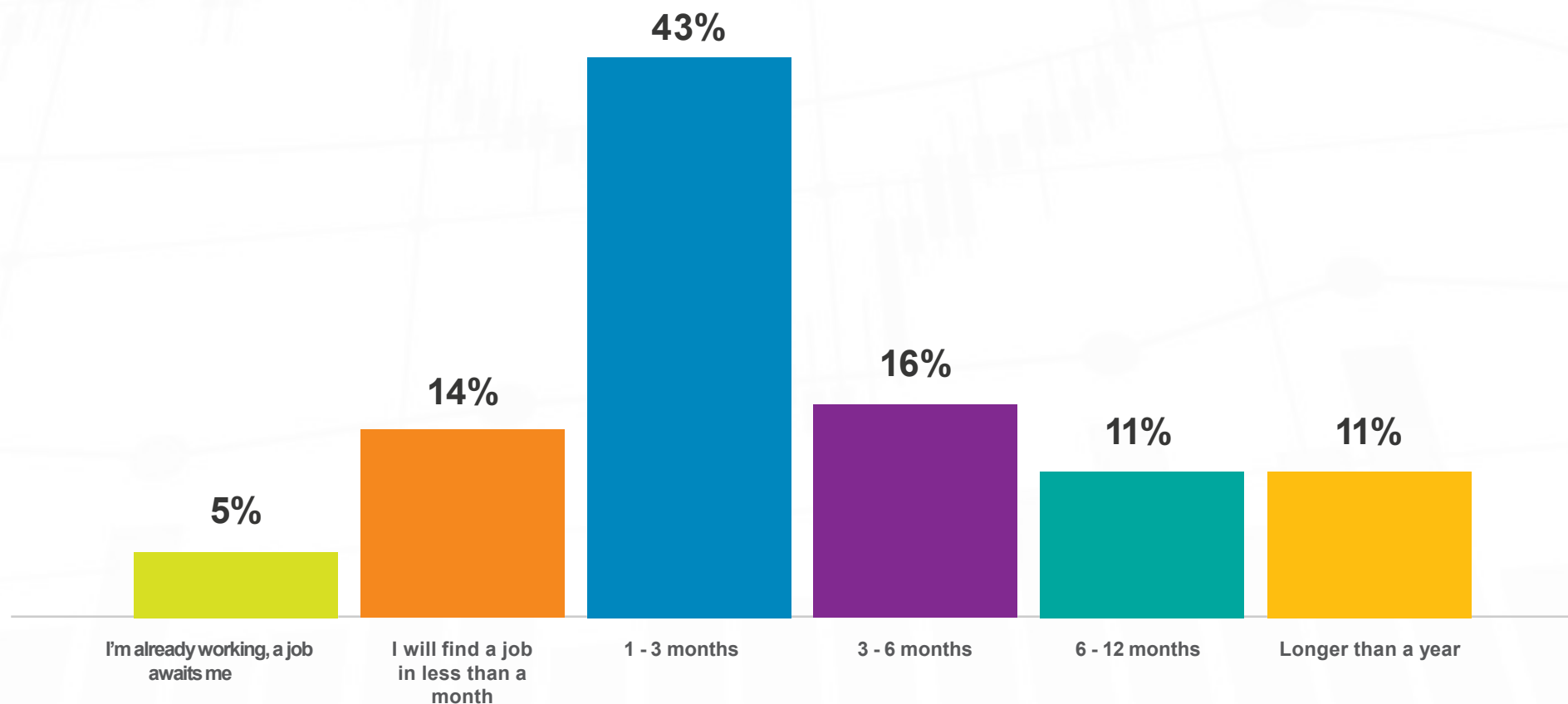
RESPONDENTS WHO ARE STILL STUDYING



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR



How long do you expect it will take for you to find a job after finishing school?



