



# Deaf Journalism Europe

**SURVEY REPORT ABOUT  
THE ROLE OF DEAF CONSUMERS  
IN DEAF-LED BUSINESSES**



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## Overview

A survey on deaf people's news consumption and willingness to pay for news services provided by deaf-led companies and organisations was conducted in Dutch, German, French, Slovak, and Swedish, as well as in Dutch Sign Language (NGT), Flemish Sign Language (VGT), German Sign Language (DGS), French Sign Language (LSF), Slovak Sign Language (SPJ), and Swedish Sign Language (STS). The survey was distributed across these six countries. The collected data has been analysed, and a report prepared, featuring a summary of the most significant findings from the analysis. The survey was disseminated through the national networks of the partner organisations. The final report is published digitally on our collaborative website, [www.deafjournalism.eu](http://www.deafjournalism.eu).

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## List of abbreviations

ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Association of the Public Broadcasting Corporations of the Federal Republic of Germany)
AVMSD	Audiovisual Media Services Directive
BFM	Bureau France Médias (France media office)
CODA	Children of Deaf Adults
CRPD	Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DGS	Deutsche Gebärdensprache (German Sign Language)
DJE	Deaf Journalism Europe
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union of the Deaf
LSF	Langue des Signes Française (French Sign Language)
NAD	National Association of the Deaf
NGT	Nederlandse Gebarentaal (Dutch Sign Language)
NOS	Nederlandse Omroep Stichting (Dutch broadcasting foundation)
RTVS	Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (Radio and television of Slovakia)
SPJ	Slovenský posunkový jazyk (Slovak Sign Language)
STS	Svenskt teckenspråk (Swedish Sign Language)
SVT	Sveriges Television (Swedish television)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
VGT	Vlaamse Gebarentaal (Flemish Sign Language)
VRT	Vlaamse Radio- en Televisieomroeporganisatie (Flemish radio and television broadcasting organisation)
WFD	World Federation of the Deaf
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (Second German Television)

# 1. Introduction

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it has become evident that there is a growing need for reliable and accessible information in sign languages. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 21) obliges states that have ratified the convention to take appropriate measures to ensure that deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind sign language users can fully exercise their right to freedom of expression and access to information. However, various (academic) studies show that this vulnerable group still does not enjoy full access to these rights. This is partly because governments and national broadcasting companies in Europe often select approaches that are not always effective for the deaf communities (Neves 2007). For example, the use of hearing interpreters during regular news broadcasts is often regarded as an illusion of inclusion (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2021).

To enable deaf citizens in Europe to think critically, compare different news sources, distinguish facts from opinions, and form their own viewpoints, it is essential that they have efficient and effective access to comprehensible information in their own sign language (Rijckaert & Gebruers 2022). With co-financing from the European Commission, seven companies and organisations are joining forces now to bridge the information gap within European deaf communities. As part of the “Deaf Journalism Europe” project, several news services in sign languages have been launched or further supported, tailored to the specific linguistic and informational needs of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind signers:

- **VGT Nieuws:** A news platform in Flemish Sign Language (VGT), managed by Visual Box based in Belgium, available on the website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and through newsletters.
- **Taubenschlag:** A news source in German Sign Language (DGS) and German, managed by manua based in Berlin, accessible on the website and Instagram. This company specialises in producing sign language videos to keep the deaf community informed and engaged.
- **DNieuws:** A news platform in Dutch Sign Language (NGT), managed by Turkoois based in the Netherlands, available on the website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and via the WhatsApp channel of DNieuws.
- **Správy SPJ:** A news platform in Slovak Sign Language (SPJ), managed by DeafStudio based in Slovakia, accessible on the website, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and via the WhatsApp channel of Správy SPJ.
- **Teckenrapport:** A news site in Swedish Sign Language (STS), managed by Teckenbro based in Sweden, featuring news and reports on the website, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.
- **Médiapi:** An independent, non-profit online news medium in France, offering national and international news in French Sign Language (LSF) and French, also available on Instagram and Facebook.

The financial sustainability of deaf-led media organisations is an urgent issue that requires business models tailored to the specific needs of the deaf community. However, the ambition to create and maintain news services in sign language, produced by deaf-led companies and organisations, remains a significant challenge. Despite various academic research studies, a lack of understanding among governments and national public broadcasting companies still exists (Neves 2007). Additionally, interpreters monopolise the delivery of sign language news broadcasts in many European countries (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). Another major obstacle is that the deaf community is not accustomed to paying for services, especially when offered by deaf-led companies and organisations.

To develop a business model that contributes to the financial sustainability of a deaf-led media organisation, research is being conducted into the news consumption habits of deaf individuals and their willingness to pay for news services in sign languages. A survey had been distributed among the audiences of the DJE consortium's partners. This survey report will form the basis for three subsequent deliverables within the framework of the DJE project: a marketing plan specifically targeted at deaf people, business models for deaf-led news and media organisations, and recommendations for governments.



## 2. Conceptual delimitation

This section provides an exploration of the existing legislation concerning news provision in sign languages across Europe. Based on a brief literature review, various concepts, terminologies, and theoretical frameworks are presented that contribute to the delineation of the research focus. On this basis, the scope of the research is determined through carefully formulated research questions.

### 2.1. Legislative framework

The provision of information to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in sign language is stipulated in various directives and legislation at international, European, and national levels. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the UN on 13 December 2006, is the first international treaty to affirm that sign languages and sign language communities must be recognised and protected (Ball 2011). Article 21, titled "Freedom of Expression and Opinion, and Access to Information," explicitly states that States Parties must take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can access information intended for the general public in a timely manner and without additional cost, and encourages mass media to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.

At the European level, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) of 2010 includes provisions regarding the accessibility of audiovisual media for persons with disabilities. The necessity for this accessibility has been further underscored in the revised directive that came into force on 1 September 2020. EU Member States are required to ensure the implementation of this revised directive in their national legislations. This revision includes an obligation for audiovisual media services to subtitle a certain percentage of their programmes. Although there are no explicit requirements with regard to sign language within audiovisual media services, Member States are encouraged to develop their own national policies that may incorporate sign language into their services.

### 2.2. Forms of Sign Language Media

In terms of public broadcasts, deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals have traditionally accessed news on television through various methods: subtitled programmes, programmes in spoken language with sign language interpretation, and programmes presented entirely and originally in sign language (Neves 2007). While this research does not delve further into subtitling, it primarily focuses on the provision of news and information in national sign languages within the EU, specifically from the six countries involved in the DJE project.

In broad terms, two types of sign language media can be distinguished. Firstly, the term "media accessible in sign language" refers to making previously produced broadcasts accessible using sign language interpreters. In this context, an interpreter is placed picture-

in-picture (in vision), which falls under a "hearing framework" (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). In this setup, the spoken language remains the primary language of the source text, which the interpreter translates into sign language. Both deaf and hearing interpreters may be utilised, depending on the process: a hearing interpreter works with auditory input, while a deaf interpreter relies on visual input (De Meulder & Heyerick 2013). In the case of deaf interpreters, the approach varies from country to country; sometimes, they read from an autocue displaying the spoken text, or they may work with a hearing interpreter off-screen (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). The choice of employing either hearing or deaf interpreters often leads to discussions within European deaf communities (De Meulder & Heyerick 2013). Research indicates that deaf sign language users prefer deaf interpreters due to linguistic and cultural identification, which enhances the comprehensibility of news content and information (Stone 2007).

Secondly, the term "media presented directly in sign language" refers among others to broadcasts in which sign language is the primary language. This operates from a "deaf framework", typically employing deaf presenters. These broadcasts are often supplemented with voice-over or subtitles to make them accessible to a broader audience of non-signers (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020).

## 2.3. Sign Language in public broadcasting

The following section outlines the national legislation and the available news offerings in/with sign language as facilitated by the public broadcasts of the six countries involved in the DJE-project. Notably, all the public broadcasters mentioned produce their news programs in/with sign language in-house. This practice is not universally observed across Europe; in the UK and Denmark, for instance, public broadcasters outsource the production of sign language news to external production companies staffed by deaf individuals, although these broadcasts are still being aired on the national channels of public broadcasters.

There is no consensus within the deaf community regarding this approach. On one hand, there are concerns that outsourcing such responsibilities to an external production house may adversely affect the quality of the news. Conversely, many believe that a deaf-led production company would be better equipped to undertake this task than a public broadcaster, which is predominantly staffed by hearing individuals. Proponents of this view argue that a deaf-led team is more attuned to the needs of the target audience of deaf signers, both in terms of content and technical delivery (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020).

### 2.3.1. Flanders (Belgium)

In Flanders, the Dutch-speaking northern region of Belgium, the Media Decree (27 March 2009, revised in 2015) stipulates that public broadcasting organisations are required to make a significant portion of their programming accessible to individuals with hearing

impairments, utilising subtitles and sign language. Agreements between the Flemish Government and the public broadcaster VRT are established for a period of five years within a management contract. Since 2012, Flemish Sign Language has been included in this contract, and this has been reaffirmed for the third time in the current management contract for the period 2021-2025.

The VRT makes its daily news broadcast *VRT NWS journaal 19u* (19:00 News) accessible in Flemish Sign Language, employing hearing interpreters (live available via the VRT website and subsequently at 20:15 on the VRT's secondary channel). Additionally, the children's news programme *Karrewiet* is made accessible through deaf interpreters (live via the website of the children's channel Ketnet and the following morning on the secondary channel).

Currently, there are no programmes produced by VRT in Flemish Sign Language featuring deaf presenters.

### 2.3.2. Germany

The *Rundfunkstaatsvertrag*, which serves as the foundation for the operations of public broadcasters in Germany, emphasises the importance of accessibility for all viewers, including the integration of German Sign Language (DGS) into news broadcasts and other programmes. Both ARD and ZDF have established specific initiatives and agreements to incorporate DGS into their news programmes and other relevant content. Since 1997, *Tagesschau* (at 20:15 on Phoenix) and *Heute Journal* (at 21:45 on ZDF) have been accessible in German Sign Language, featuring a pool of hearing and deaf interpreters (the latter working alongside hearing interpreters present behind the camera).

Additionally, both public broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, offer programmes in German Sign Language, presented by deaf hosts: *Sehen statt hören* and *Hand drauf* (targeted at younger audiences). These programmes are more “human interest” related.

### 2.3.3. The Netherlands

The public broadcaster NOS is mandated by the Dutch Media Act, which promotes accessibility for individuals with disabilities, to provide news broadcasts in Dutch Sign Language (NGT). From Monday to Friday, various morning news programmes are accompanied by hearing interpreters translating from Dutch to Dutch Sign Language. Additionally, both the daily 20:00 News (*Het Journaal*) and the Youth News (*Het Jeugdjournaal*) are made accessible with hearing interpreters. However, there are currently no programmes in Dutch Sign Language featuring deaf presenters offered by the public broadcaster.

### 2.3.4. Slovakia

The Slovak public broadcaster, RTVS, is bound by the national media legislation, which requires it to provide a minimum of 3% of its programming in sign language. Since 1993, RTVS has been offering news broadcasts interpreted into Slovak Sign Language by hearing interpreters. Initially, the interpreted news programme was broadcast on the second television channel simultaneously with the regular news on the first channel. However, the deaf community expressed dissatisfaction to the authorities, citing difficulties in understanding the interpreters due to the use of “artificial” sign language.

Since October 2013, the interpreted news is no longer aired live but is still available during repeat broadcasts late at night and early in the morning on the third television channel. At that time, a new condensed news programme, *Správy v slovenskom posunkovom jazyku* (News in Slovak Sign Language), was launched on the second channel, featuring a deaf presenter. Currently, the condensed news is broadcast daily at 20:00.

In addition, since 1987, *Televízny klub nepočujúcich* (Television Club for the Deaf), a television magazine of a more “human interest” kind, in Slovak Sign Language, has been aired by RTVS. The programme is presented by deaf hosts.

### 2.3.5. Sweden

The news provision in Swedish Sign Language by the public broadcaster SVT is framed within the management agreement established every six years with the Department of Culture of the Swedish Government. The current management agreement (*Sändningstillstånd 2020-2025*) stipulates that public broadcasting must also offer programming in recognised minority languages (*Minoritetsspråk*) existing in Sweden. Although Swedish Sign Language (*Svenskt teckenspråk*) is not officially recognised as a minority language in Sweden, it is included in the same section concerning minority languages.

Since 2012, *Nyhetsstecken* (roughly translated as “The News in Signs”) has been broadcast every weekday on SVT2, the national channel, from 17:20 to 17:30. During this ten-minute segment, a deaf presenter summarises a selection of news items in Swedish Sign Language. The sign language broadcast is accompanied by a hearing newsreader who stands alongside the deaf presenter in the studio.

Since autumn 2018, there has also been a daily news programme in Swedish Sign Language featuring deaf and hearing sign language interpreters. This content is not broadcast on television but is made available exclusively on SVT Play.

### 2.3.6. France

In France, there are specific governmental obligations regarding the accessibility of news broadcasts in Langue des Signes Française (LSF), arising from both the legislation on audiovisual communication and the Disability Act of 2005. These laws mandate that public broadcasters make their programmes accessible in French Sign Language. Both France 2 and France Info provide news broadcasts featuring hearing interpreters who sign in LSF. Additionally, the French commercial news channel BFM TV is required to broadcast certain news programmes in French Sign Language, also presented with hearing interpreters.

In practice, there is a notable presence of interpreted news on French television, with most broadcasts being understandable for the LSF community. Channels such as France 2, France Info, C8, CNews, BFM TV, and LCI regularly feature hearing interpreters. While deaf interpreters appear less frequently, they are present in some programmes. For example, France Info and occasionally CNews include deaf interpreters, particularly in the *Télématin* segment on open channels. Closed channels like Canal+ Info also include deaf interpreters, albeit more sporadically, typically around 3 to 4 times per month.

Furthermore, *L'Œil et la Main*, a French television programme specifically aimed at the deaf community, is aired on France 2 and presented by deaf hosts in LSF. This programme is shaped as a documentary and released once a week, covering a wide range of societal themes, always approached from a deaf perspective.

## 2.4. Motivations for creating own news provisions

Given the existence of various news provisions in national sign languages provided by public broadcasters, as outlined above, it seemed pertinent to investigate the motivations of the partners within the DJE consortium for creating their own news offerings and how these compare to those of public broadcasters.

Flanders (Belgium), France, Germany and the Netherlands are the only countries within the DJE project that, thus far, did not have news programmes presented in their sign language by a deaf host. The Flemish deaf community has long expressed dissatisfaction with the current accessibility model for news in Flemish Sign Language, which employs hearing interpreters. A report from the 2020 evaluation study of news offerings by VRT in Flemish Sign Language, commissioned by the Flemish Government, corroborates the concerns raised by the deaf community and concludes that the comprehensibility of news content in Flemish Sign Language on the VRT is perceived as very low. Consequently, Visual Box in Flanders, like manua in Germany and Turkoois in The Netherlands, is motivated to create a news offering that better meets the linguistic and informational needs of deaf sign language users.

The 2015 attacks in Paris revealed significant gaps in accessibility for the deaf community. According to Médiapi, the deaf community faced a severe lack of access to live updates in LSF (Langue des Signes Française). While news programmes with sign language interpreters are and as such were available at the time, they did not fully meet the informational needs of the deaf community, particularly in providing real-time information during crises. Médiapi was established in response to address this gap and ensure that deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals have access to timely, accurate, and reliable news in their own preferred language. Unlike public broadcasters, which are often constrained by editorial limitations and funding restrictions, Médiapi aims to prioritise the unique needs of the deaf community. Operating independently, Médiapi ensures both editorial freedom and financial stability through its subscription model, with the long-term goal of achieving self-sufficiency.

In Sweden, news in the national sign language, presented by a deaf presenter, already exists, with *Nyhetsstecken* from SVT primarily focusing on general news. In contrast, Teckenbro covers news specifically about deaf individuals, communities, and sign languages in Sweden, Europe, and worldwide.

In Slovakia, the national broadcaster RTVS also offers news in Slovak Sign Language, anchored by deaf presenters. However, its production requires the cooperation of hearing professionals, such as cameramen, editors, and other technical staff. DeafStudio, by contrast, provides news in Slovak Sign Language (SPJ), focusing exclusively on topics related to deaf people, their lives, communities, culture, and sign languages in Slovakia, Europe, and the world. The organisation is staffed entirely by deaf individuals at all levels of production.

All other DJE partner organisations also devote significant attention to deaf-related news in their news offerings. However, Visual Box from Flanders is more restrained in its publication of news related to deaf individuals, communities and sign languages, as it aims to align its news content as closely as possible with that of VRT. The intention is to ensure that their Flemish Sign Language news is as comparable as possible to the *19:00 Journaal*, which is made accessible by VRT in Flemish Sign Language through hearing interpreters. Visual Box believes, based on the aforementioned research report, that deaf signers in Flanders face significant challenges in obtaining news and information compared to their hearing counterparts.

## 2.5. Research questions

To enhance the sustainability of deaf-led companies and organisations that produce news content in a national sign language, it is essential to gain insight into the news consumption habits of deaf signers. How do these news provisions compare to other news offerings and to the sign language news programmes provided by public broadcasters within their respective countries?

- What is the overall news consumption pattern among deaf signers? How frequently do they watch news, and on which platforms do they primarily access it? What is their preferred language for consuming news?
- Are deaf sign language users aware of the news offerings provided by the DJE consortium? Do they follow this content? If so, how often and on which platforms do they engage with it? If not, what are the reasons for their lack of engagement?
- Do they also follow other sign language news services provided by public broadcasters? Which form of sign language presentation do they prefer: a deaf presenter, a deaf interpreter, or a hearing interpreter?

Furthermore, the CRPD stipulates that information intended for the general public must be made available free of charge to individuals with disabilities. Among the six companies and organisations in the DJE consortium, Médiapi is the only entity that can produce news content based on various revenue streams, including subscriptions. Other companies and organisations currently rely on funding from the European Union and partially on their own revenue sources to provide news in national sign language. It is commonly observed within European deaf communities that deaf signers are often reluctant to pay for certain services, particularly those offered by fellow deaf individuals. The often-repeated joke that "D.E.A.F." stands for "Deaf Expects All Free" raises the question of whether this is a reality or merely a myth.

- Are deaf individuals willing to pay for the news services offered by deaf-led companies and organisations? Do they also subscribe to written news, such as newspapers, magazines, or news apps?
- What are their reasons for being either willing or unwilling to pay for news provisions in sign languages?
- If they are willing to pay for these news services, what frequency of subscription would they prefer and at what cost?
- Do they find it acceptable for advertisements to be included on platforms providing news in sign languages? For example, would they mind if a sign language news video were to be interrupted by an advertisement from companies or organisations sponsoring these news provisions?
- What are the expectations of deaf individuals regarding the production of sign language news? Should it be produced by public broadcasters themselves, or would it be better outsourced to an external deaf-led production company? Is there an expectation that sign language news should also be available in written form (through transcription or subtitles)? Should sign language news continue to be produced during weekends and holidays? Additionally, should there be news coverage specifically related to deaf individuals, communities and sign languages?

### 3. Methodology

Following the conceptual delineation outlined above, the decision was made to convert the research questions into a survey. The aim was to collect as many responses as possible from deaf communities in all six countries involved in the DJE project. The survey was designed to provide insight into both the participants' familiarity with various news offerings in sign languages and their motivations for watching and/or financially supporting the DJE consortium's news services. The survey was structured as follows:

- **The first section** includes questions regarding sociodemographic characteristics deemed relevant to the research.
- **The second section** comprises a series of questions about the respondents' viewing habits concerning general news, the DJE consortium's news offerings, and news services in sign languages provided by public broadcasters.
- **The third section** explores the respondents' willingness to pay for the DJE consortium's news services. Additionally, ten statements were presented, allowing respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed.

Although this quantitative approach is not entirely ideal—DJE partners have observed from experience that deaf individuals often experience survey fatigue due to the number of questionnaires they receive from academic institutions, including those from interpreting students—and there are limitations as respondents cannot always answer in their native language, i.e. sign language, we provided an option at the end of the survey for participants to leave their email address. This allows researchers to follow up with additional questions or seek clarification if any ambiguities or contradictions are found in the written responses. Respondents retained the option to maintain their anonymity.