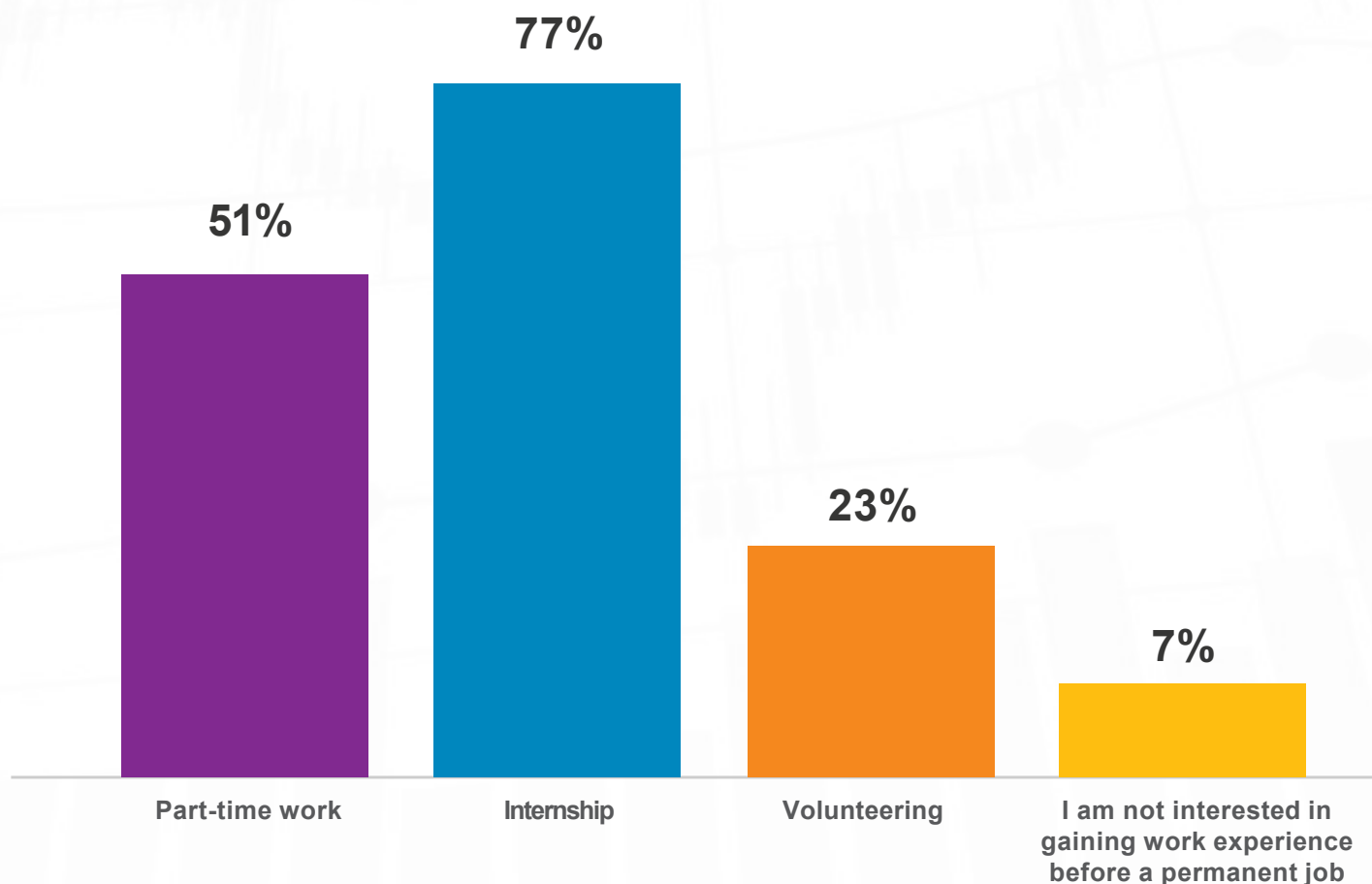
Among the young population, the prevalent belief is that finding a job takes only a few months, with 43% of students mentioning 1–3 months. However, 22% of younger respondents are less optimistic, believing it will take them longer than 6 months to secure their first job.



Serbia



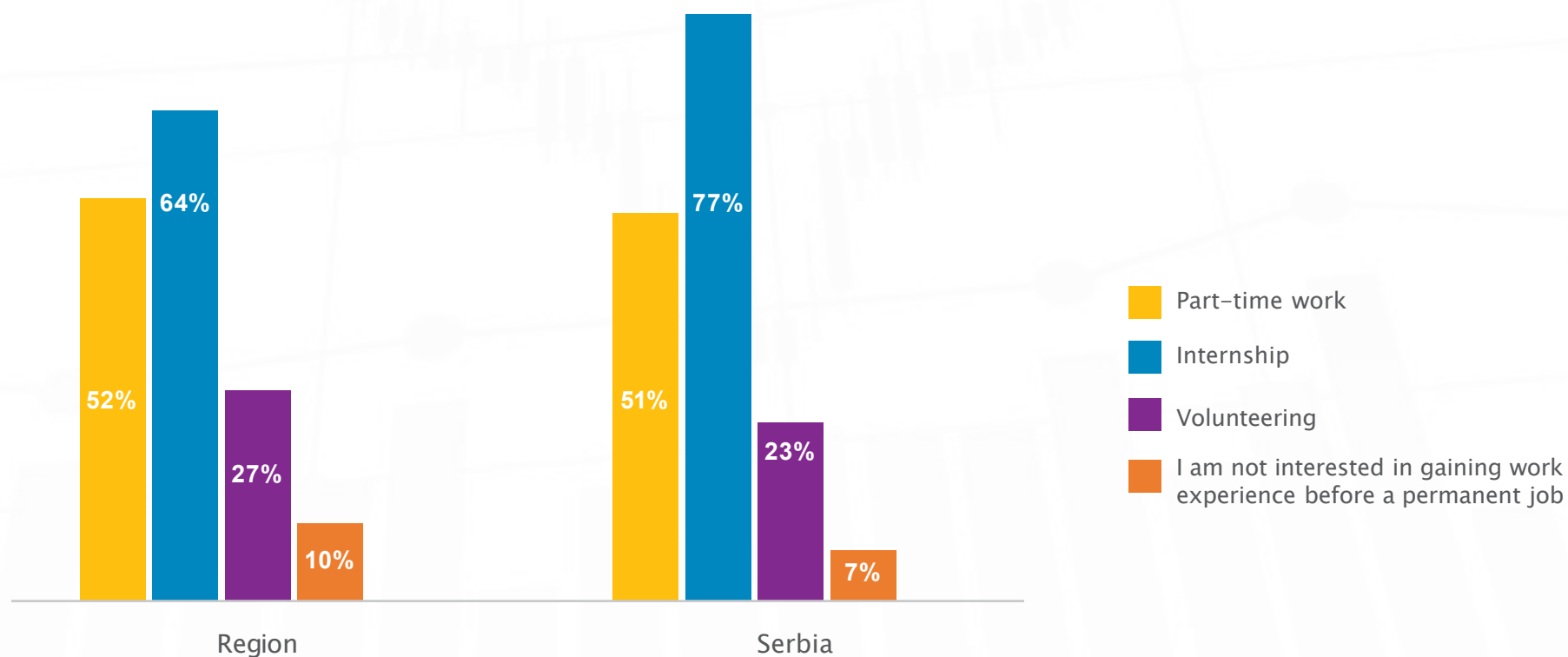
What forms of gaining work experience before permanent employment are you interested in?