The survey, included in English in the appendix, was prepared via Google Forms in five languages (Dutch, German, Slovak, Swedish, and French) and translated into six sign languages (Flemish, Dutch, German, Slovak, Swedish, and French Sign Language). On 10th June 2024, the surveys were distributed via the social media channels of DJE and the partner organisations. Within the DJE consortium, it was agreed to aim for a minimum of 100 respondents per country involved in the project, in order to obtain a representative picture of the opportunities and barriers faced by deaf-led businesses and organisations. This target was achieved on 31st July 2024, at which point the surveys were closed for further analysis.



## 4. Results and findings

The responses were collected per country and exported from Google Forms into an Excel file. The analysis was carried out by Jorn Rijckaert of Visual Box in Flanders. He is deaf and holds a master's degree in marketing (Ghent University) and in film studies and visual culture (University of Antwerp). He has authored several academic publications on evaluation research concerning Flemish Sign Language on VRT and the viewing habits of deaf Flemings during the COVID-19 pandemic (see reference list for his publications), making him well-versed in researching this topic.

After the analysis was completed, the entire report was discussed within the DJE consortium for further findings and additions based on each partner's field experience, as those are often in contact with their proper target audiences. It is important to note that the following results and findings are primarily viewed from the perspectives of deaf-led media companies, with or without an academic lens, who are convinced of the value and quality of news services in sign languages for the deaf communities.

### 4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

At the time the six surveys closed, a total of 877 respondents had completed the questionnaires: 223 for the Flemish version, 186 for the German version, 157 for the Dutch version, 105 for the Slovak version, 104 for the Swedish version, and 102 for the French version. Consequently, these countries will be discussed below in this order, from the highest to the lowest number of respondents.

In response to the question regarding their current residence, participants were given the option to select the country in which the survey was conducted or to specify another country of their choice.

	Domestic	Abroad	Total
Flanders	217	6	223
Germany	182	4	186
The Netherlands	154	3	157
Slovakia	98	7	105
Sweden	100	4	104
France	96	6	102
Total	847 (96,6%)	30 (3,4%)	877

*Table 1 – Overview respondents: country of residence*

The majority of respondents reside in the country where the survey was distributed. A small percentage lives abroad, and further analysis indicates that these are often expatriates who

follow news in their native language via digital platforms provided by DJE organisations. A much smaller proportion consists of foreigners who choose to follow these news provisions, despite them not being in their first language.

For the subsequent question, respondents were limited to two options: whether they identify as “deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind,” or “hearing.” For clarity and ease of reading, the term “deaf” will be used throughout the following pages to refer to all forms of hearing loss, including any additional disabilities such as visual impairments.

	Deaf	Hearing	Total
Flanders	212	11	223
Germany	176	10	186
The Netherlands	134	23	157
Slovakia	96	9	105
Sweden	98	6	104
France	90	12	102
Total	806 (91,9%)	71 (8,1%)	877

*Table 2 - Overview respondents: deaf or hearing?*

Although our research does not target hearing individuals, we have cautiously included them in our analysis, as they may also be audiences for news provisions in sign languages (for example, CODAs or interpreters wishing to enhance their sign language skills). It is particularly important to scrutinise the results from the Dutch survey, as it includes a larger proportion of hearing respondents than anticipated (14.6%).

The following section presents the number of respondents according to age categories.

	<18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>75	Total
Flanders	6	19	30	47	39	45	31	6	223
Germany	2	10	30	51	49	40	3	1	186
The Netherlands	4	33	40	31	21	20	4	4	157
Slovakia	1	8	41	31	16	5	2	1	105
Sweden	0	3	16	38	31	9	6	1	104
France	1	11	29	23	17	9	11	1	102
Total	14 (1,6%)	84 (9,6%)	186 (21,2%)	221 (25,2%)	173 (19,7%)	128 (14,6%)	57 (6,5%)	14 (1,6%)	877

*Table 3 - Overview respondents: age categories*

Notably, the two age categories—those under 18 years and those over 75 years—are significantly underrepresented. The low representation of respondents under 18 is unsurprising, as news provisions in sign language are typically aimed at adults. The underrepresentation of respondents over 75 may be attributed to a lack of familiarity with the digital platforms on which DJE organisations primarily operate, rather than traditional television.

When asked about their first language—the language they understand best and in which they can express themselves most effectively—respondents could choose from three options: the national sign language of the country in question, the national spoken/written language, or both (bilingual). A fourth option allowed respondents to specify their first language if none of the previous three options applied.

	Sign Language	Spoken Language	Both	Other	Total
Flanders	109	13	94	7	223
Germany	69	19	97	1	186
The Netherlands	25	49	82	1	157
Slovakia	79	11	3	12	105
Sweden	33	3	61	7	104
France	22	10	68	2	102
Total	337 (38,4%)	105 (12%)	405 (46,2%)	30 (3,4%)	877

*Table 4 - Overview respondents: first language*

The data reveal a strong representation of respondents who are bilingual, being proficient in both spoken language (whether in written form or not) and sign language. Additionally, there is a substantial group of sign language users who do not have the spoken language as their first language. Only in Flanders and Slovakia, the group that exclusively chose sign language as their first language is larger than that of those who selected “both”. It is important to note that in the Slovak survey, the option for “both” was inadvertently omitted.

Other respondents wrote International Sign or other foreign sign languages in conjunction with the national sign language. A smaller group comprises respondents who have a foreign sign language as their first language but have some understanding of the national sign language in which the survey was conducted. There were also respondents who filled in different sign systems (for instance, *Posunkovaná slovenčina*, a signed form of the Slovak language, is the most cited).

## 4.2. News consumption

In the second section of the survey, the news consumption behaviour of the respondents was thoroughly investigated. The first part of this section focused on general news consumption, taking into account news in spoken and/or written languages as well as in sign languages. The second part specifically addressed the consumption of news content in various sign languages provided by the consortium of the DJE project. The third part of this section concentrated on the viewing habits and preferences of the respondents regarding a wide range of news offerings in national sign languages.

### 4.2.1. General news consumption

The first question, *"How often do you generally follow the news?"*, aimed to ascertain the frequency with which the respondents engage with news, regardless of whether it is rendered in the spoken/written form of their national language or in their national sign language. The second question, *"How do you generally follow the news?"*, provided respondents with the opportunity to select one or more news sources, thereby seeking to gain insight into the channels they utilise for news consumption. The third question, *"What is your preferred language for following the news?"*, asked respondents to indicate whether they preferred to follow the news in their national spoken/written language, in sign language, or in a combination of both.

#### 4.2.1.1. Flanders (Belgium)

Of the 223 respondents, 135 indicated that they follow the news daily. A smaller group of 46 respondents follows the news weekly, while 9 respondents do so only monthly. Additionally, a group of 27 respondents stated that they follow the news sporadically, and 6 respondents indicated that they do not follow it at all. The graph below (figure 1) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.

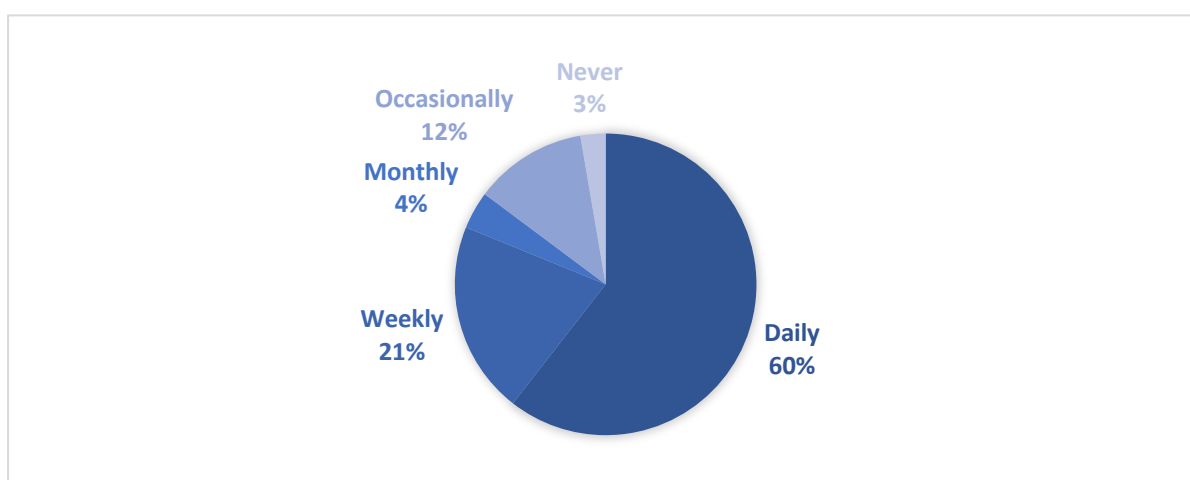
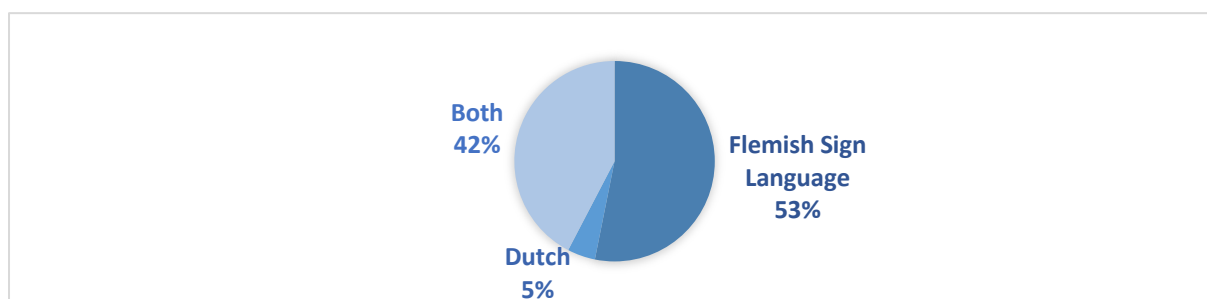


Figure 1 – General news consumption: frequency (Flanders)

Among the 217 respondents, three news sources emerged as the most popular. To stay informed, social media are used by 131 individuals (60.4%), followed by internet usage with 127 respondents (58.5%) and television with 123 respondents (56.7%). News apps are consulted by 66 respondents (30.4%), while newspapers and magazines are less popular, with only 34 respondents (15.7%). Finally, 38 respondents (17.5%) obtain news through verbal communication or sign language.

In response to the third question regarding the preferred language for following the news, a majority of 118 respondents chose Flemish Sign Language (VGT). This group consists solely of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Additionally, a substantial group of 94 respondents expressed a preference for following the news in both Dutch and Flemish Sign Language. This group also primarily comprises individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind; however, seven of them are hearing.



*Figure 2 – General news consumption: preferred language (Flanders)*

Only 10 respondents indicated "Dutch" as their preferred language for news consumption. Four of these individuals are hearing, while the remaining six respondents are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Despite their preference for Dutch, five of these respondents noted that Flemish Sign Language, either alone or in conjunction with Dutch, is their first language. Several of these respondents provided their contact information at the end of the survey for any follow-up questions. Two of them have been approached to clarify their preference for following news in Dutch. One respondent noted that she recently became deaf and therefore still considers Dutch to be her first language. She is highly motivated to learn Flemish Sign Language (VGT) and follows *VGT nieuws* as part of this effort. However, she does not yet have sufficient command of the language to fully understand it and often relies on the accompanying Dutch transcript to interpret the signs.

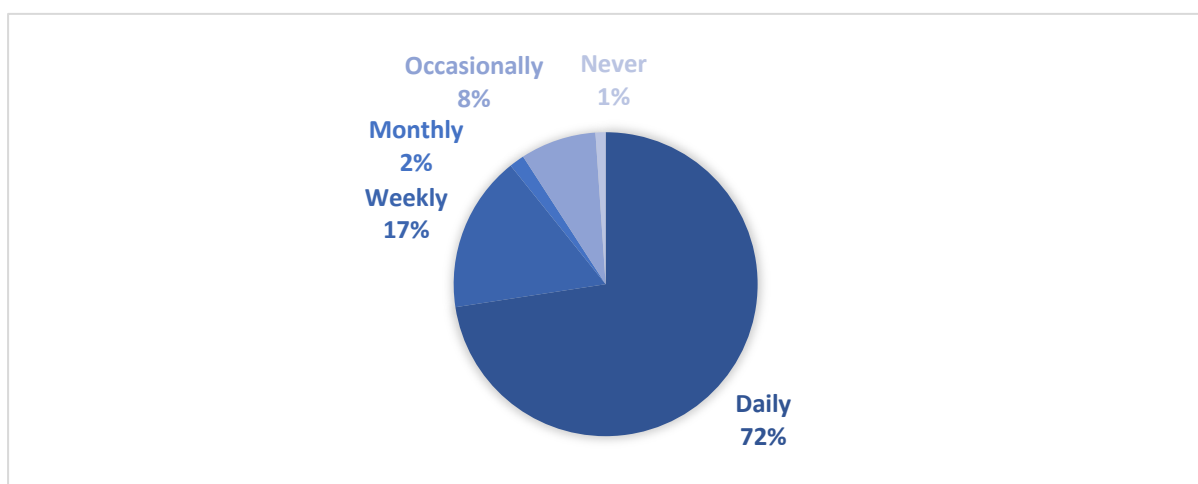
Another respondent indicated that he is proficient in both Dutch and Flemish Sign Language, but prefers to follow the news in Dutch because it is "quicker" to read. He often skims news articles in Dutch and gives them more focused attention when a particular topic interests him. He watches televised news broadcasts with subtitles rather than sign language interpreters, which he finds less appealing. This respondent described the *VGT nieuws* videos as somewhat "dry," noting that they lack supplementary visuals to contextualise or illustrate the news, which reduces his ability to engage fully with the content. Nonetheless,

he emphasised the importance of having sign language news presented by a deaf presenter for the deaf community and sees himself as an "ally" for *VGT nieuws*.

Finally, there is one deaf respondent who indicated that he/she does not follow general news but consults *VGT nieuws* daily. This respondent has been excluded from the graph (figure 2).

#### 4.2.1.2. Germany

Of the 186 respondents, 135 have reported that they follow the news daily. A modest group of 31 respondents does so weekly, while 3 respondents limit their news consumption to a monthly frequency. Additionally, 15 respondents stated that they follow the news sporadically, and 2 respondents indicated that they do not follow it at all. The graph below (figure 3) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.

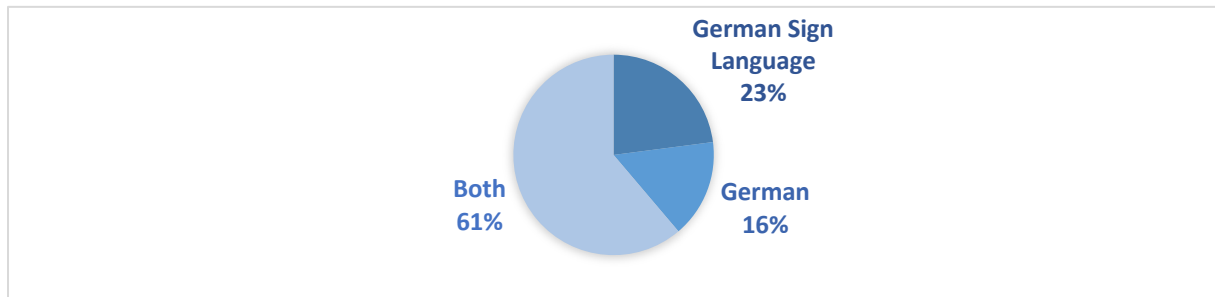


*Figure 3 - General news consumption: frequency (Germany)*

Among the 184 respondents, two channels dominate their preferences. Social media are utilised by 155 respondents (84.2%), followed by the internet with 149 respondents (81%). Other frequently used sources include television (106 respondents, 57.6%), news apps (93 respondents, 50.5%), and newspapers/magazines (81 respondents, 44%). Furthermore, 41 respondents (22.3%) reported receiving news through verbal communication or sign language.

When asked about their preferred language for following the news in general, 42 respondents indicated a preference for German Sign Language (DGS). This group consists solely of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Additionally, 112 respondents chose both German Sign Language and German. Within this group, nine respondents are hearing. Furthermore, 29 respondents selected only German as their preferred language. Within this group, only one respondent is hearing. Notably, of these 29 respondents, 25 indicated German Sign Language as their first language, sometimes alongside German. Several respondents from this group provided their contact details and

were invited to elaborate on their preferences. Two respondents explained that reading news articles is quicker than watching videos. One respondent noted that he considers German to be his first language and DGS his second language; consequently, he finds it more relaxing to consume news in his primary language.

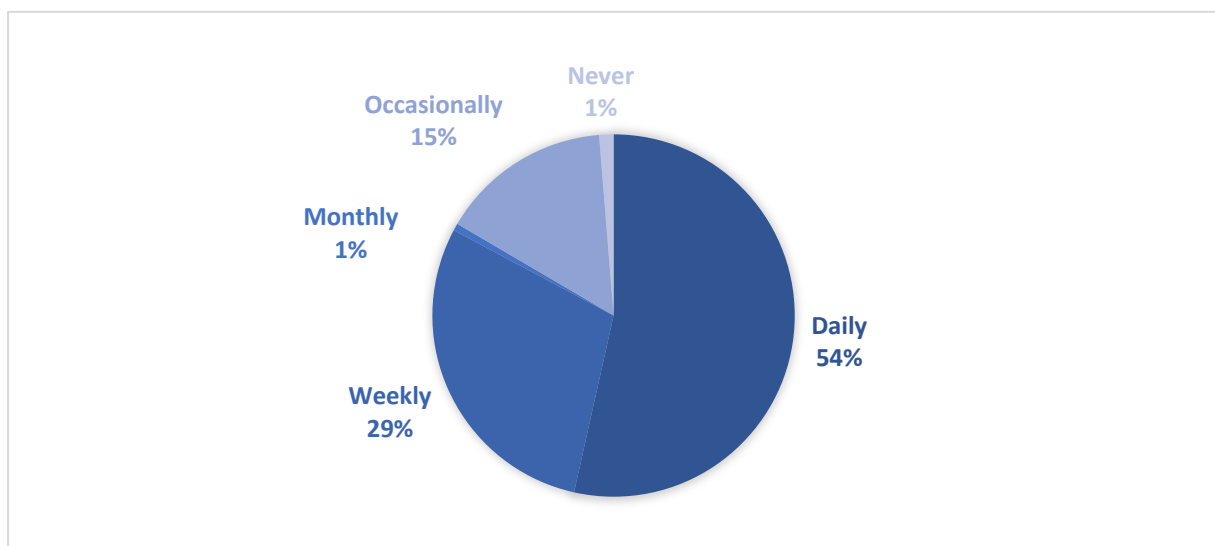


*Figure 4 – General news consumption: preferred language (Germany)*

Three respondents specified other languages, such as English, American Sign Language (ASL), and International Sign. These respondents have been excluded from the graph (figure 4).

#### 4.2.1.3. The Netherlands

Of the 157 respondents, 84 reported that they follow the news daily. A smaller group of 46 respondents engages with news consumption weekly, while 1 respondent only views the news monthly. Additionally, 24 respondents stated that they follow the news sporadically, and 2 respondents indicated that they never follow the news. The graph below (figure 5) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.



*Figure 5 – General news consumption: frequency (The Netherlands)*

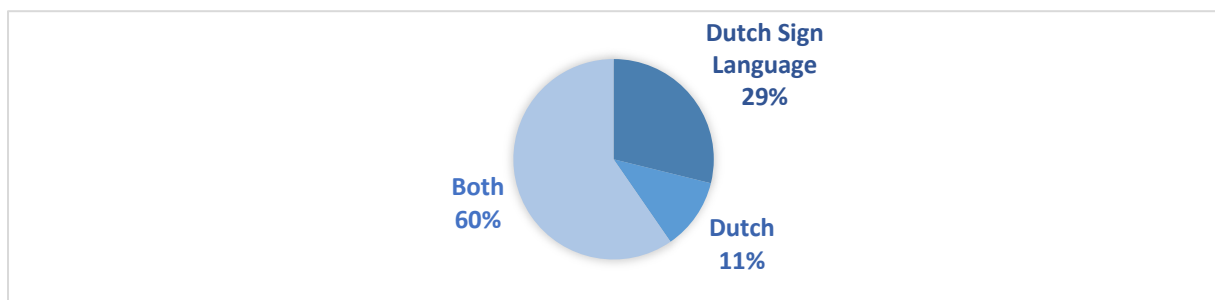
Among the 155 respondents, the majority prefer social media (123 respondents, 79.3%) and the internet (101 respondents, 65.2%). News apps (81 respondents, 52.3%) and television (77

respondents, 49.7%) are also regularly consulted. Newspapers and magazines are read by 44 respondents (28.4%), and 40 respondents (25.8%) obtain their news through verbal communication or sign language.

Of the 157 respondents, 45 individuals indicated a preference for following news exclusively in Dutch Sign Language (NGT). This group consists solely of respondents who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. A larger group of 93 respondents chose both Dutch Sign Language and Dutch. Within this group, 16 respondents are hearing.

Additionally, 18 respondents selected Dutch as their sole preferred language for news consumption. Among them, 7 are hearing, while the remaining 11 are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. All the latter consider Dutch Sign Language to be their first language, often alongside Dutch. One respondent from this group provided her contact details and was invited to elaborate on her preference. However, this respondent did not respond to our email prior to the completion of this research report.

One respondent expressed a preference for following news in both Dutch and Dutch with Signs (*Nederlands met Gebaren*), a supportive signing system that complements spoken Dutch with signs. Since this is not a fully-fledged language, this respondent has been excluded from the graph below (figure 6).

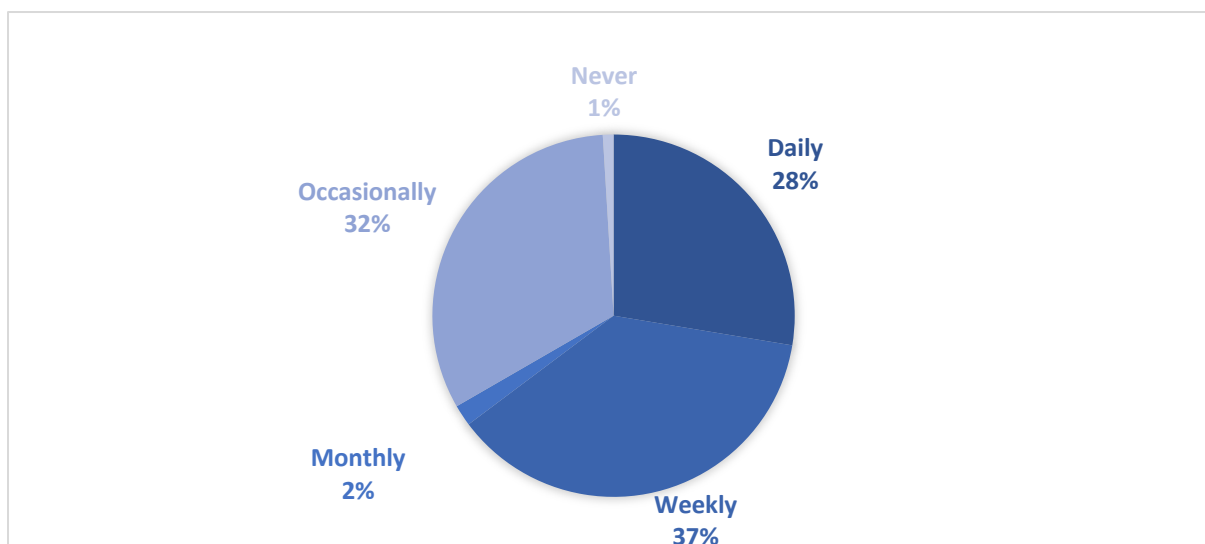


*Figure 6 – General news consumption: preferred language (The Netherlands)*

#### 4.2.1.4. Slovakia

Of the 105 respondents, only 29 indicated that they follow the news daily, while a larger group of 39 respondents does so weekly. Additionally, a group of 34 respondents stated that they occasionally follow the news. Two respondents reported following the news monthly, and one respondent does not follow the news at all. The graph below (figure 7) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.





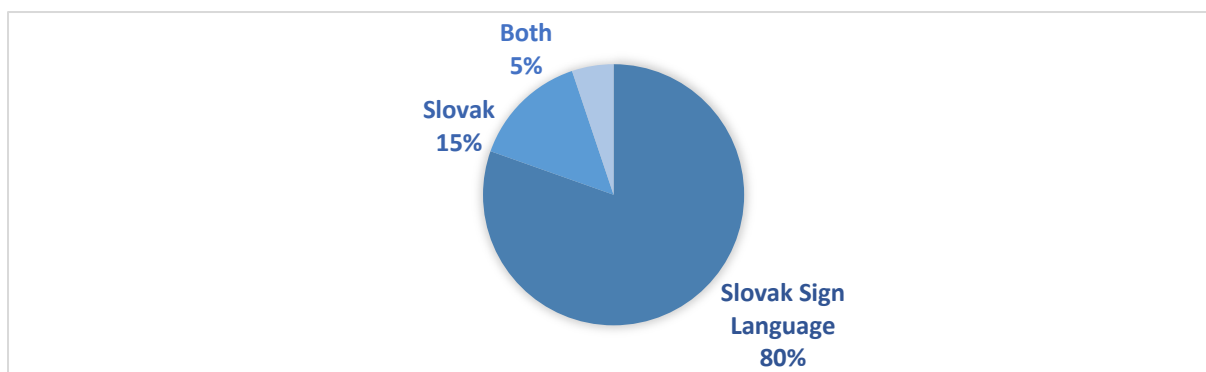
*Figure 7 – General news consumption: frequency (Slovakia)*

Among the 104 respondents, the majority access news via the internet (90 respondents, 86.5%), followed by social media (64 respondents, 61.5%) and television (55 respondents, 52.9%). Less frequently mentioned sources include news apps (27 respondents, 26%), newspapers and magazines (21 respondents, 20.2%), and verbal/sign language communication (19 respondents, 18.3%).

Of the 105 respondents, a significant number, namely 78, indicated a preference for Slovak Sign Language (SPJ) as the language in which to follow the news. Notably, three of these respondents are hearing, while the majority are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Only five respondents chose both languages: Slovak Sign Language and Slovak. Of these five respondents, four are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind, while one is hearing.

Furthermore, 14 respondents specified Slovak as their sole preferred language. Among this group, five respondents are hearing, while 4 out of the 14 are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind and consider Slovak Sign Language to be their first language. Unfortunately, these respondents did not provide contact information for further clarification.

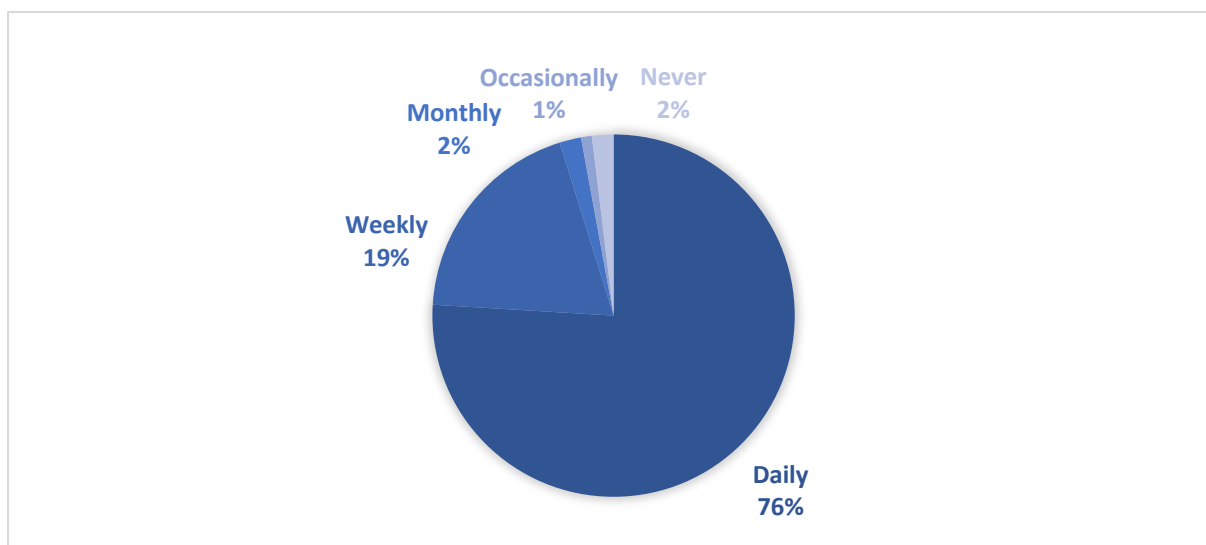
Finally, seven respondents indicated that they use *Posunkovaná slovenčina*, which literally translates to "signed Slovak." This signing system supports the spoken Slovak language with signs, but it is not a fully-fledged sign language. For this reason, the users of this system have been excluded from the graph below, as has the respondent who indicated a preference for Russian and Ukrainian languages.



*Figure 8 – General news consumption: preferred language (Slovakia)*

#### 4.2.1.5. Sweden

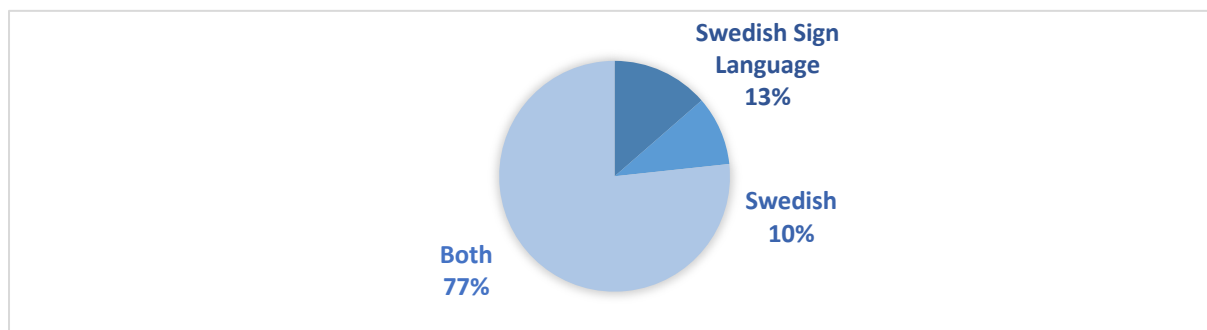
Of the 104 respondents, a significant group of 79 indicated that they follow the news daily. A smaller group of 20 respondents does so weekly, while 2 respondents consume news only monthly. Additionally, one respondent stated that he/she follows the news sporadically, and two respondents indicated that they never follow the news. The graph below (figure 9) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.



*Figure 9 – General news consumption: frequency (Sweden)*

Among the 102 respondents, the most commonly used channels for news consumption are the internet (84 respondents, 82.4%) and social media (82 respondents, 80.4%). News apps are consulted by 59 respondents (57.8%), while television is mentioned slightly less frequently (48 respondents, 47.1%). Newspapers and magazines attract the attention of 26 respondents (25.5%), and verbal/sign language communication is used as a news source by 17 respondents (16.7%).

Of the 104 respondents, only 14 indicated Swedish Sign Language as their sole preferred language for following the news. All respondents in this group are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. A larger group of 79 respondents designated both Swedish Sign Language and Swedish as their preferred languages.



*Figure 10 - General news consumption: preferred language (Sweden)*

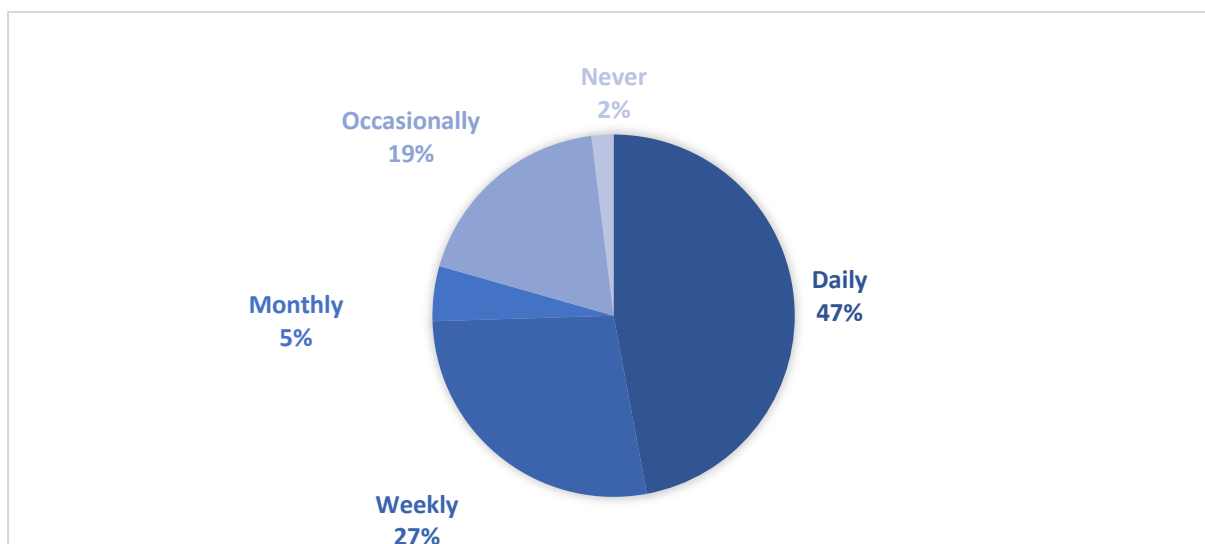
Additionally, 10 respondents specified only Swedish as their preferred language for news consumption, of which two are hearing. The remaining eight respondents, who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind, classified Swedish Sign Language as their first language. Two of these respondents provided their contact information for further clarification. They prefer reading in Swedish because it allows them to quickly skim through the text to determine whether or not the content interests them. If it does, they can then re-read it more slowly or opt for the sign language version.

One respondent indicated a preference for another sign language, namely Swiss German Sign Language, and has therefore been excluded from the graph (figure 10).

#### 4.2.1.6. France

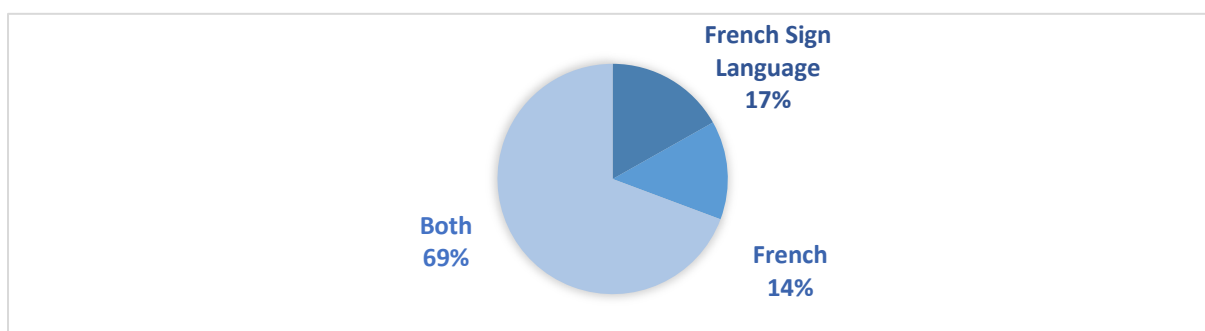
Of the 102 respondents, 48 reported that they follow the news daily. Smaller groups of 28 and 19 respondents indicated that they follow the news weekly and sporadically, respectively. Only 5 respondents stated that they limit their news consumption to a monthly frequency, while 2 respondents never follow the news. The graph below (figure 11) illustrates the various frequencies in percentages, rounded to whole numbers.

Among the 100 respondents, the majority access news via the internet (79%), followed by social media (62%) and television (51%). News apps (33%) and newspapers/magazines (32%) are used less frequently. Finally, a small group of 19 respondents indicated that they obtain their news from others.



*Figure 11 – General news consumption: frequency (France)*

Of the 102 respondents, 17 indicated a preference for following the news in French Sign Language (LSF). This group consists solely of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. A larger group of 70 respondents expressed a preference for both French Sign Language and French. Of this group, only five respondents are hearing.



*Figure 12 – General news consumption: preferred language (France)*

Fourteen respondents specified only French as their preferred language for following the news. Among this group, five are hearing, while the remaining nine are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. Eight of these respondents classified French Sign Language (LSF) as their first language, alongside French. One respondent indicated a preference for LfPC (*Langue française Parlée Complétée*) as a preferred language in addition to French. This is a signing system that supports spoken language with signs. Four of these respondents provided their contact information for further clarification if needed. From their responses, the following reasons can be identified as to why they prefer following the news in French:

- Written French as a First Language:** One respondent mentioned that reading news content in French feels more comfortable and accessible because it is their native language.

- **Speed and Efficiency:** Written content offers flexibility and freedom in reading, allowing them to control the reading pace rather than having to follow the fixed pace of a video. In written texts, they can skip or focus on sections of interest, which also saves time. It was also noted that watching a video in sign language takes longer than reading written text. One respondent even indicated that information is easier to retrieve when the news is in written form; with a search function, it is easier to find specific information in text than in a sign language video.
- **More News Articles Available:** Respondents felt that more news articles are available in written form, giving them access to a wider range of content. However, one respondent mentioned that there are few to no news renderings covering deaf-related news.
- **Depth and Plurality of Perspectives:** General news in sign language often lacks depth and diverse perspectives compared to written news articles from other available sources, which enable respondents to explore topics in greater detail and consider different viewpoints.

One respondent specified Arabic as their preferred language and has therefore been excluded from the graph (figure 12).

## 4.2.2. Consumption of news content by DJE

In this section of the survey, respondents are first asked whether they are familiar with the news content in their national sign language, which is produced by the organisations within the Deaf Journalism Europe (DJE) consortium. Respondents who indicate that they are not familiar with this news content are then directed to questions about other news offerings in sign languages. The second question focuses on whether respondents actually follow the news in sign language. If a respondent answers affirmatively ("yes"), they are asked how often they view this news content and through which channels. For respondents who indicate that they do not follow the news content in sign language ("no"), they are asked for the reasons behind this.

### 4.2.2.1. Flanders (Belgium)

All 223 respondents reported being familiar with *VGT nieuws*. Of this group, 220 respondents (98.7%) watch *VGT nieuws*, while only 3 respondents (1.3%) indicated that they do not follow the news.

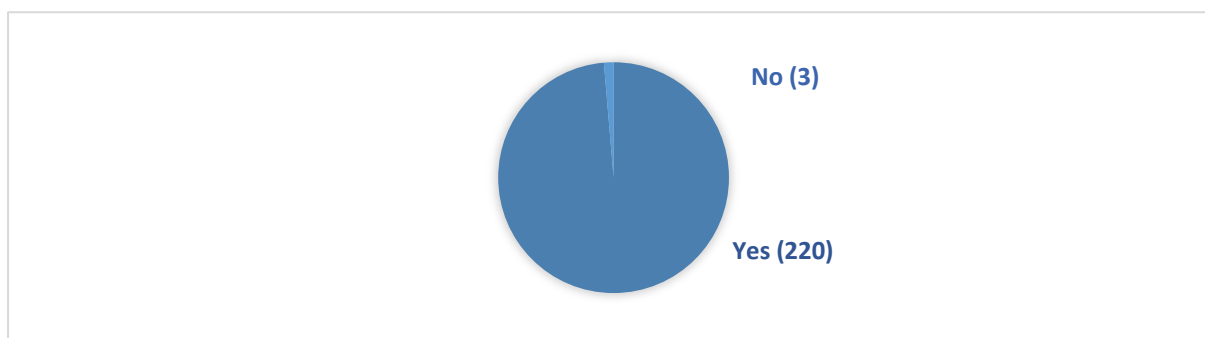


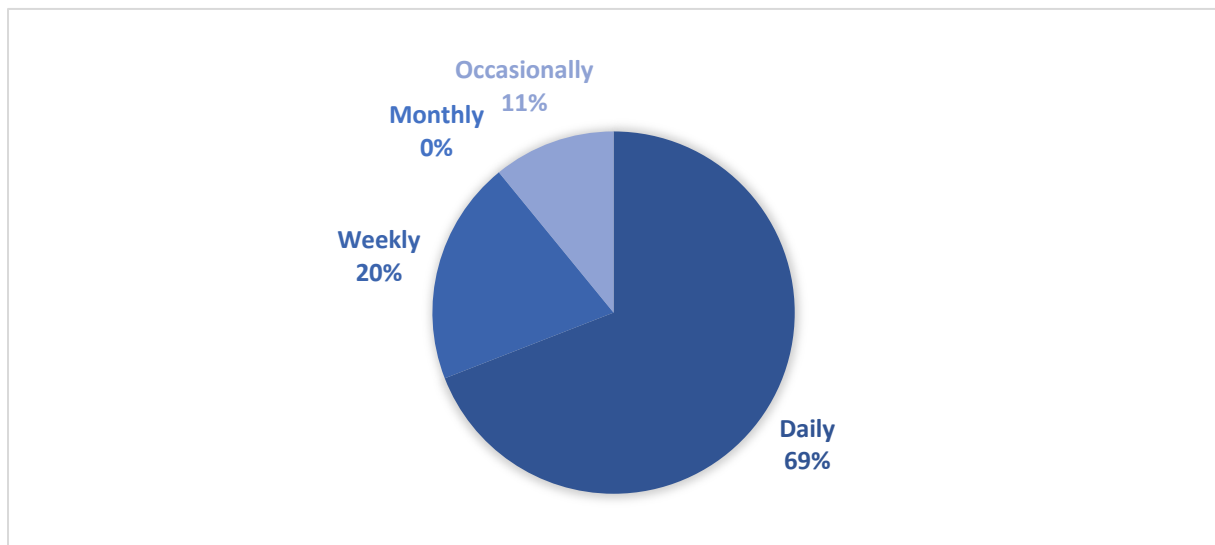
Figure 13 – Do you follow VGT nieuws?