It seems that for young people, internships are considered the best way to gain work experience, with 77% of them seeing it as a desirable option. Following that is part-time work, which is also viewed positively by half of the respondents. Companies should take advantage of these possibilities and offer young people these options, well-organized, as it appears to be important to them. If it turns out that their desires align and match, this could serve as a gateway into the company itself and the job market in general.

 Region vs. Serbia

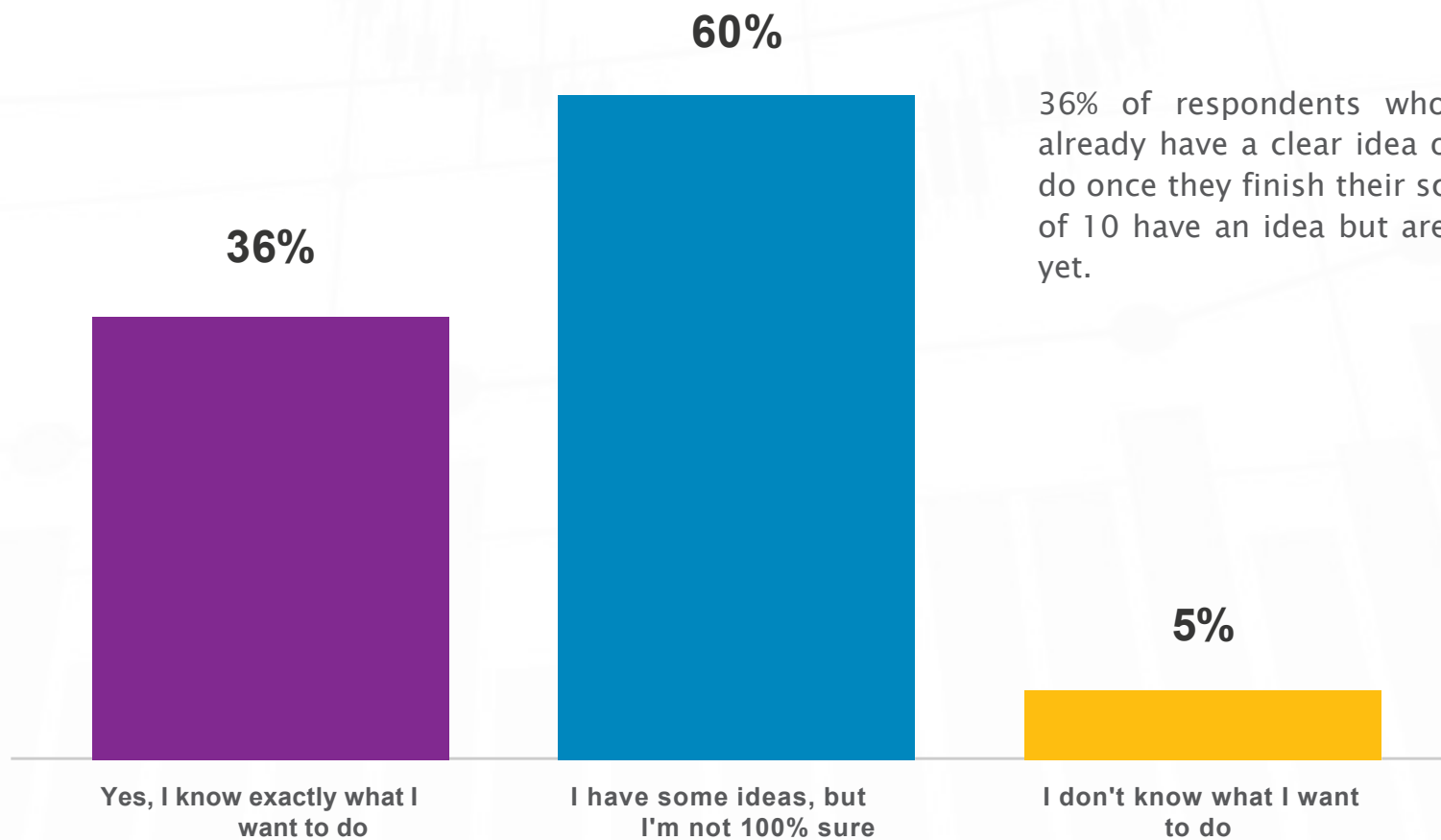
 What forms of gaining work experience before permanent employment are you interested in?



It seems that internships are the best way to gain work experience, both in the region and particularly in Serbia. Part-time work follows closely. Volunteering is slightly more prevalent in the region compared to our country.



What forms of gaining work experience before permanent employment are you interested in?





AUTOMATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

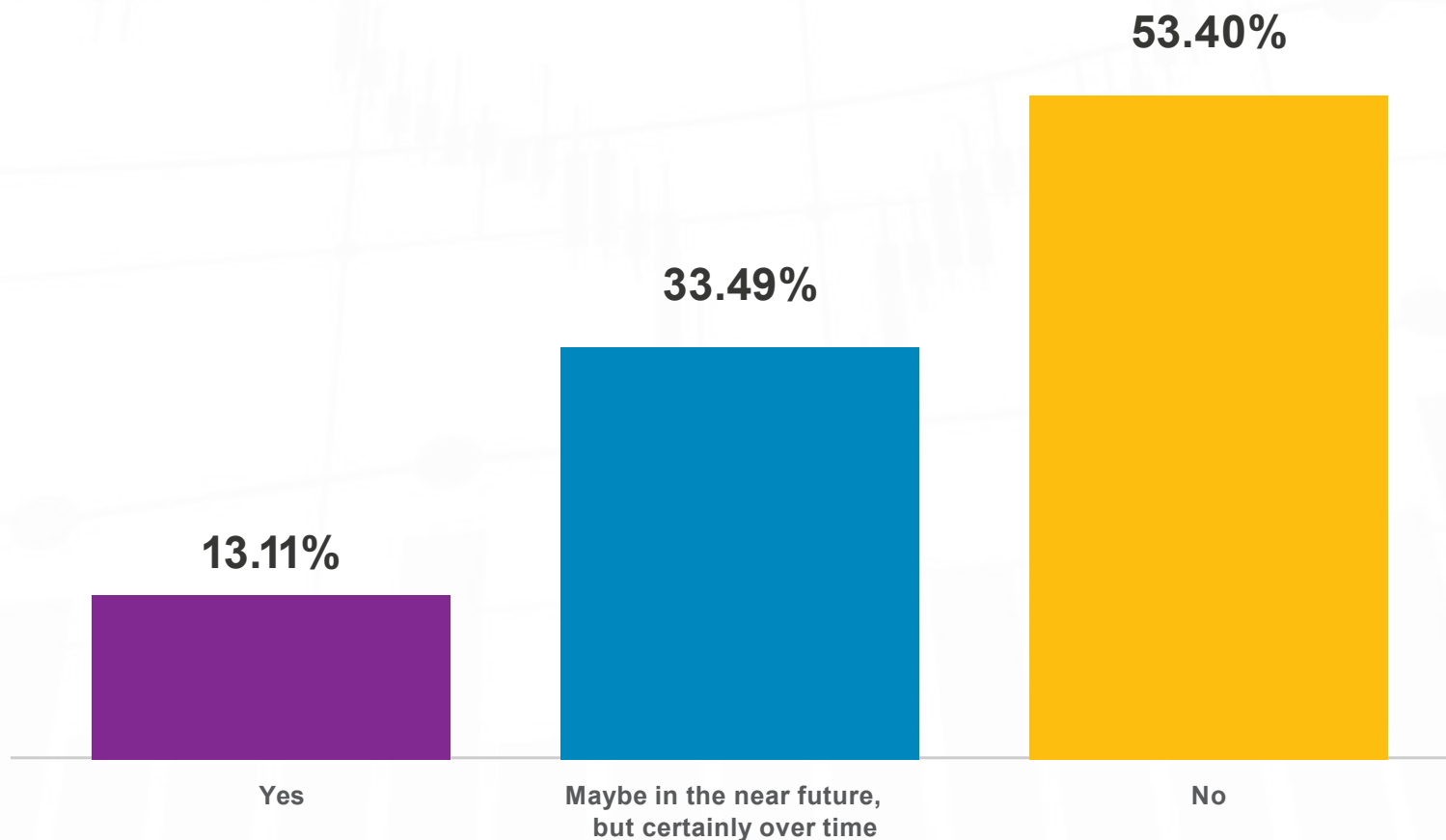


REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY



Serbia

? Are you afraid of potentially losing your job in the next ten years due to technological advancements (AI, automation)?



Half of the respondents are not afraid of potentially losing their jobs due to technological advancements in the next 10 years. Thirteen percent believe that job loss could be a possibility.