The latter three respondents provided their reasons for the question “Why do you not watch VGT nieuws?”:

- **Respondent #1** (deaf/hard of hearing/deafblind, age category 45–54 years) prefers reading, for instance on the internet and via news apps. Following the news on television is not high on their list of preferences. This respondent has indicated that his preferred language for news consumption is Dutch, but he also states that he would follow news in Flemish Sign Language (VGT) if it were presented by a deaf presenter. Upon further analysis, it appears that he finds *VGT nieuws* important for supporting the Flemish deaf community, but is personally satisfied with the free written Dutch news sources available.
- **Respondent #2** indicated that he does not understand *VGT nieuws*, as he claims to know only about 400 signs. This respondent is hearing and falls within the age category of 55–64 years. He expressed a preference for following the news with a hearing interpreter who translates from Dutch to Flemish Sign Language.
- **Respondent #3** (deaf/hard of hearing/deafblind, age category 45–54 years) simply noted “no interpreter” in his response, without further elaboration. However, this respondent did indicate that she follows the 19:00 news programme from VRT with hearing interpreters. Notably, she expressed a preference in the survey for news presented by a deaf presenter, rather than a hearing interpreter. The respondent has granted permission to be contacted for further clarification. When she was contacted by the researcher, she submitted a video in Flemish Sign Language and expressed confusion regarding her media consumption, noting that she follows *VGT nieuws* while also traditionally watching the interpreted news with hearing interpreters on VRT. She was unsure why she had answered “no” to the question of whether she follows *VGT nieuws*. By “no interpreter”, she means that she prefers not to watch hearing interpreters, as both she and her husband acknowledged that they do not fully understand the interpreters. Consequently, she prefers deaf presenters in *VGT nieuws*, partly because the videos are shorter and clearer. She also mentioned that

she often watches these videos in her own time, for example, while waiting in the car for her children to come out of school.

When asked about the frequency of watching *VGT nieuws*, the majority of respondents indicate that they do so daily. A total of 152 respondents follow *VGT nieuws* daily, while 44 respondents watch weekly. Additionally, a smaller group of 24 respondents indicated that they watch *VGT nieuws* sporadically.



*Figure 14 – How often do you watch 'VGT nieuws'?*

A bar chart is used to examine whether there are differences in the viewing behaviour of respondents regarding general news and *VGT nieuws*. In the graph below (figure 15), the y-axis represents the frequency of viewing behaviour for general news, while the x-axis presents the number of respondents per frequency category for *VGT nieuws*. The graph (figure 15) reveals shifts in news consumption patterns. More specifically, the analysis shows that a greater number of respondents watch *VGT nieuws* more frequently compared to general news. For instance, there are respondents who only follow general news weekly, monthly, occasionally, or not at all, yet are still more motivated to consume *VGT nieuws* on a daily basis.

When asked "*Through which channel do you watch VGT nieuws videos ?*", the 220 respondents were able to select various options. The analysis indicates that Instagram (133 respondents, 60.5%) and Facebook (114 respondents, 51.8%) are the most commonly used channels for watching *VGT nieuws*. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that respondents younger than 18 exclusively use Instagram, while respondents aged 75 and older do not access this platform at all. The data show that Instagram is primarily popular among younger age groups (under 45 years). Among respondents aged 45 and older, Facebook is consulted more frequently than Instagram, and there is also an increase in the use of websites (45 respondents, 20.5%) and newsletters (34 respondents, 15.5%). Additionally, YouTube (34

respondents, 15.5%) is particularly popular among the 55–64 age category, compared to other age groups.

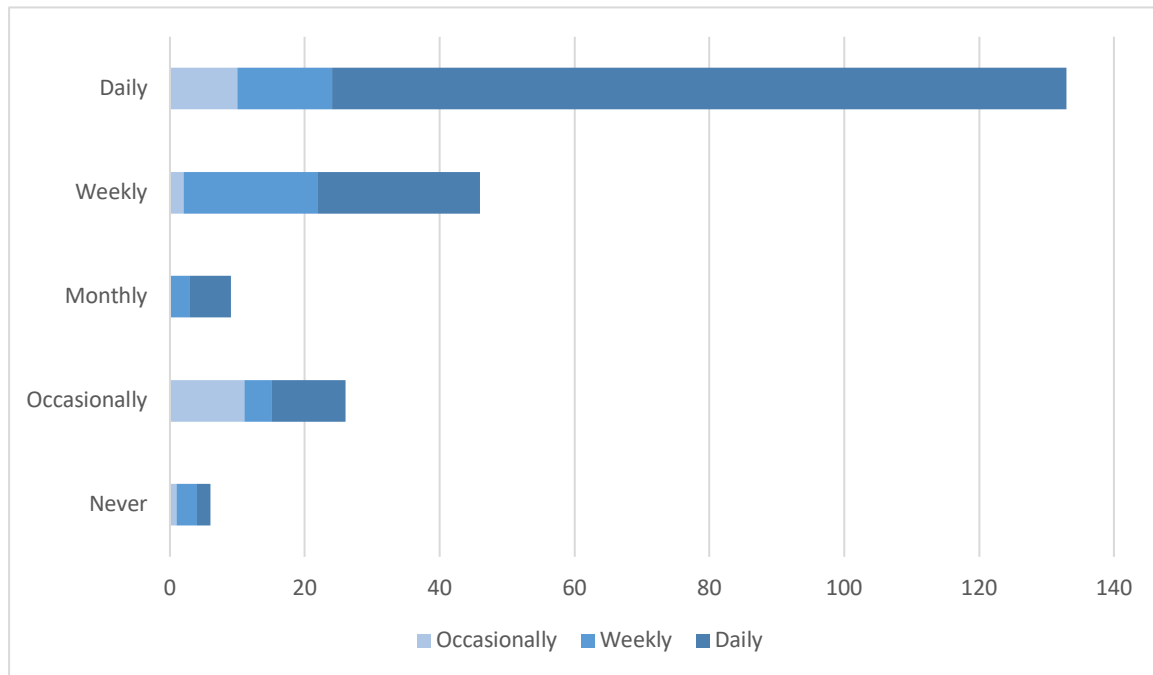


Figure 15 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and 'VGT nieuws'

#### 4.2.2.2. Germany

With co-funding from the DJE project, manua has been producing *Taubenschlag*, a news service in German Sign Language and German, since 6 November 2023. Out of 186 respondents, 115 (61.8%) are familiar with this news service. There are no notable socio-demographic differences among the 71 respondents (38.2%) who are not aware of it. Of the 115 respondents who are familiar with *Taubenschlag*, 79 (68.7%) actively follow it.

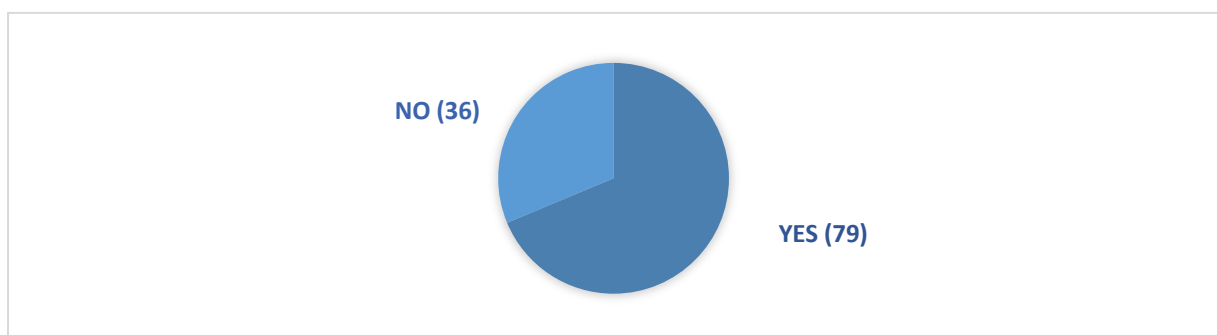


Figure 16 – Do you follow 'Taubenschlag'?



The 36 respondents who do not follow *Taubenschlag* are all deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. They provided various reasons for their choice:

- **Lack of time:** 16 respondents cited lack of time as a reason. Some provided specific reasons for their limited time.
- **Paywall:** 2 respondents indicated that they do not wish to pay to access the news service.
- **Lack of information:** 3 respondents stated that they do not have enough information about *Taubenschlag* or do not know where to access it.
- **Publication frequency:** 4 respondents had differing opinions about the frequency of *Taubenschlag* publications. Three respondents felt there was too little news, while the other expressed feeling overwhelmed by the volume of information (which may relate to news in general, rather than specifically to *Taubenschlag*).
- **Lack of interest:** 4 respondents did not see the value in *Taubenschlag* and, therefore, showed no interest in following it. One respondent mentioned preferring newspapers and television.
- **Content preference:** 1 respondent remarked that he prefers news about his region and Germany (e.g., political news) rather than news specifically related to deafness.
- **Sign language usage:** 1 respondent stated that they do not watch the service because of the sign language style used by the presenters.
- **Future interest:** 1 respondent indicated plans to follow *Taubenschlag* in the future.

Four respondents were unable to specify their reasons, as they were unsure themselves.

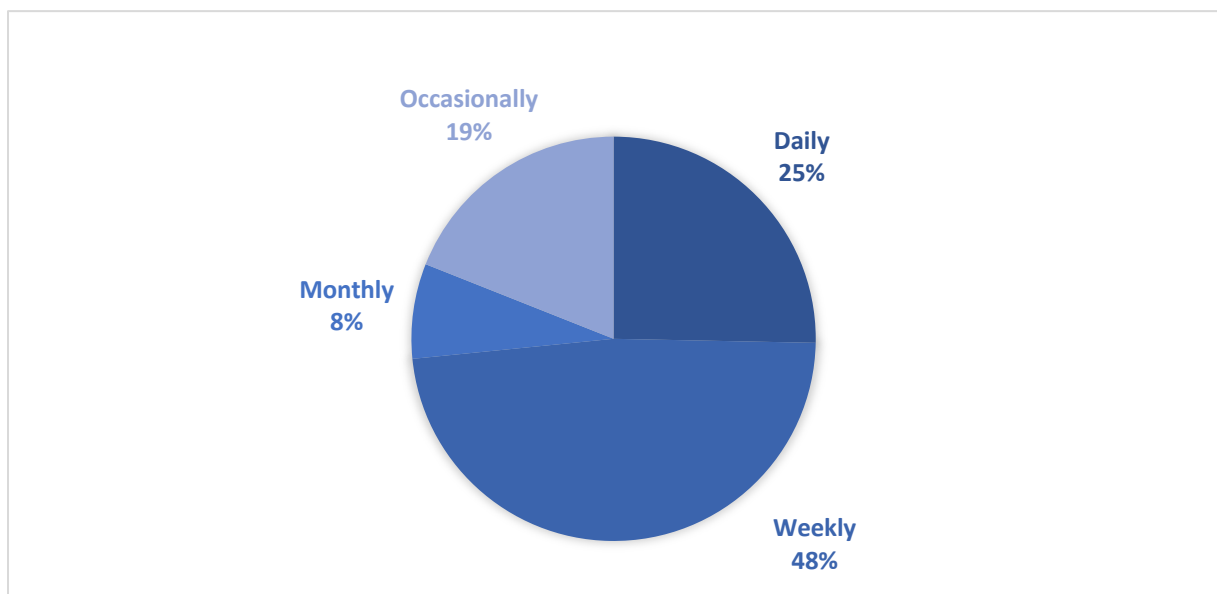
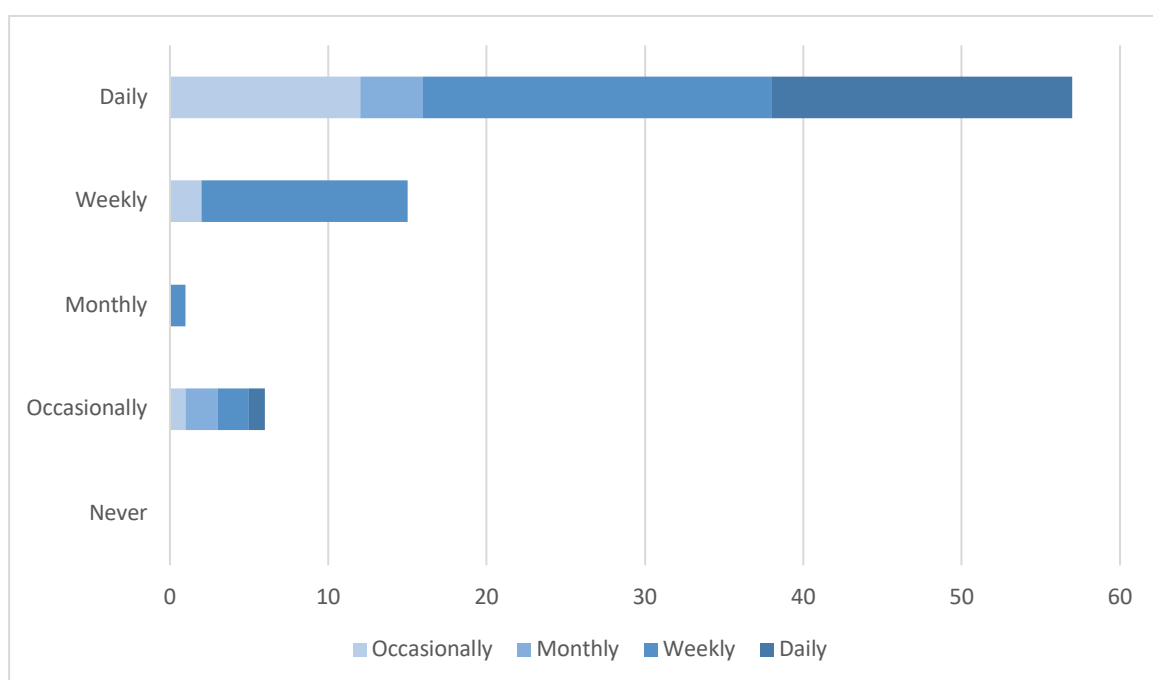


Figure 17 – How often do you watch 'Taubenschlag täglich'?

An analysis of viewing frequency shows that most respondents access the *Taubenschlag* platform weekly. Of the respondents, 38 use *Taubenschlag* weekly, followed by 20 respondents who access it daily, and 15 respondents who use it occasionally. A smaller group of 6 respondents access *Taubenschlag* monthly.

A bar chart (figure 18) is used to examine differences in respondents' viewing habits between general news and *Taubenschlag*. In the chart, the y-axis represents the frequency of general news consumption, while the x-axis shows the number of respondents in each frequency category for *Taubenschlag*. The results indicate that relatively few respondents watch *Taubenschlag* more frequently than they watch general news. In fact, some respondents access *Taubenschlag* less often than they consume general news daily.



*Figure 18 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and 'Taubenschlag täglich'*

Since manua's news service, *Taubenschlag täglich*, is only available on two platforms (website and Instagram), we did not investigate which channels respondents use to access it. Nevertheless, we deemed it valuable to analyse which age groups follow this news service (see figure 19). Although the number of respondents is limited, it is notable that younger age groups are particularly interested in following *Taubenschlag täglich*.

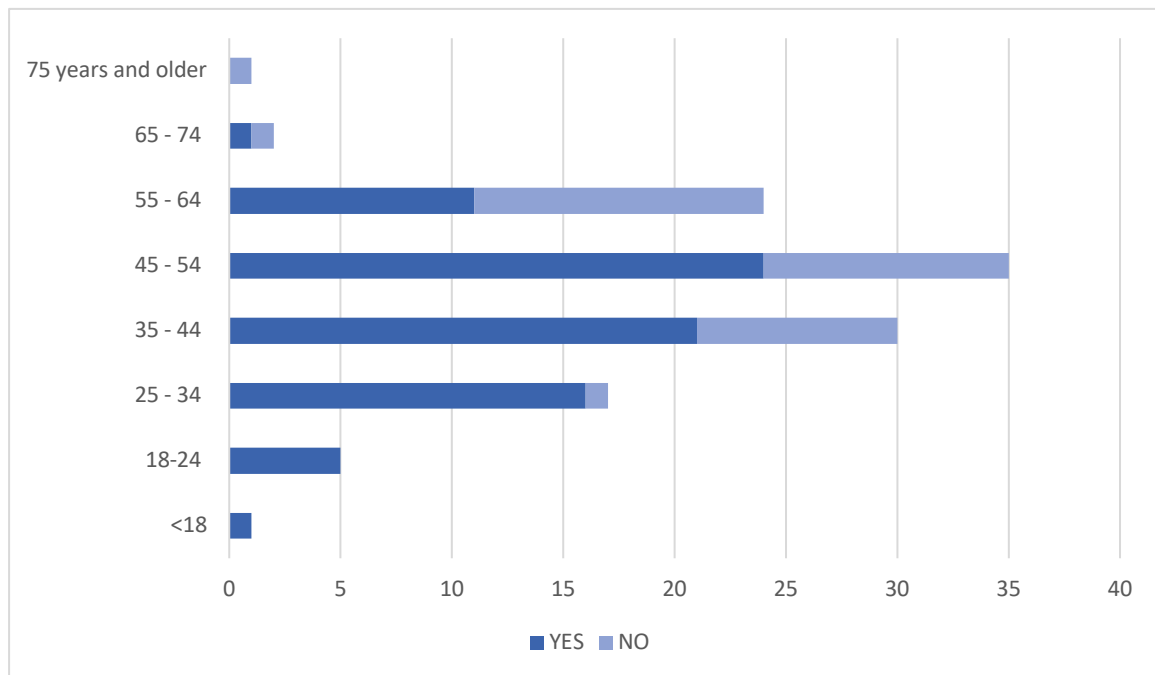


Figure 19 - Do you follow 'Taubenschlag'? (age categories)

#### 4.2.2.3. The Netherlands

Since the beginning of September 2023, Turkoois, with support from the DJE project, has launched a news service in Dutch Sign Language called *DNieuws*. Out of the 157 respondents, 153 (97.5%) indicated that they were aware of this news service, of whom 141 (92.2%) actively follow it.

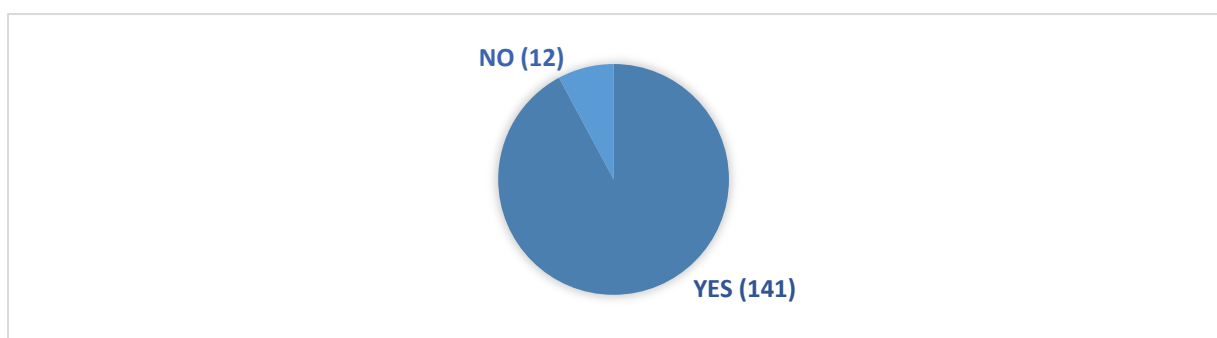


Figure 20 - Do you follow 'DNieuws'?

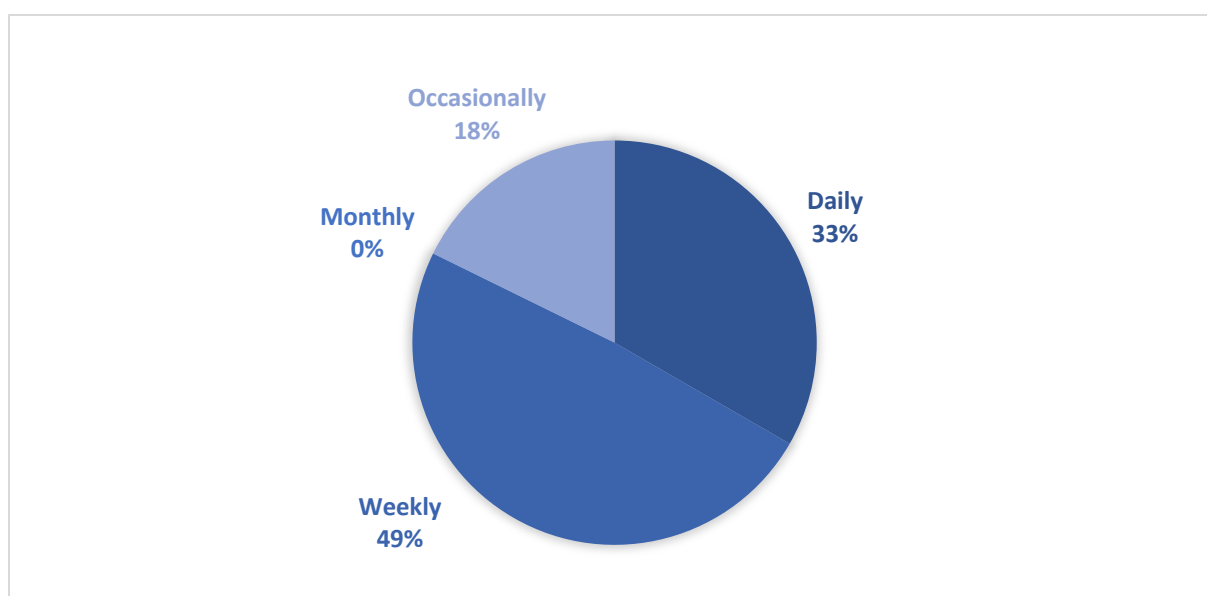
Only 12 respondents (7.8%) do not follow *DNieuws*, and their reasons are as follows:

- **Low visibility:** Two respondents mentioned that they rarely see *DNieuws* appear because they are not very active on social media. They suggested that news videos be distributed via email or news apps so they could receive notifications.

- **Preference for other formats:** Three respondents preferred reading the news in Dutch or watching news broadcasts with subtitles. One respondent noted that subtitles are not available for *DNieuws* videos.
- **Lack of interest:** Three respondents expressed no interest in *DNieuws*. One described the content as too lengthy, while another stated that it often covers "old news", which may imply that *DNieuws* publishes news later than mainstream sources do.
- **Political preference:** One respondent felt that *DNieuws* is politically "too left-leaning".
- **Importance of *DNieuws*:** One hearing respondent indicated in the survey that they do not personally follow *DNieuws*, but consider the service important for the deaf and hard of hearing, including their own child.

One respondent did not provide a specific reason for not following *DNieuws*.

Regarding the frequency with which respondents watch *DNieuws*, the majority indicated that they follow it weekly. In total, 69 respondents watch *DNieuws* weekly, 47 respondents watch it daily, and 25 respondents watch it occasionally.



*Figure 21 – How often do you watch 'DNieuws'?*

To analyse differences in viewing habits between general news and *DNieuws*, a bar chart (figure 22) was created. In this chart, the y-axis represents the frequency of general news consumption, while the x-axis displays the number of respondents in each frequency category for *DNieuws*. The results show that fewer respondents follow *DNieuws* daily compared to general news. At the same time, some respondents who follow general news only weekly, sporadically, or not at all, consult *DNieuws* more frequently.

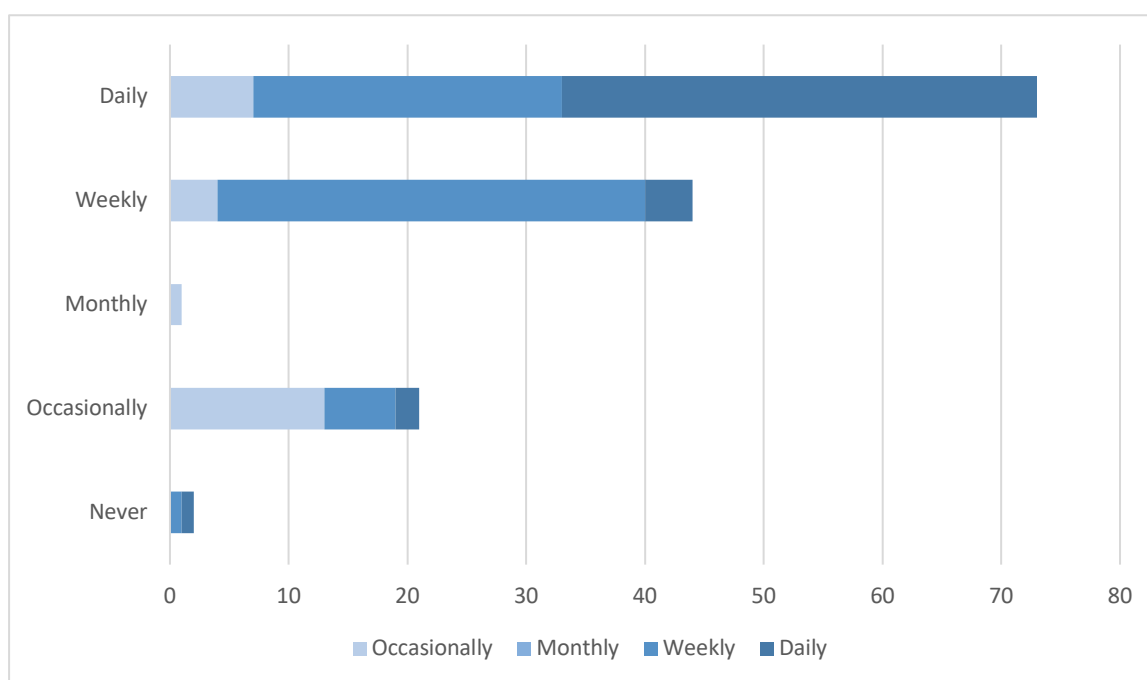


Figure 22 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and ‘DNieuws’

With regard to the platforms used to watch *DNieuws* videos, 141 respondents were allowed to select multiple options. Notably, Instagram was the most accessed platform, with 110 respondents (78%) choosing it. The remaining platforms were used significantly less frequently, in the following order: Facebook (42 respondents, 29.8%), YouTube (29 respondents, 20.6%), WhatsApp channel (19 respondents, 13.5%), and the *DNieuws* website (18 respondents, 12.8%). Further analysis reveals that Instagram is primarily used by younger age groups (under 55 years). Moreover, it is noteworthy that respondents from older age categories are relatively underrepresented.

#### 4.2.2.4. Slovakia

*Správy SPJ*, a news service in Slovak Sign Language, has been available since September 2023, made possible by the DJE project. Of the 105 respondents, 98 (93.3%) reported being aware of this service, of whom 89 (90.8%) actively follow it.

Only 9 respondents (9.2%) do not follow *Správy SPJ*, and their reasons are as follows:

- **Lack of time:** Two respondents mentioned that they do not have time to follow *Správy SPJ*.
- **Cost:** One respondent cited financial reasons for not following *Správy SPJ*. This is noteworthy, as the news service is provided free of charge to the public.
- **Preference for other sources:** One respondent indicated a preference for following news from the national broadcaster RTVS, which is accessible with interpretation in Slovak Sign Language (SPJ).

- **Visibility:** Two respondents felt that the visibility of this news service, such as on social media, is insufficient.

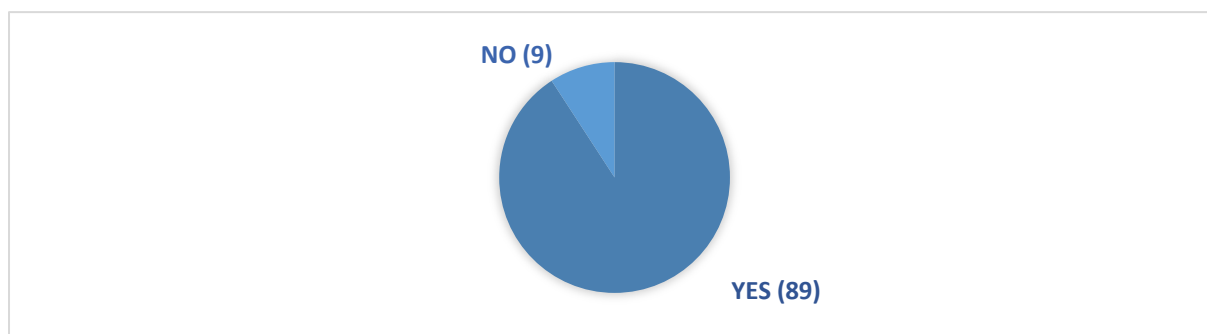


Figure 23 – Do you follow 'Správy SPJ'?

Three respondents gave unclear or incomplete answers, and unfortunately, they did not provide their contact details at the end of the survey, preventing further clarification.

Among the 89 respondents who follow *Správy SPJ*, 39 reported consulting it weekly. A group of 25 respondents follow it sporadically, while 22 respondents watch this news source daily. Only a very small number, 3 respondents, reported following this Slovak Sign Language news service monthly.

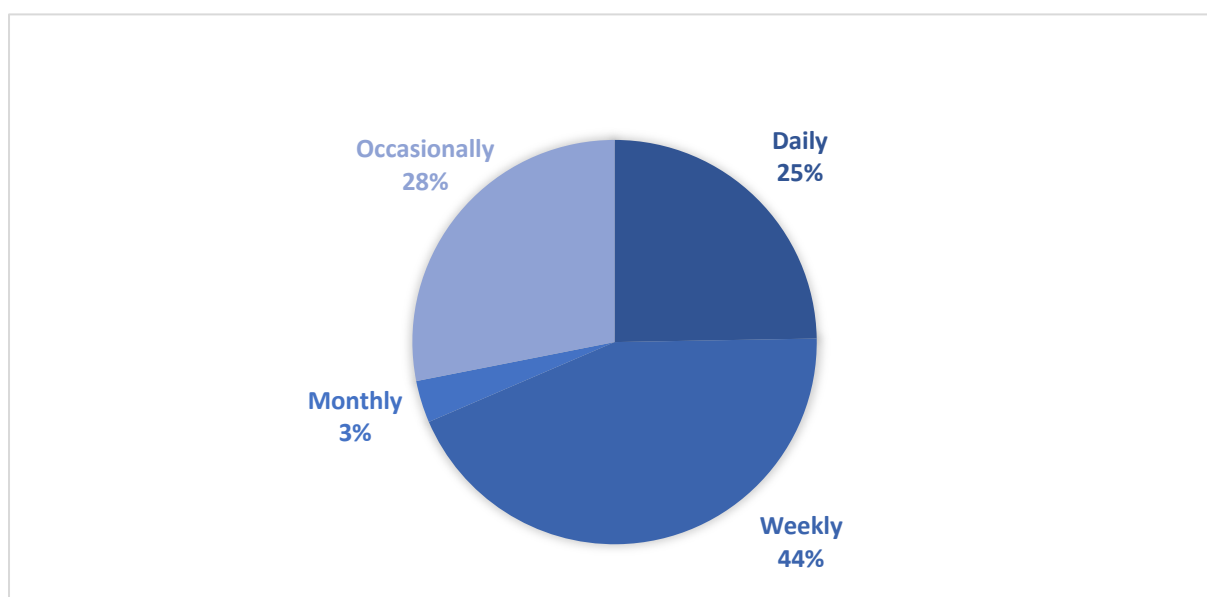


Figure 24 – How often do you watch 'Správy SPJ'?

To analyse differences in news consumption between general news and *Správy SPJ*, a bar chart (figure 25) was created. In this chart, the y-axis represents the frequency of general news consumption, while the x-axis shows the number of respondents in each frequency category for *Správy SPJ*. Notably, a larger number of respondents who watch general news weekly also follow *Správy SPJ* weekly. However, a small group of respondents consults this

news source daily. This pattern is also evident among respondents who watch general news sporadically. At the same time, there are respondents who follow general news daily but access *Správy SPJ* on a weekly or sporadic basis.

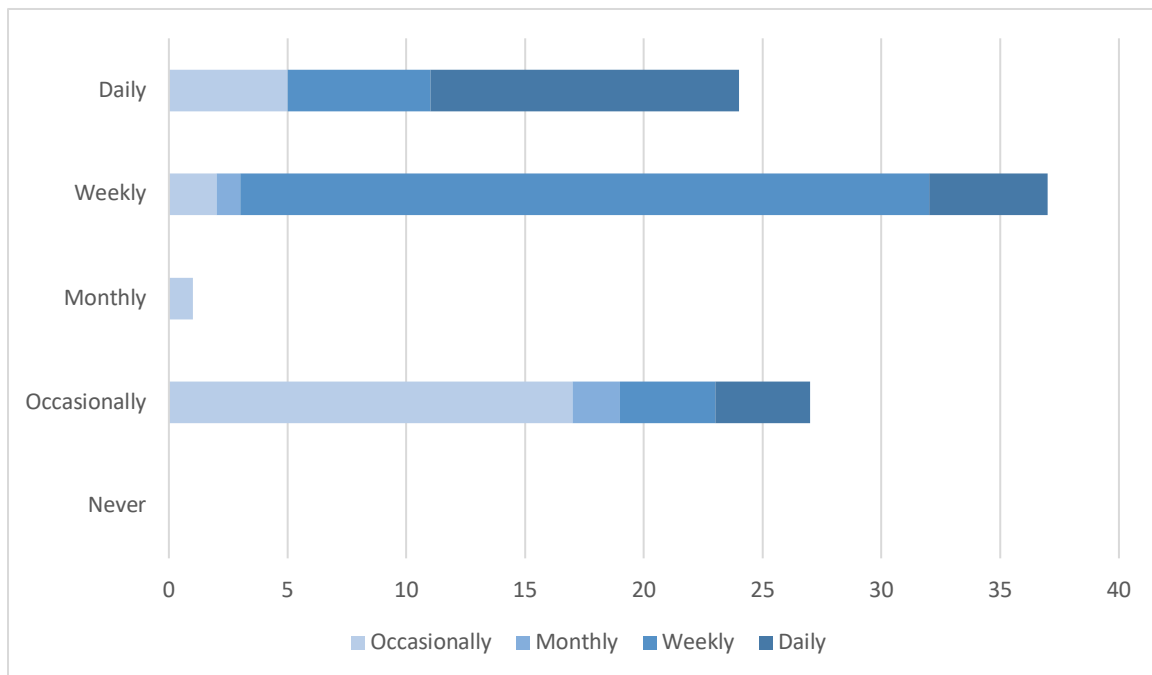


Figure 25 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and 'Správy SPJ'

Among the 89 respondents, three *Správy SPJ* platforms receive the most attention: Facebook (50 respondents, 56.2%), the website (49 respondents, 55.1%), and Instagram (43 respondents, 48.3%). The WhatsApp channel is used by only 11 respondents (12.4%) to follow this news service. It is important to note that the underrepresentation of respondents from older age groups (55 and above) complicates further analysis of platform preferences.

#### 4.2.2.5. Sweden

Since 1 September 2023, *Teckenbro*, supported by the DJE project, has launched *Teckenrapport*, a news service in Swedish Sign Language. Of the 104 respondents, 100 (96.2%) indicated that they were aware of this news service. Of this group, 94 respondents (94%) actively follow *Teckenrapport*, while only 6 respondents (6%) reported not following it.

These six respondents, all of whom are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, provided various reasons for not following *Teckenrapport*:

- **Doubts about expertise:** Two respondents expressed doubts regarding the journalistic expertise of the *Teckenrapport* editorial team.
- **Lack of trust:** One respondent stated a lack of trust in *Teckenrapport*, mentioning that the platform had published news about an organisation with which the respondent was closely associated, claiming that the content was inaccurate.

- **Visibility:** Two respondents mentioned that *Teckenrapport* does not appear prominently enough, such as in their Facebook feed.
- **Preference for written news:** One respondent prefers reading Swedish news in text form and occasionally watches *Teckenrapport* depending on the sign language presenter in the videos.

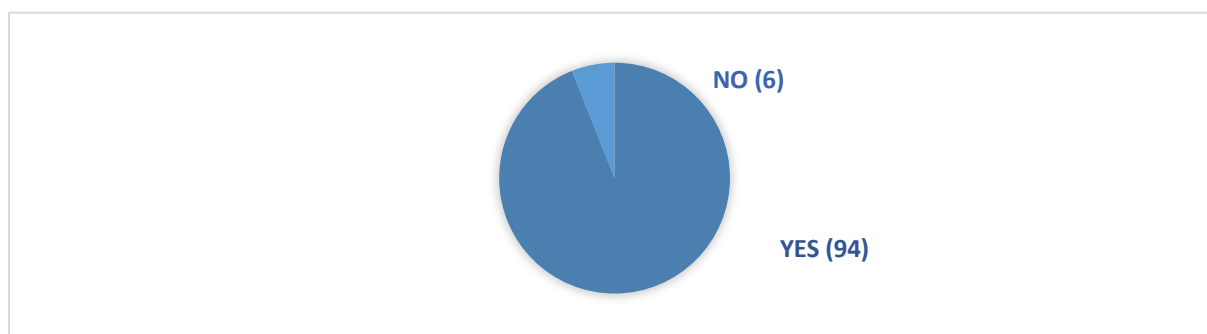


Figure 26 – Do you follow *Teckenrapport*?

Among the 94 respondents who follow *Teckenrapport*, a substantial group of 51 (54.3%) reported watching it daily, while 36 respondents (38.3%) follow it weekly. Only 3 respondents (3.2%) access this news service monthly, and 4 respondents (4.3%) follow it sporadically.