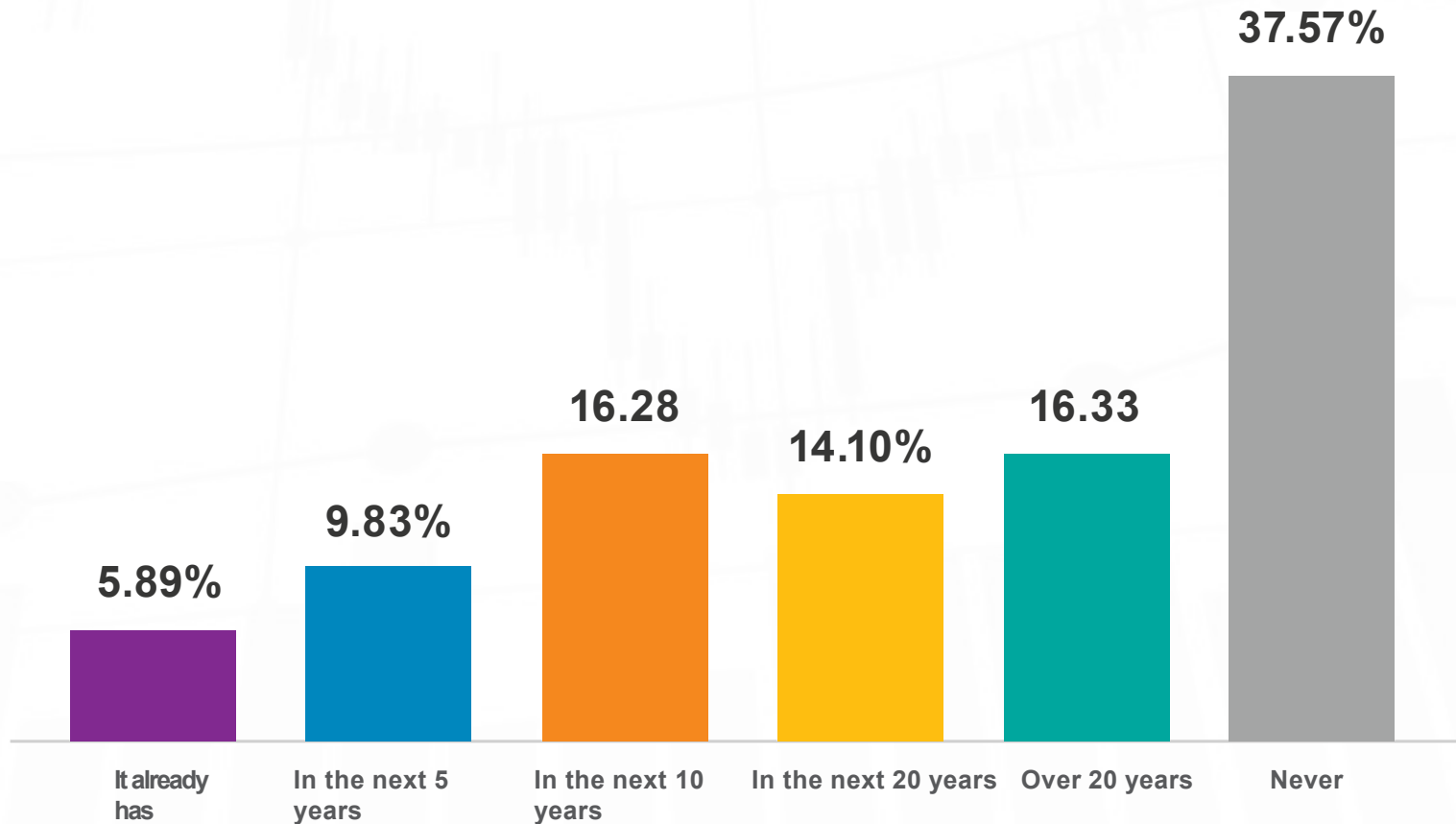
AN EXPECTED TIME FOR ADVANCEMENT OF TECHNOLOGY TO THREATEN THEIR JOBS



Serbia



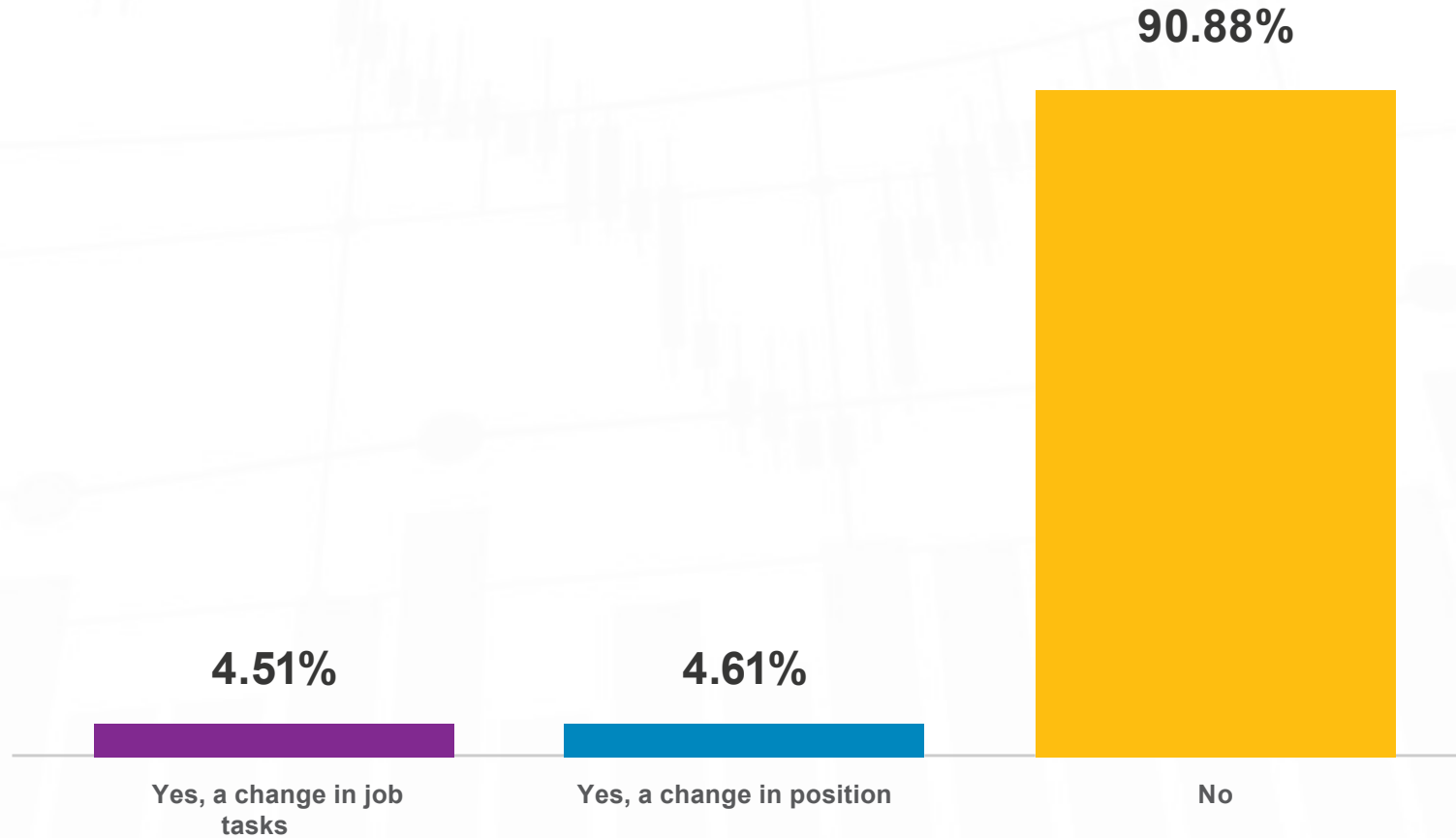
When do you expect automation and technological advancements to threaten YOUR job position?