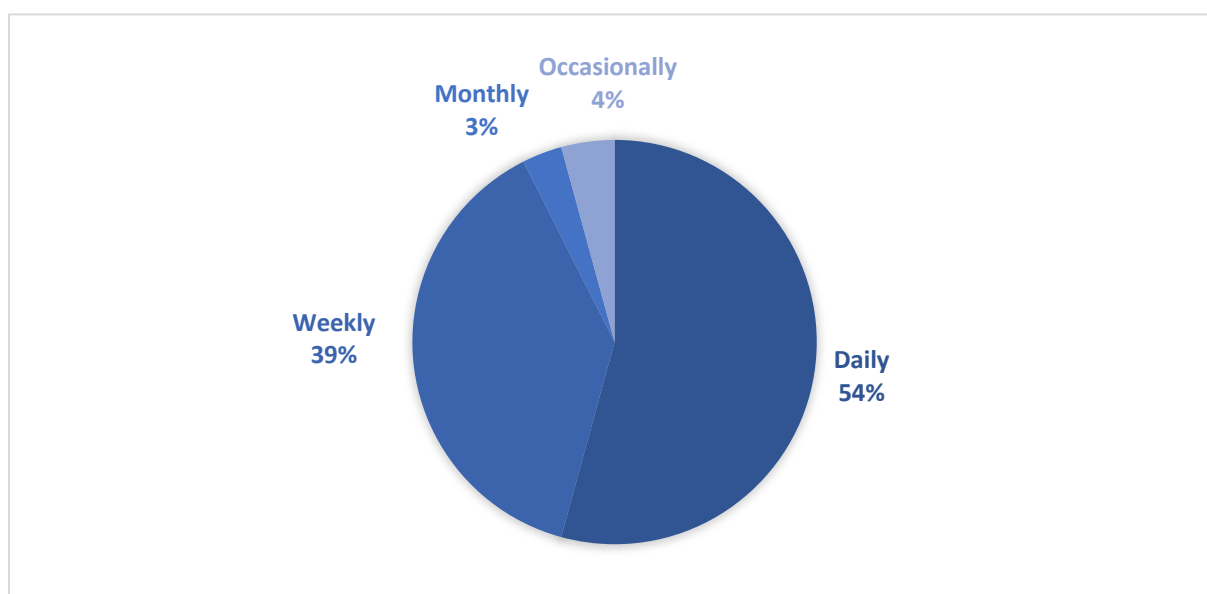
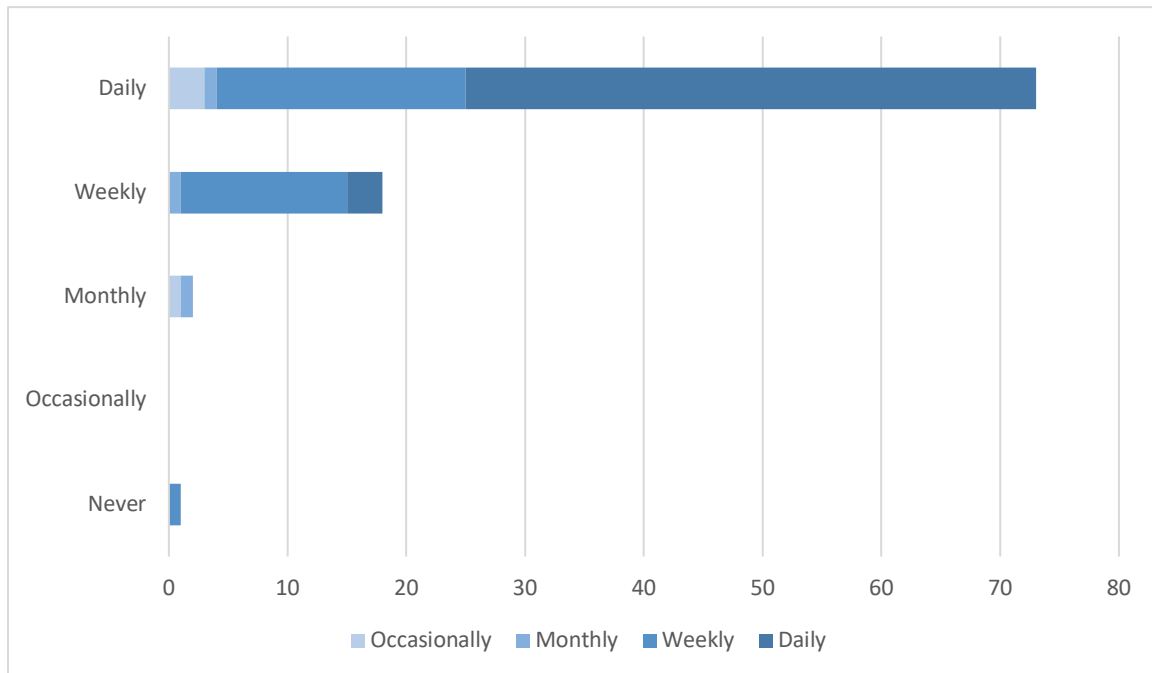


Figure 27 – How often do you watch *Teckenrapport*?

To analyse the differences in news consumption between general news and *Teckenrapport*, a bar chart (figure 28) was created. In this chart, the y-axis represents the frequency of general news consumption, while the x-axis displays the number of respondents per frequency category for *Teckenrapport*. Interestingly, although many respondents watch general news daily, they follow *Teckenrapport* less frequently. Conversely, there are also



respondents who watch general news only weekly or not at all, yet access *Teckenrapport* more regularly.



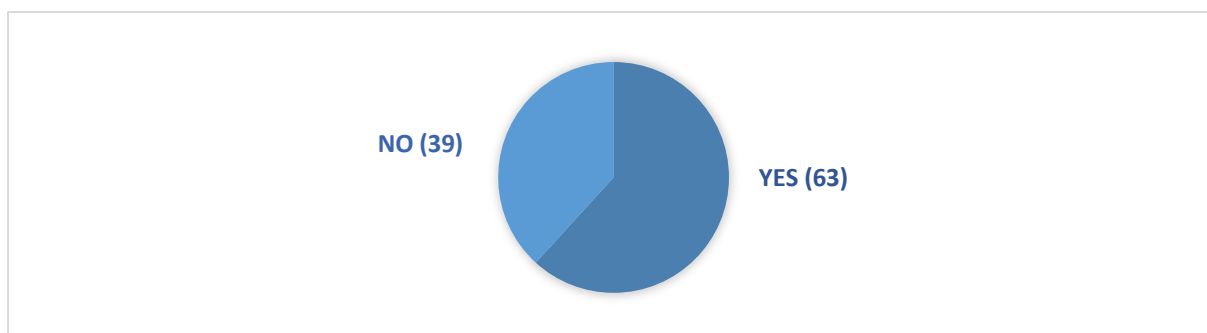
*Figure 28 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and ‘Teckenrapport’*

Among the 94 respondents who participated in the survey, two media platforms were found to be the most popular for accessing *Teckenrapport*. Facebook, used by 63 respondents (67%), and Instagram, used by 55 respondents (58.5%). The *Teckenrapport* website is accessed by 22 respondents (23.4%), while YouTube is the least popular, with only 7 respondents (7.4%) using it.

Although the relatively small number of respondents limits the ability to draw strong conclusions, it is notable that Facebook and Instagram are less commonly used by respondents aged 55 and above. Additionally, YouTube is not used at all by respondents in these older age groups.

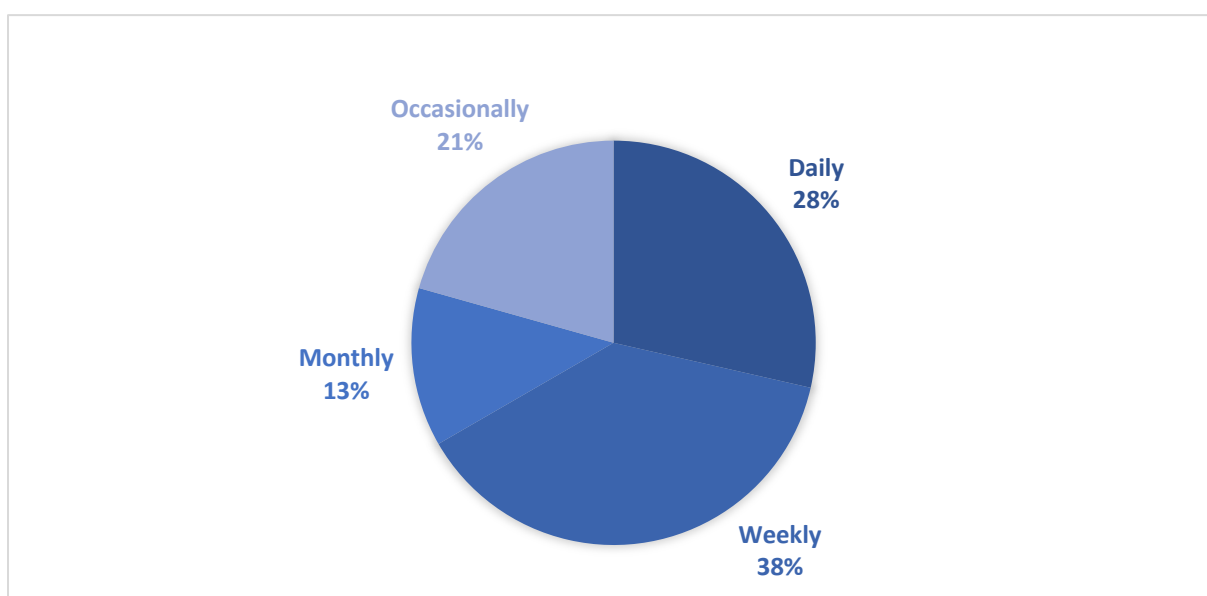
#### 4.2.2.6. France

All 102 respondents are familiar with Médiapi, which provides news in French Sign Language (LSF). As this news service existed prior to the DJE project, the French survey differed from those in other countries. Instead of asking whether they follow Médiapi, respondents were asked if they subscribe to it. Sixty-three respondents reported having a subscription, while 39 respondents do not. Additionally, respondents were asked to share the reasons behind their choice of whether or not to subscribe. More details on this can be found on the following pages.



*Figuur 29 – Are you a Médiapi subscriber?*

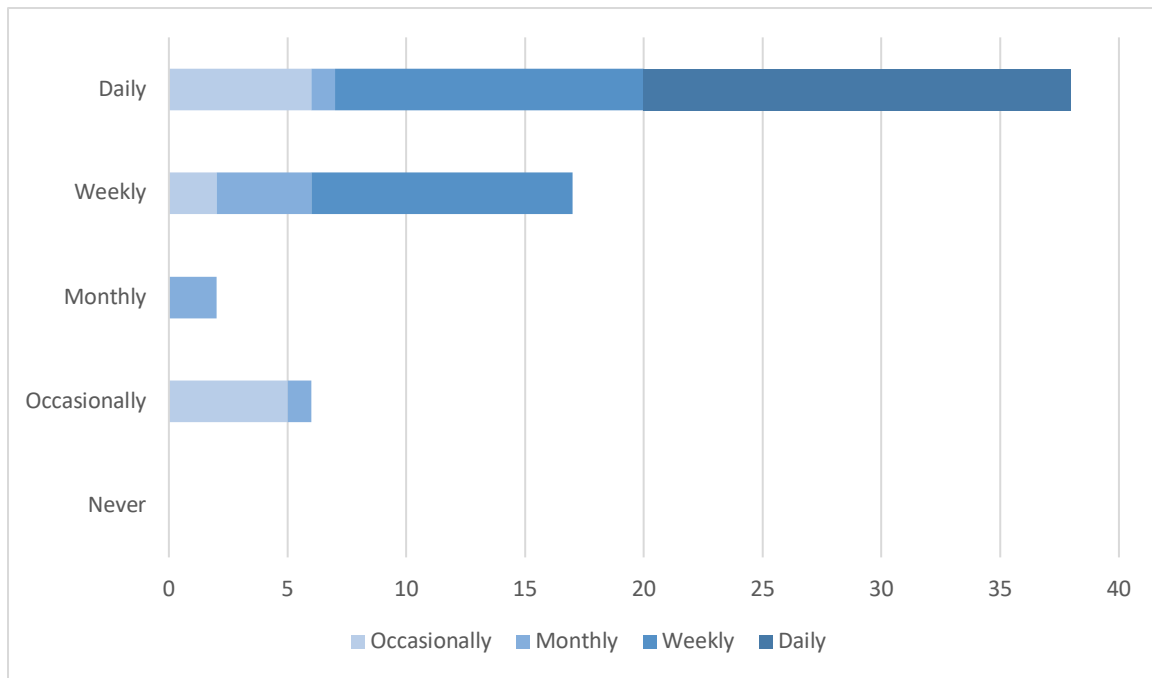
Among the 63 respondents who have a subscription to Médiapi, 18 indicated that they watch it daily. A group of 24 respondents follow it weekly, while 8 respondents watch it monthly. Lastly, 13 respondents reported consulting the news service occasionally.



*Figure 30 – How often do you watch 'Médiapi'?*

To analyse the differences in news consumption between general news and Médiapi, a bar chart (figure 31) was created. In this chart, the y-axis represents the frequency of general news consumption, while the x-axis shows the number of respondents per frequency category for Médiapi. It is notable that a large number of respondents follow Médiapi less frequently than they do general news.

As Médiapi primarily provides news via subscriptions on a paid basis through its website, this report will not further discuss the platforms respondents use to access the service.



*Figure 31 – Comparison of viewing behaviour: general news and 'Médiapi!'*

### 4.2.3. Consumption of other news offerings in sign languages

In addition to comparing the general news consumption habits of the respondents, this third section examines how alternative news offerings in national sign languages are consumed. In the first question, respondents were given the opportunity to select their current ways of news consumption from a list of existing news services in their national sign language, excluding the news offerings provided by partners within the DJE consortium. Additionally, they had the option to select "none" if they do not utilise other news services in sign languages.

The second question, "How do you prefer to access the news in your national sign language?", aimed to gauge respondents' preferences regarding the presentation format. They could choose between a deaf presenter (where the news is presented directly in sign language, tailored to the language and information needs of the deaf community), a deaf interpreter, or a hearing interpreter (where a standard news broadcast is made accessible through an in-vision sign language interpreter).

#### 4.2.3.1. Flanders (Belgium)

In Flanders, since 2012, the 19:00 News and the children's news programme *Karrewiet* have been provided with a Flemish Sign Language interpreter by the public broadcaster VRT. The 19:00 News employs a hearing interpreter, while *Karrewiet* broadcasts are interpreted by deaf interpreters.

The research indicates that 148 respondents (66.4%) do not follow any specific news services in Flemish Sign Language; two of these respondents do not follow the *VGT nieuws* either. Out of the 223 respondents, 63 (28.2%) reported watching the 19:00 News with hearing interpreters, of whom 18 also follow *Karrewiet* with deaf interpreters. Additionally, there are 12 respondents who exclusively watch *Karrewiet* with deaf interpreters. Although *Karrewiet* is specifically aimed at children under the age of 12, it is noteworthy that only five of the 30 *Karrewiet* viewers (13.5%) are under 35 years old, while 13 of them are aged 55 or older.

Interestingly, only one respondent indicated that they exclusively watch the news with hearing interpreters, without following the *VGT nieuws*. This respondent was contacted because she had left her contact details. She admitted that she may have mistakenly answered "no" to the question about whether she follows *VGT nieuws* in the survey (see section 4.2.2.1).

When asked how the respondents prefer to access news in Flemish Sign Language, they could choose from three options, but only one preference could be indicated. The majority, 191 respondents (85.7%), preferred a deaf presenter. A smaller number, 21 respondents (9.4%), preferred a deaf interpreter for Flemish Sign Language. This result is notable, given that only five of them follow *Karrewiet* with VGT. Further inquiry, facilitated by some respondents providing their contact details, revealed that confusion occasionally arose. This confusion stemmed from the fact that most presenters of the *VGT nieuws* are also certified deaf interpreters, or because the distinction between a deaf presenter and a deaf interpreter was not fully understood. Additionally, some respondents expressed the expectation that a presenter delivering news in sign language should possess the qualifications of a sign language interpreter.

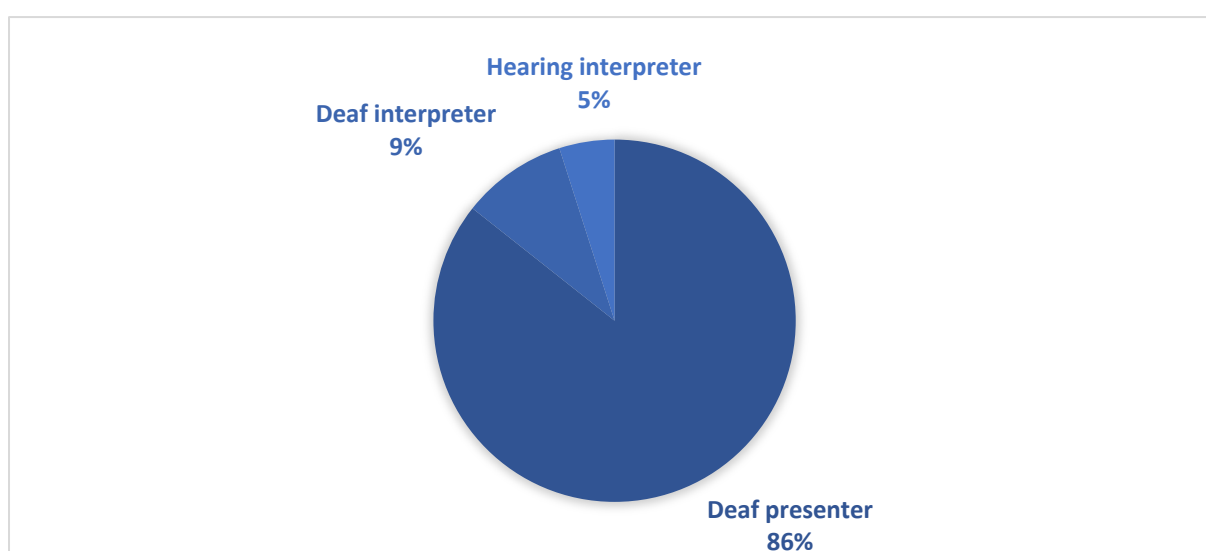


Figure 32 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (Flanders)

Only 11 respondents (4.9%) indicated a preference for a hearing interpreter for Flemish Sign Language. Among this group, three respondents were hearing, one of whom reported

having insufficient knowledge of Flemish Sign Language. No specific reasons for the preferences of the other eight respondents—who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind—could be determined. Of this group, five watch the *VGT nieuws* daily, two weekly, and one occasionally. Only one respondent (aged 55-64) provided their contact details. This respondent indicated that she does enjoy following *VGT nieuws*, but she feels "obliged" to choose to watch the 19:00 News with a hearing interpreter. She fears that if lobbying occurs to replace the existing news offering in Flemish Sign Language provided by VRT with another format presented by a deaf presenter, such as *VGT nieuws*, the hearing interpreters may become less motivated to continue interpreting in other settings. In Flanders, the deaf community is facing a significant shortage of interpreters, and the influx of new sign language interpreters has drastically declined in recent years. Therefore, she hopes that hearing interpreters will continue to have this interesting employment opportunity on a national television channel, ensuring that the profession of "sign language interpreter" remains appealing.

#### 4.2.3.2. Germany

In Germany, since 1997, the news programmes *Tagesschau* (at 20:15) and *Heute Journal* (at 21:45) have been made accessible with interpreters in German Sign Language (DGS). These interpreted broadcasts are aired on the television channel Phoenix, which is jointly managed by ARD and ZDF. In most cases, hearing interpreters are used and rarely a deaf interpreter.

Additionally, there are German television programmes such as *Sehen statt Hören* and *Hand drauf*, which are broadcast by the regional broadcasters *Bayerischer Rundfunk* (BR) and *Südwestrundfunk* (SWR), respectively. These programmes primarily focus on providing information about current topics and issues relevant to the deaf community (human interest).

The popularity of these two programmes is notably high: 150 respondents (80.6%) report watching *Hand drauf*, and 142 respondents (73.3%) follow *Sehen statt Hören*. In contrast, the news broadcasts made accessible with interpreters in DGS are significantly less frequently viewed. Only 70 respondents (37.6%) watch ARD *Tagesschau* in DGS, and 44 respondents (23.7%) follow ZDF *Heute Journal* in DGS.

An interesting pattern emerges among the respondents who follow the digital news platform *Taubenschlag täglich*. Of the 79 respondents who indicate using this platform, not even half (32 respondents) watch the interpreted news broadcasts from ARD and/or ZDF. Among the 107 respondents who are unfamiliar with or do not follow *Taubenschlag täglich*, fewer than half (48 respondents) also watch these accessible news broadcasts.

When asked which presentation format in German Sign Language is preferred, a majority of 125 respondents expressed a preference for a deaf presenter. Additionally, a smaller group of 28 respondents chose a deaf interpreter. Among this latter group, 17 respondents are

familiar with the news platform *Taubenschlag täglich*, of whom 9 actively follow the platform.

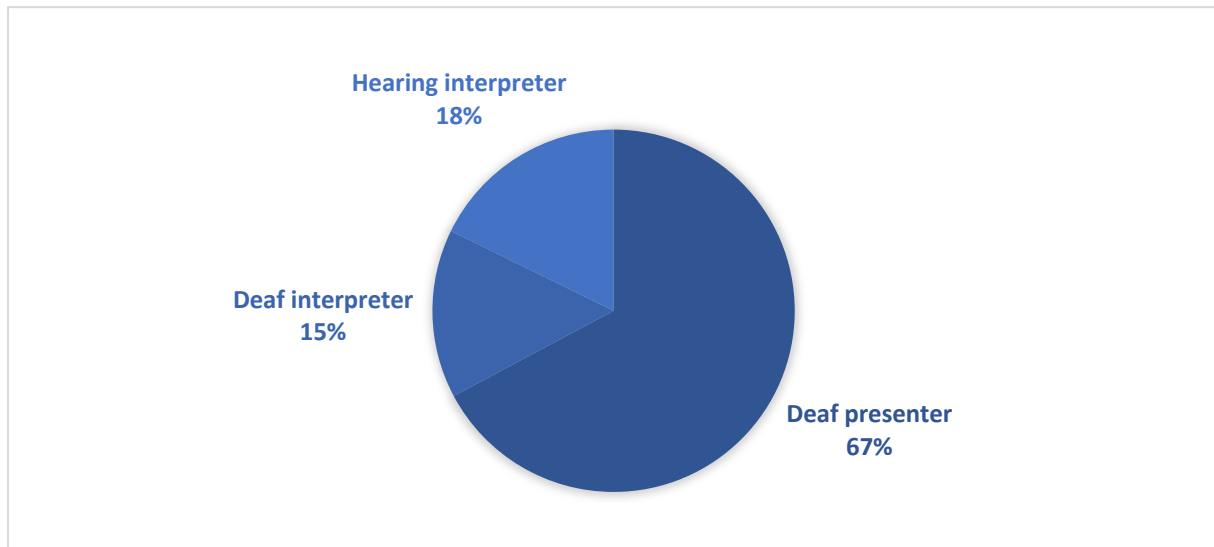


Figure 33 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (Germany)

A significant number of 33 respondents preferred a hearing interpreter. Two of these respondents are hearing individuals. It is notable that within this group, only 12 respondents are aware of *Taubenschlag täglich*, and half of them follow the platform. Three respondents from this group provided their contact details for possible follow-up inquiries. However, they did not reply to our email before the completion of this research report.