6% mention that technological advancements have endangered their job positions, while 2 out of 5 believe it will never happen. Around one-third believe it will take more than 10 years before their job positions become threatened.

 Serbia

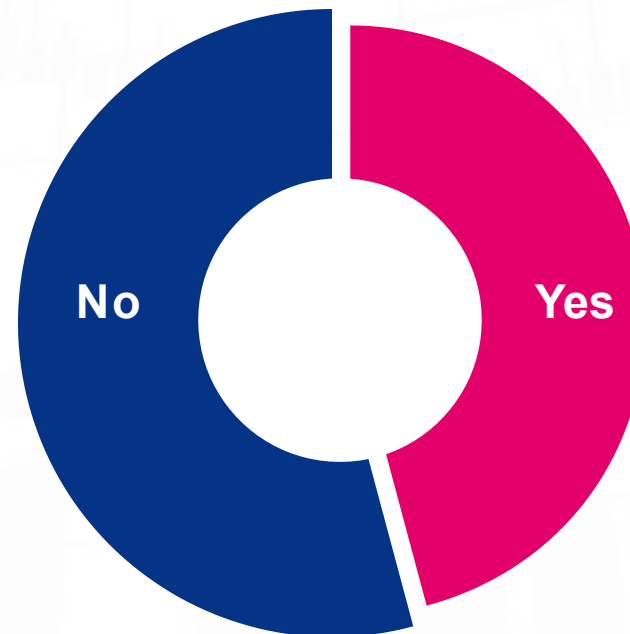
 Have you ever experienced job loss or change due to automation in the past?



Most haven't experienced direct job loss or a change in job tasks due to automation in the past. Therefore, it seems unlikely for such a scenario to occur.



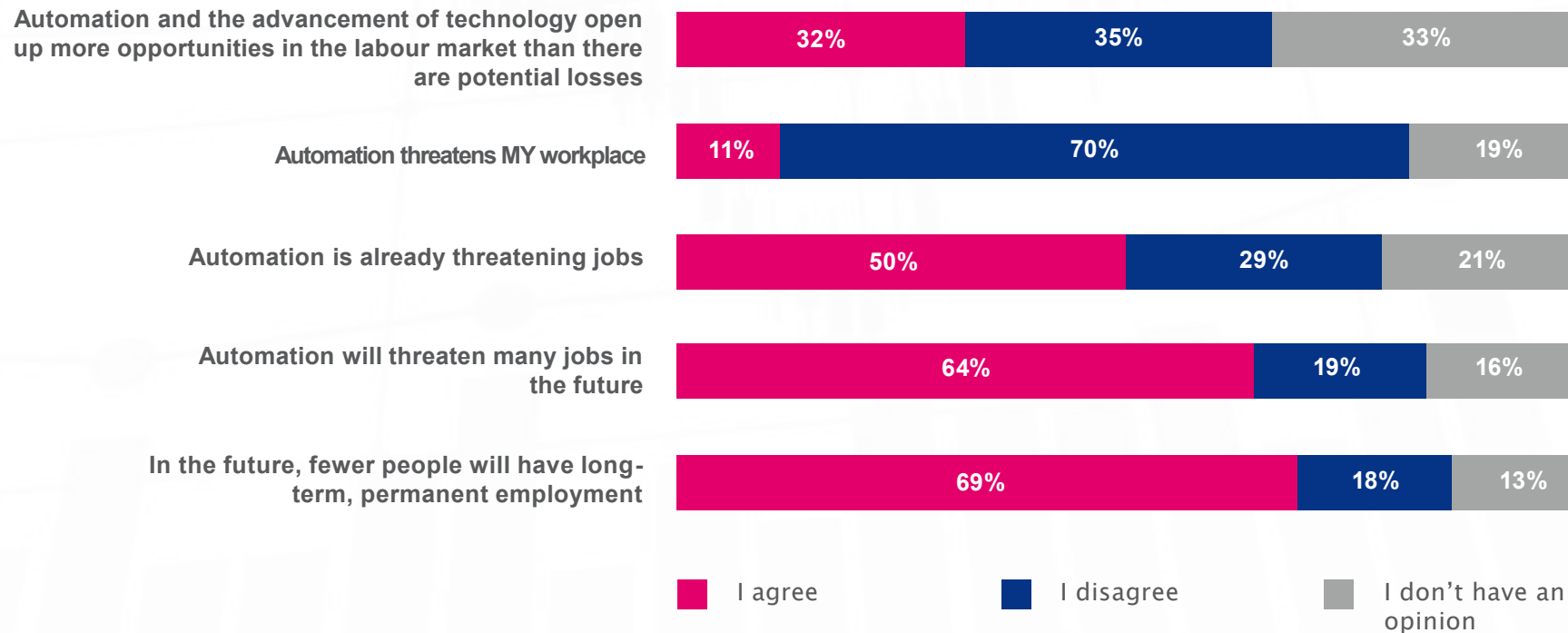
? Do you think that the benefits of automation, such as increased efficiency and productivity, outweigh the potential job losses?