#### 4.2.3.3. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the public broadcaster NOS offers the *Journal* and the *Jeugdjournaal* with interpreters in Dutch Sign Language (NGT), exclusively employing hearing interpreters. Of the 157 respondents, a significant number, specifically 85 respondents (54.1%), watch the *Journal* with hearing interpreters. From this group, 73 respondents also follow *Dnieuws*.

A smaller group of 35 respondents (22.3%) reported watching the NOS *Jeugdjournaal* with interpreters, of whom 31 also follow *Dnieuws*. It is noteworthy that, despite the target audience of the *Jeugdjournaal* being children under 12 years old, only two respondents are younger than 18, while 23 respondents are over 35 years of age.

Additionally, a substantial number of 67 respondents (42.7%) indicated that they do not follow any other news services in Dutch Sign Language. However, among this group, 58 respondents do watch *Dnieuws*.

When asked how they prefer to access news in Dutch Sign Language, a large group of 115 respondents expressed a preference for a deaf presenter. Only 6 of these do not watch *Dnieuws*, with the reasons for this having been discussed above.

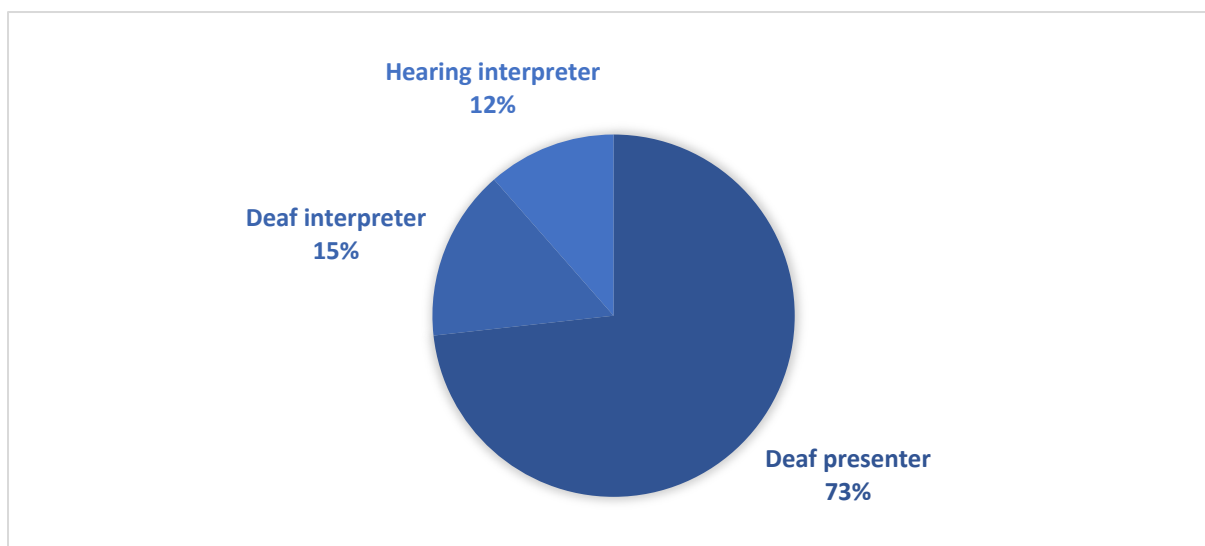


Figure 34 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (The Netherlands)

24 respondents preferred a deaf interpreter for Dutch Sign Language. Three of these are hearing individuals. Four respondents from this group do not follow *Dnieuws*, with two indicating that they are not familiar with this news offering. Some respondents who expressed a preference for a deaf interpreter provided their contact details for follow-up questions. Only one respondent replied to our email requesting clarification. He explained that, in his opinion, some deaf presenters seem less suited to presenting the news. As a result, he prefers "deaf interpreters" to deliver the news. This, according to the researcher, suggests that deaf interpreters are more thoroughly trained and more conscious of translating written language into sign language, or are skilled in presenting sign language (from a linguistic perspective) in an aesthetically pleasing manner on screen.

Only 18 respondents preferred a hearing interpreter for Dutch-Flemish Sign Language. Two of these respondents are hearing. Among the 18 respondents, 12 do watch *Dnieuws*, yet four of them do not follow the NOS *Journal* with hearing interpreters. This is notable, as these respondents watch *Dnieuws* but do not utilise the interpreted news, despite their preference for hearing interpreters. Unfortunately, they did not provide contact details for further clarification. Only one respondent from this group of 18 respondents shared their contact information; this respondent watches the NOS *Journal* with NGT interpreters but does not follow *Dnieuws*. He indicated that he prefers watching regular news broadcasts in the same way as hearing people do, meaning being able to follow a news broadcast that is simultaneously interpreted by a Dutch Sign Language (NGT) interpreter.

#### 4.2.3.4. Slovakia

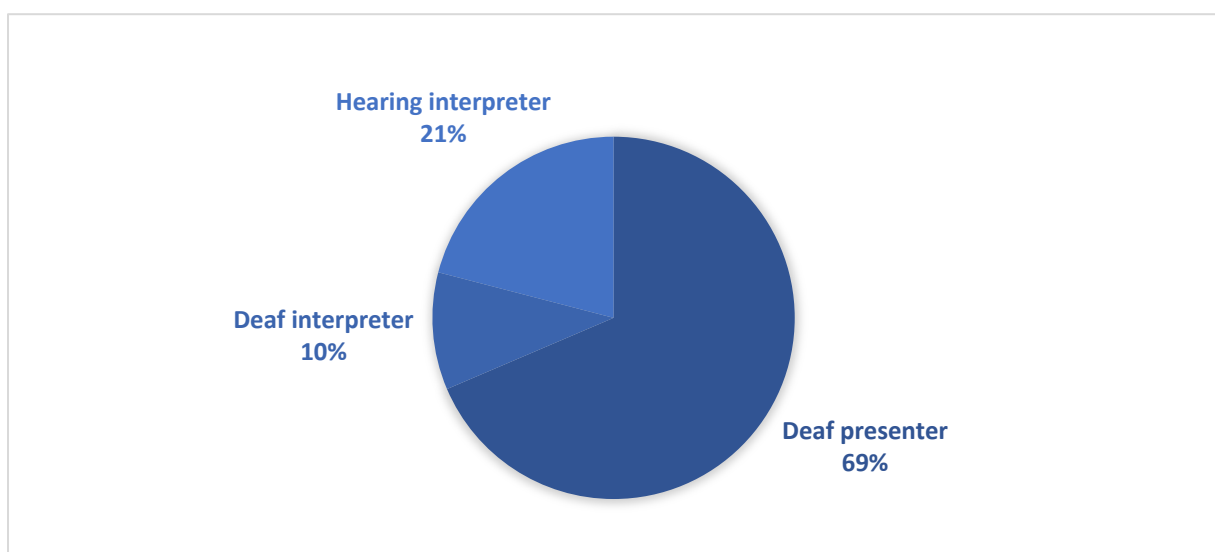
RTVS, the public broadcaster of Slovakia, provides news accessible in sign language. The news broadcasts are both interpreted by hearing interpreters and summarised in the programme *Správy v slovenskom posunkovom jazyku*, which is presented by a deaf host. Of the 105 respondents, 76 (72.4%) indicated that they follow the news broadcasts of RTVS;

however, this data does not specify which particular news programmes are being viewed. Among these 76 respondents, eight do not follow *Správy SPJ*.

*Televízny klub nepočujúcich* ("Television Club for the Deaf"), hosted by deaf and hard-of-hearing presenters, is a dedicated television magazine in Slovakia that targets the deaf community. Produced by RTVS, this programme offers information (human interest) and entertainment in Slovak Sign Language and is designed to meet the needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Of the respondents, 53 (50.5%) reported following this programme. Additionally, *Noviny TV JOJ*, a news programme from the Slovak commercial broadcaster TV JOJ, has also been made accessible with hearing sign language interpreters. Thirty-one respondents (29.5%) indicated that they follow this programme.

Lastly, 14 respondents (13.3%) stated that they do not follow any other news broadcasts in Slovak Sign Language, although 9 respondents do follow *Správy SPJ*.

Among the 105 respondents, a significant number—72 —preferred a deaf presenter for news offerings in Slovak Sign Language. Only 11 respondents preferred a deaf interpreter. Of these 11 respondents, 9 also indicated that they follow *Správy SPJ*. Unfortunately, none of these respondents provided contact details to inquire further information about their preference for deaf interpreters over deaf presenters.



*Figure 35 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (Slovakia)*

Additionally, 22 respondents expressed a preference for a hearing interpreter. All respondents in this group are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deafblind. Of these 22 respondents, 19 do follow other news offerings in Slovak Sign Language, as described above, and 18 of them watch these programmes. Two respondents from this group have provided their contact details for potential follow-up questions. Unfortunately, they were unable to respond before this report was finished.



#### 4.2.3.5. Sweden

*Nyhetstecken* (approximately translated as “The News in Sign Language”) is currently broadcast every weekday by the national broadcaster *Sveriges Television AB* (SVT). A deaf presenter summarises a selection of news items in *Svenskt teckenspråk* (TSP), the Swedish Sign Language. Of the 104 respondents, 65 (62.5%) follow this programme, while only 6 respondents from this group do not watch *Teckenrapport* from Teckenbro.

Additionally, the SVT news programme *Rapport* is provided with a mix of deaf and hearing interpreters. This programme is followed by 31 respondents (29.8%), of whom only four do not watch *Teckenrapport*.

Among the respondents, 29 (27.9%) indicated that they do not follow any other news broadcasts in Swedish Sign Language, while 26 of them do follow *Teckenrapport* from Teckenbro.

A significant number of respondents, specifically 90, expressed a preference for a deaf presenter. Only 10 respondents (9.6%) chose a deaf interpreter, two of whom do not follow *Teckenrapport*. One of these respondents does watch *Nyhetstecken*, while the other prefers to follow the news in Swedish.

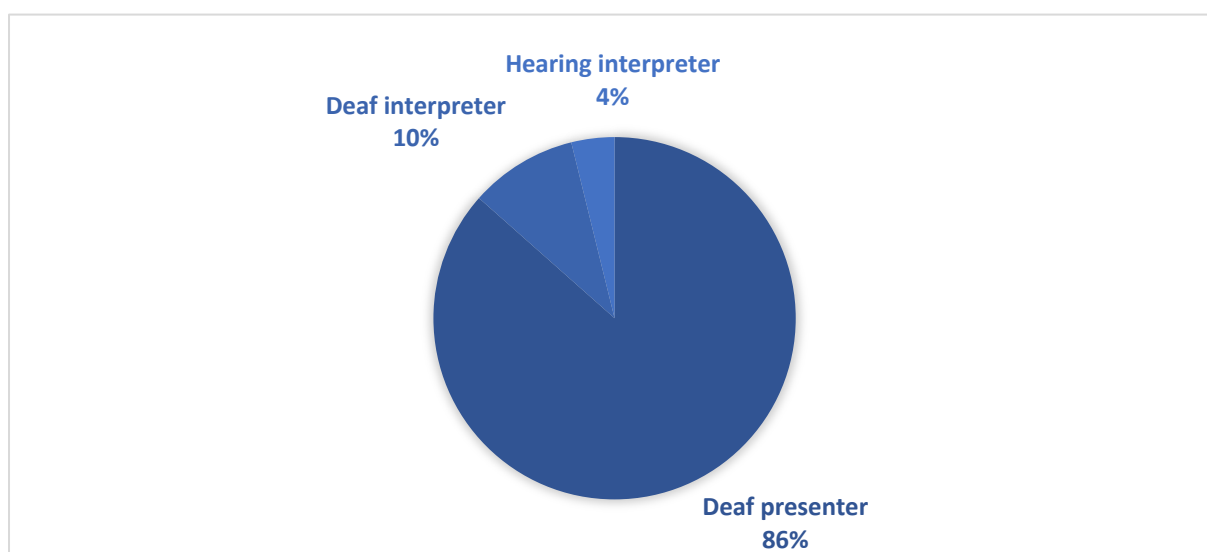


Figure 36 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (Sweden)

Only 4 respondents (3.8%) opt for a hearing interpreter. One of these four respondents is hearing, while the other three are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or deafblind, all of whom follow *Rapport* with a mix of deaf and hearing presenters; two of them also watch *Nyhetstecken*. These respondents have provided their contact details for potential follow-up questions but provided no answers at the completion of this research report.

#### 4.2.3.6. France

In France, the news programmes *France info* and *Télématin*, broadcast on the public television channel France 2, as well as the news broadcasts from the commercial news channel BFMTV, are made accessible with hearing interpreters in *Langue des Signes Française* (LSF). Of the 102 respondents, 42 (41.2%) indicated that they follow these accessible news broadcasts, with 29 also being subscribed to Médiapi.

Additionally, 79 respondents (77.5%) follow *L'œil et la Main*, a French television programme aimed at the deaf community, which is broadcast on France 5, another public channel in France. This programme focuses on informing, educating, and entertaining deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Among these respondents, 50 are subscribers to Médiapi.

Furthermore, 12 respondents (11.8%) reported that they do not follow any other news offerings in LSF, of whom only five have a subscription to Médiapi.

Among the 102 respondents, a significant majority—82 respondents—expressed a preference for news presentations in LSF by a deaf presenter. In contrast, 13 respondents preferred a deaf interpreter; of these 13 respondents, four are hearing. Among those who prefer a deaf interpreter, 9 are subscribers to Médiapi, while only five of them follow the news broadcasts accessible with hearing interpreters. It is therefore notable that these respondents prefer deaf interpreters; however, they did not leave contact details for further inquiries.

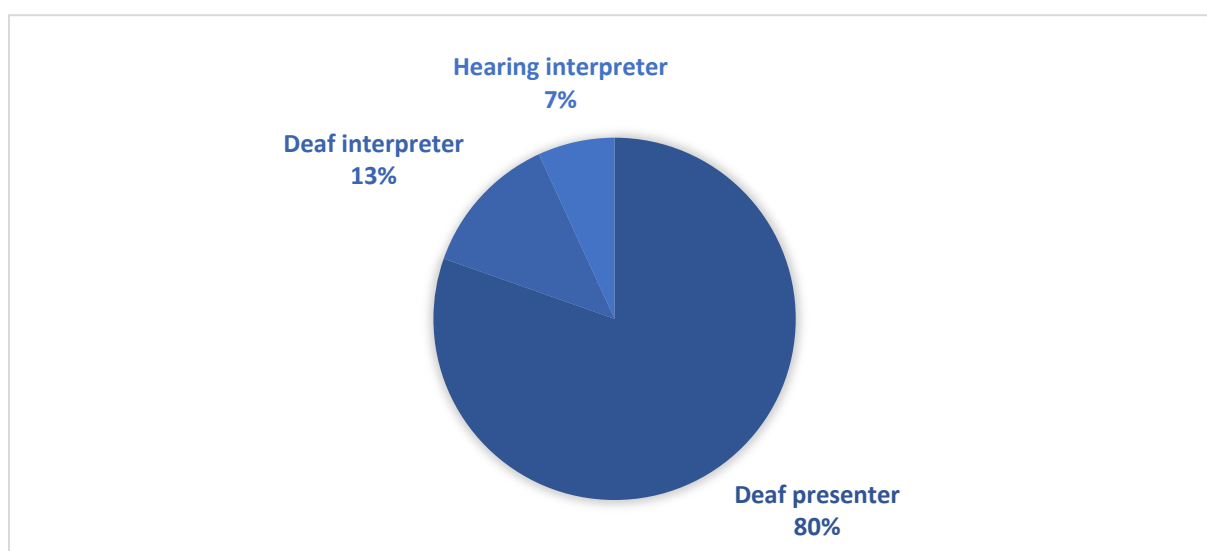


Figure 37 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation (France)

Only 7 respondents indicated a preference for hearing interpreters. Among this group, one is hearing. Only three of the seven respondents are subscribers to Médiapi, while four of them follow news broadcasts in LSF with hearing interpreters. These respondents also did not provide contact details for potential follow-up questions.

### 4.3. Expectations regarding DJE news services

In the third and final section of the survey, the focus is initially on assessing whether deaf signers are willing to pay for news services provided by deaf-led companies and organisations. Participants were also asked to explain their motivations for being willing or unwilling to pay, as well as the amount of money they would be prepared to spend. Additionally, the acceptability of including advertisements from sponsoring companies or organisations in the news services of DJE partners was briefly examined. Finally, respondents were presented with ten general statements regarding expectations for sign language news and were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each.

#### 4.3.1. Willingness to pay

Before assessing the willingness of respondents from the six surveys to pay for sign language news services provided by the DJE consortium, it is useful to first determine whether they currently pay for other written media. The responses to the question regarding existing subscriptions to written news sources, such as newspapers, magazines, or news apps, are summarised below (table 5).

	Yes	No	Total
Flanders	37	186	223
Germany	77	109	186
The Netherlands	25	132	157
Slovakia	20	85	105
Sweden	37	67	104
France	36	64	100
Total	232 (26,5%)	643 (73,5%)	875

*Table 5 – “Do you pay to access written news sources?”*

A significant proportion of respondents from all six countries indicated that they do not currently have a subscription. Notably, the highest rates of subscriptions were found in Germany (41.1%), followed by France (36%) and Sweden (35.6%). In contrast, the subscription rates in Flanders (16.6%), the Netherlands (15.9%), and Slovakia (19%) were the lowest.

There does not appear to be a direct correlation between the respondents' first language, their preferred language for consuming news, and whether or not they subscribe to written news sources.

Médiapi in France is currently one of the six DJE news services that operates on a subscription model. Consequently, France is excluded from the table below (table 6), which

provides an overview of the number of respondents who were asked to choose from three options in response to the question, "*Would you be willing to pay for access to our news service in your national sign language after the DJE project ends?*"

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Flanders	23	125	75	223
Germany	38	56	92	186
The Netherlands	31	58	68	157
Slovakia	35	30	40	105
Sweden	27	29	48	104
Total	154 (19,9%)	298 (38,4%)	323 (41,7%)	877

*Table 6 – Willingness to pay for DJE news offerings*

It is notable that a relatively low percentage of respondents (19.9%) expressed a willingness to pay for a DJE news service subscription. At the same time, a relatively small group (38.4%) indicated that they would not be willing to pay. A larger proportion of respondents (41.7%) were undecided at the time of completing the survey. In Flanders, there is a particularly stark contrast between respondents who would be willing to pay (10.3%) and those who would not (56.1%).

Regarding the survey on Médiapi, out of 102 respondents, 63 (61.8%) were current subscribers, while 39 (38.2%) were not. Although France is the only country where more respondents indicated a willingness to pay for a subscription than not, it is important to note that the survey in French and LSF may have been distributed through Médiapi's own channels, where existing subscribers are more likely to be active.

There is no immediate correlation between being a subscriber to written news and the willingness to pay for a subscription to news services in sign language.

#### 4.3.1.1. Motivations

In response to the question regarding the reasons why participants were willing to subscribe, or in the case of Médiapi, had already subscribed, respondents were asked to choose from three different options (with the possibility of selecting more than one), as well as to provide a personal reason if desired. The figures presented below represent the combined data from six countries, with a total of 877 respondents.

- The primary reason cited was to **support the continuation of high-quality news in sign language**, with 346 respondents (39.5%) selecting this option.
- The second most common reason was **the importance of financially supporting initiatives that benefit the deaf community**, as indicated by 330 respondents (37.6%).