The progress of technology and its impact on employment remains a controversial topic—half believe that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, while the other half holds the opposite view.



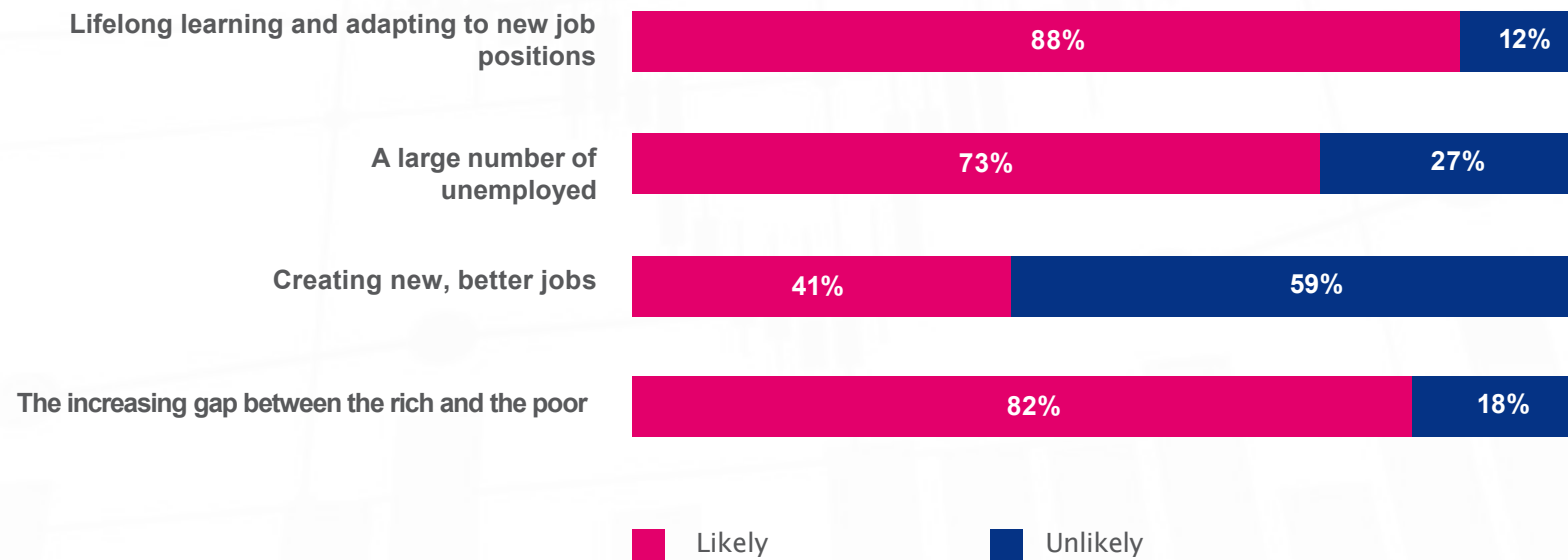
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



The general perception regarding the impact of automation contrasts with its perceived personal effect. Many believe there will be increased uncertainty and that numerous jobs will be at risk, yet they don't consider their own job to be threatened.



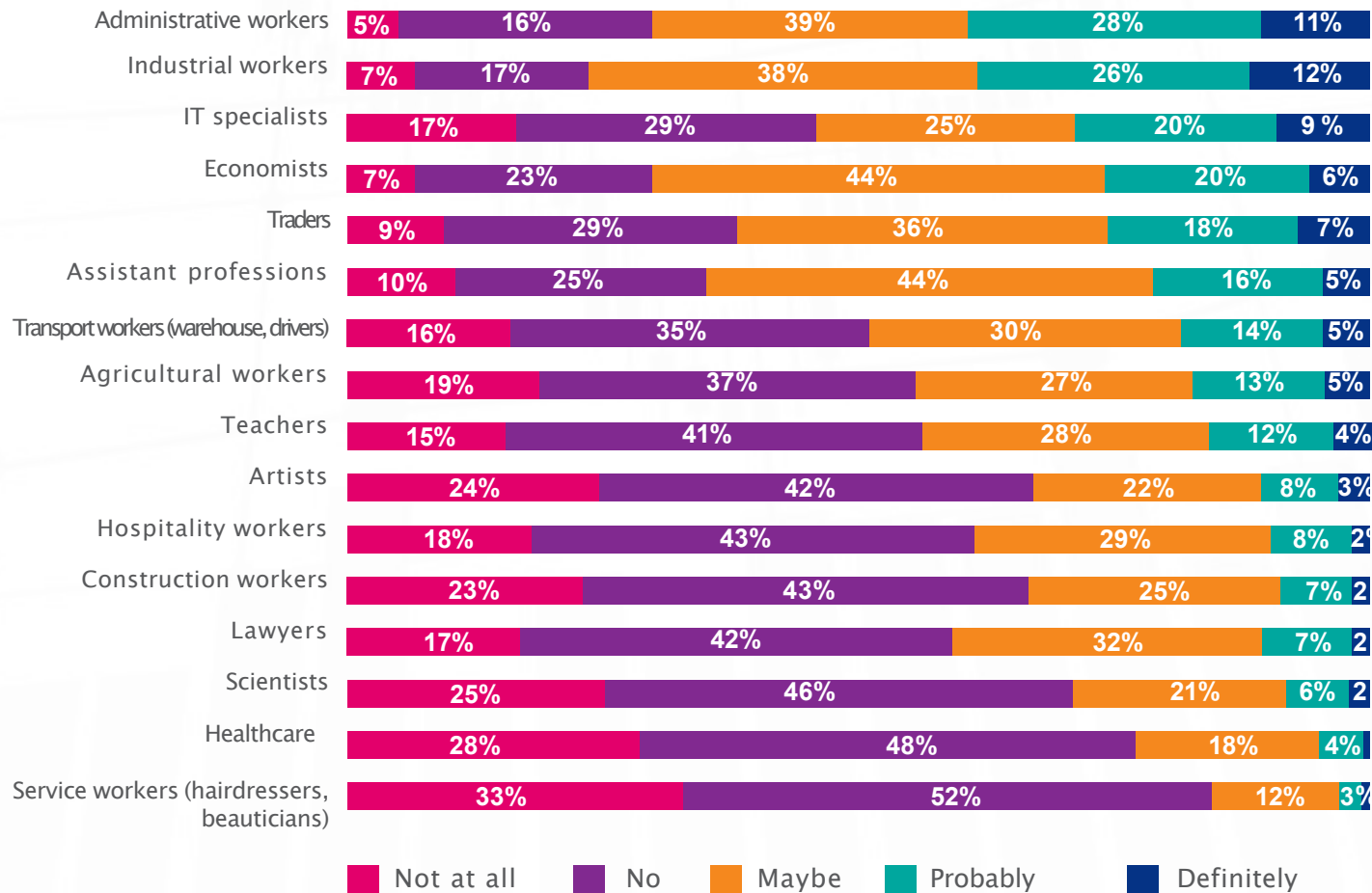
If automation takes over a large part of the jobs currently performed by people, what will be the consequences?



According to the participants in the study, due to automation, people will have to adapt to new job roles, leading to a growing divide between the rich and the poor, with a substantial increase in unemployment. There's a prevailing negative outlook, suggesting it's unlikely there will be new and better job opportunities.



Which occupations are at the greatest risk of job loss due to automation?



Occupations at the greatest risk include administrative and industrial workers, IT specialists, and economists, while service workers, healthcare professionals, legal experts, and scientists are at the lowest risk.



MANAGEMENT SUMMARY



REGIONAL
JOB FAIR

The research was conducted in October 2023 during the Regional Job Fair, organized by the Poslovi Infostud website and partner sites across the region. Candidates independently completed the questionnaire distributed through digital channels on employment websites.

A total of 6272 respondents participated in the survey, with the majority of candidates from Serbia (2506), followed by North Macedonia (1916), and Croatia (1472), with notably fewer respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina (268) and Slovenia (86). The sample consisted of 62% employed, 33% unemployed, and 5% candidates still in the education process. Half of the candidates held higher education degrees or higher levels of education, while 45% had completed secondary education. In terms of employment positions, 56% were in operational and administrative roles, 23% in specialized roles, 16% in lower management, and 5% in upper management or ownership positions.

Regarding demographics, 68% were women, and two-thirds of the respondents were between 26 and 45 years old.

When selecting an employer, candidates considered various criteria, with **salary level** and **good interpersonal relationships** being cited as the most important. This was followed by opportunities for advancement and learning, working hours, and job security. Salary level was significantly important to the employed, while candidates in education prioritized flexible working hours and opportunities for advancement and learning. Unemployed respondents emphasized job security more than other factors.

In Serbia, the average expected salary is 990 euros. On average, candidates in Slovenia have the highest expectations, over 1600 euros, while the lowest expectations are in North Macedonia, at 800 euros. Men generally have higher salary expectations than women, with an average expectation of 200 euros more than women, continuing the trend.

Two out of three employed individuals in Serbia plan to change jobs within the next year, which is higher than the regional average. Compared to the region, there's a slightly more pronounced fear of job loss in Serbia (27%), while the same percentage of employed individuals doesn't consider this a concern (29%). When asked about the future of the job market amid global adversity, 64% of respondents hold a rational view, believing that some jobs will be more sought after than before, while 15% foresee a decrease in job offerings. Despite widespread economic challenges and high inflation, it seems that employers haven't managed to match this with salary increases—only 23% of respondents received a raise this year, and 11% had adjustments due to inflation, leaving two out of three employees with reduced purchasing power. Foreign owners remain the most desirable employers, with the state in Serbia having a more favourable role as an employer compared to other countries in the region.

35% of the unemployed are considered to be "fresh," with not even 3 months having passed since they entered this status, meaning **2 out of 3 individuals have been unemployed for less than a year**. Compared to last year's research, there aren't significant differences, but it appears there are more recently unemployed individuals than those experiencing longer-term unemployment.

Receiving feedback from employers is a rare occurrence according to unemployed respondents—around 70% rarely or never receive feedback. However, it seems that this situation is accepted by some of the unemployed as common practice, unfortunately constituting a market norm. However, **nearly half with such experiences will avoid reapplying**, and 1 in 10 will avoid their products and services.

Among candidates still in education, the prevailing belief is that **finding a job takes a couple of months**. A significant portion emphasizes that securing a job requires 1–3 months, while 16% highlight that it takes 3–6 months. However, not everyone shares this optimism; 11% believe it will take more than a year to find a job. As knowledge and skills are deemed the most crucial assets for a job, according to this group of candidates, it's not surprising that **77% of candidates in Serbia consider internships as a good option to acquire work experience**. Internship experience seems relevant to the job they aspire to pursue on one hand, while on the other, most internships are organized for a specific, shorter duration. **Additionally, half of the respondents consider part-time work as a viable option**.

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