- Additionally, 235 respondents (26.8%) **valued having access to news in their preferred language.**

Only a small number of respondents provided their own reasons in the survey. A total of 22 respondents (2.5%) articulated specific reasons, which were subsequently categorised by the researcher when similar themes were identified:

- Of this group, 14 respondents (1.6%) indicated that they subscribed, or were willing to do so, to enhance their knowledge of sign language or to maintain their proficiency. This group included both deaf individuals (e.g., those who became deaf later in life and wished to learn sign language, or those keen to discover new signs) and hearing individuals (such as professional sign language interpreters seeking to improve their language skills).
- Furthermore, 6 respondents (0.7%) appreciated that the news services offered coverage of topics related to the deaf community and sign language. One respondent specifically mentioned the importance of raising awareness about the rights of deaf individuals.
- Lastly, two respondents highlighted that these news services, presented by deaf individuals, serve as valuable resources and role models for their deaf children.

For the question regarding the reasons why respondents were unwilling to pay for a subscription, participants could choose from four different options (with the possibility of selecting more than one) and also provide a personal reason if desired.

- Just over half of the respondents (459 respondents, 52.3%) indicated that **news in sign language should be freely available to everyone.**
- The second most common reason was **satisfaction with existing free news sources** (whether in spoken/written language or in sign language), as noted by 222 respondents (25.3%). In Slovakia, this reason was more frequently cited (34 respondents) than the previous one (29 respondents).
- The third reason cited was a **lack of financial resources** to pay for news content, as indicated by 128 respondents (14.6%).

In addition, 96 respondents (10.9%) selected the option "**uncertainty about the quality** of various DJE news services" in the survey, making them hesitant to pay for access. Furthermore, 10 respondents provided their own answers, indicating reasons related to the quality of these news services. These responses were grouped by the researcher, when similar themes emerged:

- **Content-related:** News content was described as too superficial or lacking depth, or as lacking video footage, such as interviews, environmental visuals, etc.
- **Volume and Frequency:** Concerns included insufficient publication of news, an excessive focus on deaf-related topics, or delayed publication, resulting in news that

feels less timely. Some respondents even stated that certain DJE news services do not provide an equivalent volume of content as that of mainstream news programs provided by public broadcasters with sign language (hearing) interpreters.

- **Journalistic Approach:** Some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the selection of deaf presenters, citing presentation and language skills, or questioned the DJE consortium's journalistic expertise. One respondent stated that a specific DJE news service appeared overly politically left-leaning. Another respondent noted a lack of trust after a news item negatively portrayed an organisation with which they are affiliated.

Lastly, only 9 respondents offered clearly articulated personal reasons:

- Four respondents admitted that they do not watch news frequently enough to justify paying for DJE news services.
- Four respondents cited, or expressed concern about, technical barriers with regard to subscribing to DJE news services.
- One respondent even acknowledged using another person's subscription to access news videos from Médiapi.

#### 4.3.1.2. Subscription options and pricing

At the time of writing this report, there are only two subscription options available for Médiapi: €119.10 annually and €10.90 monthly. In response to the question regarding the payment frequency of Médiapi subscribers, 44 out of 63 respondents (69.8%) indicated that they have an annual subscription, while the remaining 19 respondents (30.2%) reported subscription on a monthly basis. Respondents were also asked whether or not they were satisfied with the price they were paying. A majority of 51 respondents (81%) stated that they found the price reasonable. Only three respondents (4.8%) expressed dissatisfaction with the subscription cost, while the remaining nine respondents were unsure about how to assess the value.

In the five other countries surveyed, participants were asked about their preferred subscription frequency if they were willing to subscribe.

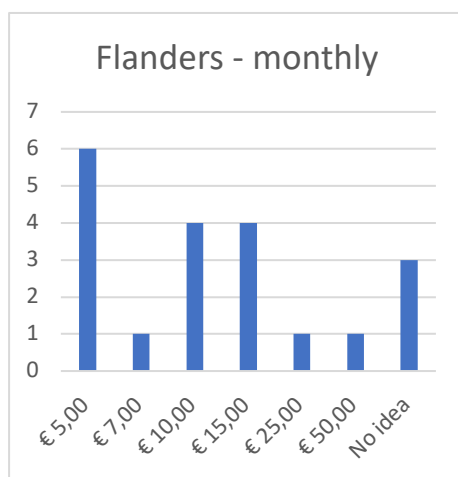
	Per video	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annual
Flanders	5	4	6	20	63
Germany	16	8	8	32	66
The Netherlands	6	4	7	39	43
Slovakia	6	8	7	21	33
Sweden	3	5	5	43	19
Total	36 (7.5%)	29 (6.1%)	33 (6.9%)	155 (32.5%)	224 (47.0%)

*Table 7 – “On what frequency would you prefer to pay for news in signed language?”*

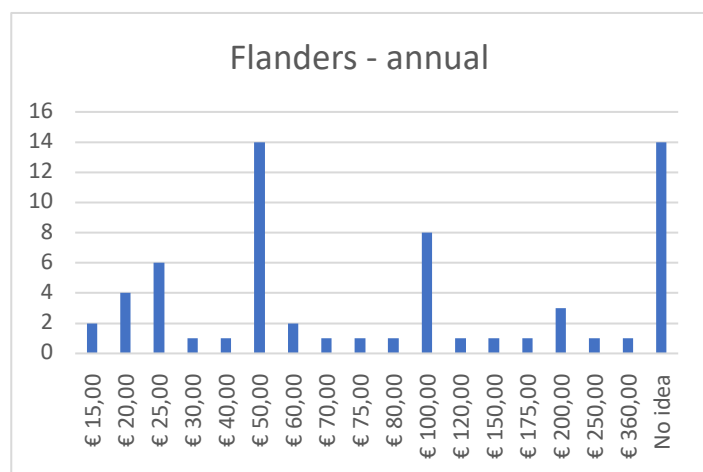
Out of a total of 477 respondents, 224 (47%) indicated a preference for an annual subscription, while 155 (32.5%) preferred a monthly subscription. Notably, in Sweden, respondents who completed the Swedish version of the survey showed a stronger preference for monthly subscriptions over annual ones. In contrast, respondents in Flanders and Germany demonstrated a significantly stronger preference for annual subscriptions compared to monthly ones.

After selecting their preferred subscription frequency, respondents were then asked how much they would be willing to pay, depending on the payment frequency chosen. Given that very few respondents opted for payment per video, or a daily or weekly subscription, and as Médiapi does not offer these options, the responses from these individuals are not further analysed. Below in the figures are the amounts in euros—or, in the case of Denmark, Danish kroner—that respondents indicated they would be willing to pay for a monthly or annual subscription. While some respondents provided amounts with decimal points (e.g. €4.99), these were rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g. €5.00). Additionally, amounts ending in a nine (such as €89) were rounded up to the next whole number (e.g. €90). When respondents indicated a range, such as €8 to €10 per month, the maximum amount was recorded. There were also some respondents who stated that they were unsure of what amount to specify, who mentioned having no fixed income, or who indicated that the service should be offered for free despite previously answering "yes" or "maybe" to the question about willingness to pay. These responses were grouped under the category "No Idea." These adjustments were necessary to simplify the analysis.

The following section provides an overview for each country, illustrating the number of respondents (y-axis) who are willing to pay a specific amount (x-axis) as indicated by their own responses.



*Figure 38 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for a monthly subscription (Flanders)*



*Figure 39 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for an annual subscription (Flanders)*

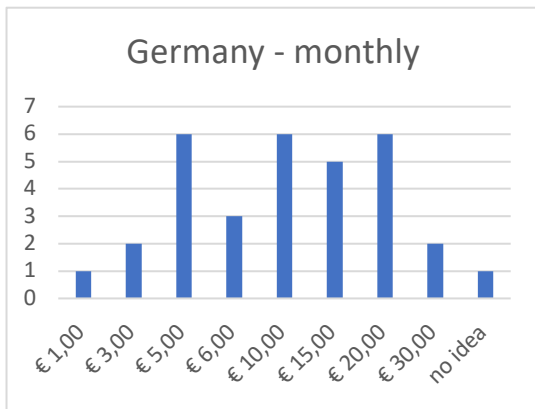


Figure 40 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for a monthly subscription (Germany)

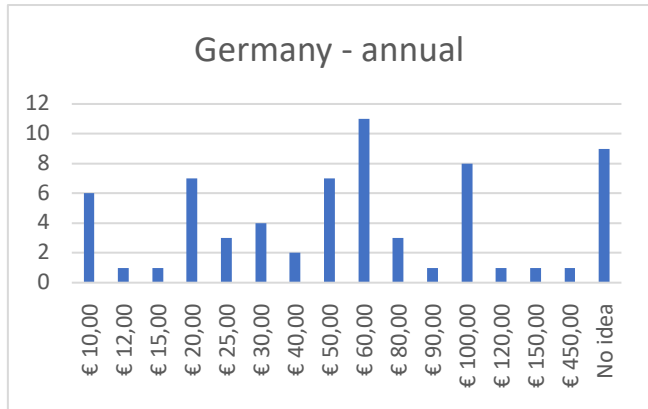


Figure 41 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for an annual subscription (Germany)

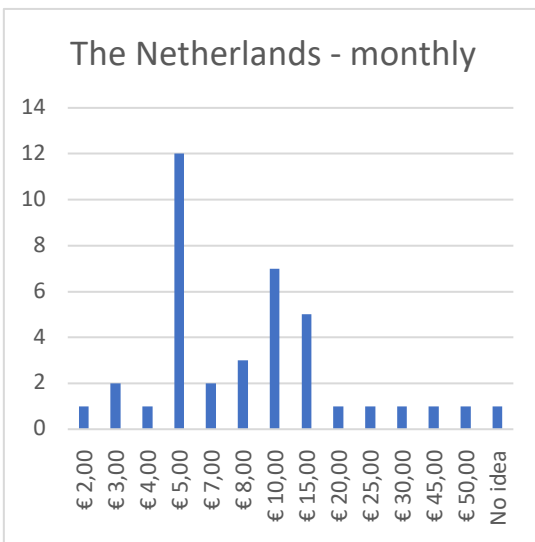


Figure 42 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for a monthly subscription (The Netherlands)

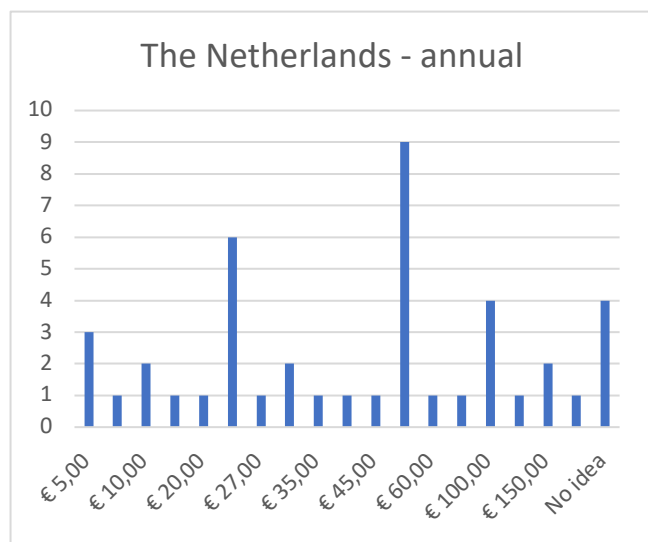


Figure 43 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for an annual subscription (The Netherlands)

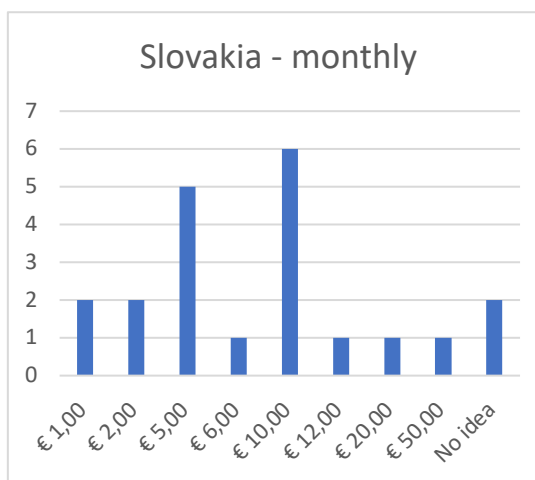


Figure 44 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for a monthly subscription (Slovakia)



Figure 45 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for an annual subscription (Slovakia)



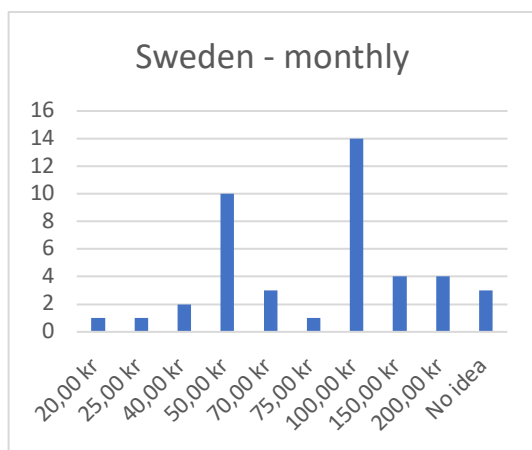


Figure 46 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for a monthly subscription (Sweden)

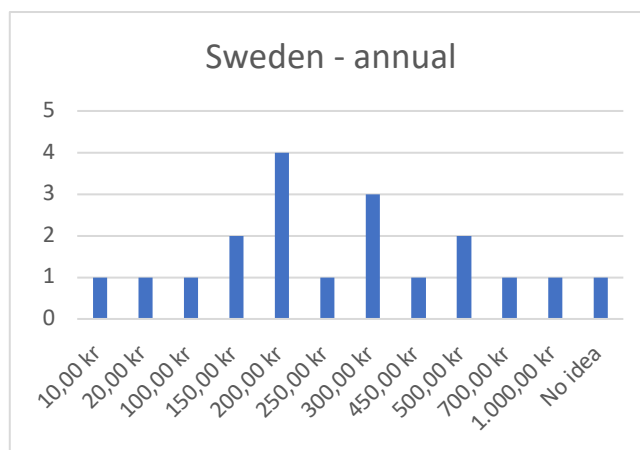


Figure 47 – Amounts respondents are willing to pay for an annual subscription (Sweden)

Although calculating and comparing averages was challenging due to the wide variation in the amounts specified, an attempt was made to establish an average for each country to assess whether the suggested subscription costs align with the expectations of the DJE consortium. In Sweden, the average suggested amount was 95.13 Swedish kronor per month and 307.22 Swedish kronor per year. In the table below, these amounts have been converted into euros based on an exchange rate of €0.087 per Swedish krona at the time of writing.

	Monthly	Annual
Flanders	€12.47	€78.14
Germany	€11.92	€58.96
The Netherlands	€11.18	€52.38
Slovakia	€9.00	€40.00
Sweden	€8.30	€26.79
<b>France</b>	<b>€10.90</b>	<b>€119.10</b>

Table 8– Average amounts respondents are willing to pay for DJE news offerings

When comparing these average amounts to the cost of monthly and annual subscriptions for Médiapi (as provided in the marked last row of Table 8), it is evident that the respondents have generally suggested a realistic price for a monthly subscription. However, the average amounts for annual subscriptions are significantly lower than the current price of a yearly subscription to Médiapi. Notably, even the average for Sweden is remarkably low.

### 4.3.2. Attitudes towards advertisements

A summary of the answers provided to the question regarding whether or not respondents would watch news in sign language if it included advertisements, such as those from sponsoring companies, is presented below in a table which is categorised by country.

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Flanders	23	125	75	223
Germany	53	62	71	186
The Netherlands	41	53	63	157
Slovakia	19	67	19	105
Sweden	29	37	38	104
France	17	42	43	102
Total	182 (20.8%)	386 (44%)	309 (35.2%)	877

*Table 9- "Would you watch the news if it contained advertisements?"*

A significant number of respondents (44%) are predominantly opposed to this. Conversely, only a small percentage of respondents (20.8%) expressed no issues with advertisements. However, a larger group of respondents (35.2%) indicated a neutral stance, answering "maybe". Further analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of these respondent groups yielded no additional insights. Notably, the highest proportions of dissenting opinions are found in Flanders and Slovakia, where the majority responded negatively to the inclusion of advertisements in sign language news provision.

### 4.3.3. Perspectives on providing news in sign languages

In the final question of the surveys, respondents were presented with ten different statements, for which they were asked to select only one response from a five-point Likert scale: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neutral", "agree", and "strongly agree". These statements were specifically designed not only to address additional research questions which were not covered in the previous analysis but also to ensure consistency in respondents' answers. To achieve this, some statements included a negation, such as "the government should NOT fund news in sign language". It is important to note that such negations may have caused some confusion among respondents whose first language is not the written language, even though translations into sign language were provided.

When discussing the results of the responses to the ten statements, further clarifications, if necessary, were sought from respondents who provided their contact details at the end of the surveys. Additionally, interpretations and insights from members of the DJE consortium have been incorporated, drawing on their professional experience and interactions with the deaf communities.

#### 4.3.3.1. Funding and accessibility

Four out of the ten statements pertain to who should facilitate access to news and information in sign language, and whether this access should be provided for free or not:

- *"Access to news and information should not require payment."*
- *"Sign language news should be offered for free."*
- *"The government should not fund sign language news."*
- *"News services provided by deaf people for deaf people should not be free."*

The responses to these four statements are presented below in separate graphs. The x-axes display the five-point Likert scale, while the y-axes show the number of respondents from all six surveys combined who selected each response.

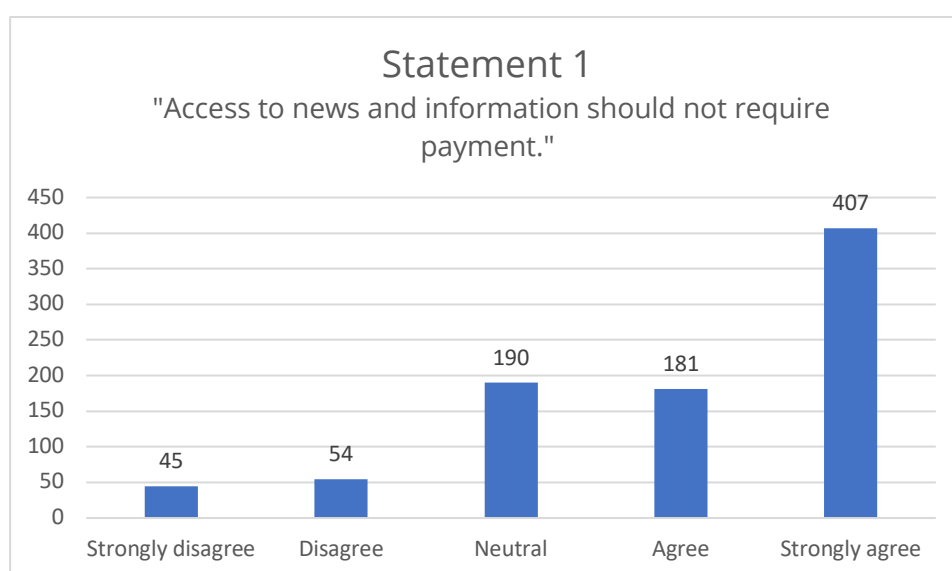
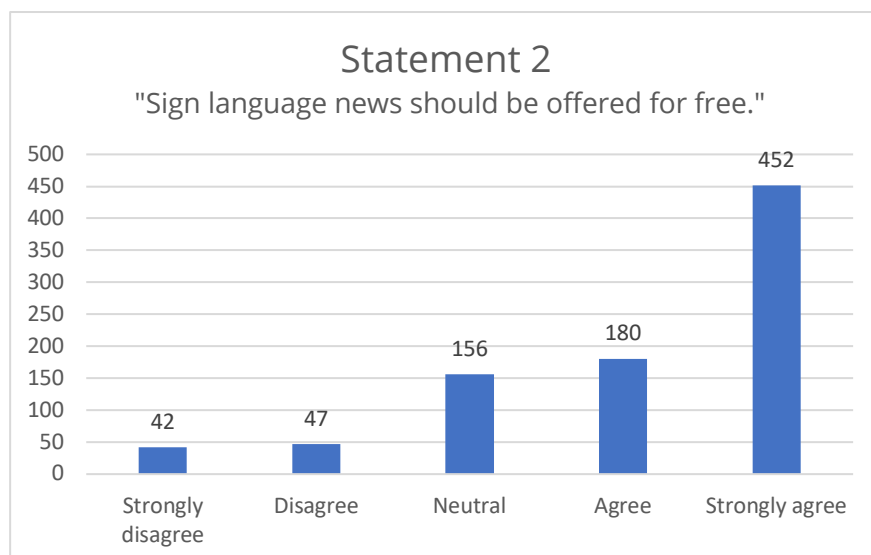


Figure 48 – Responses to statement 1

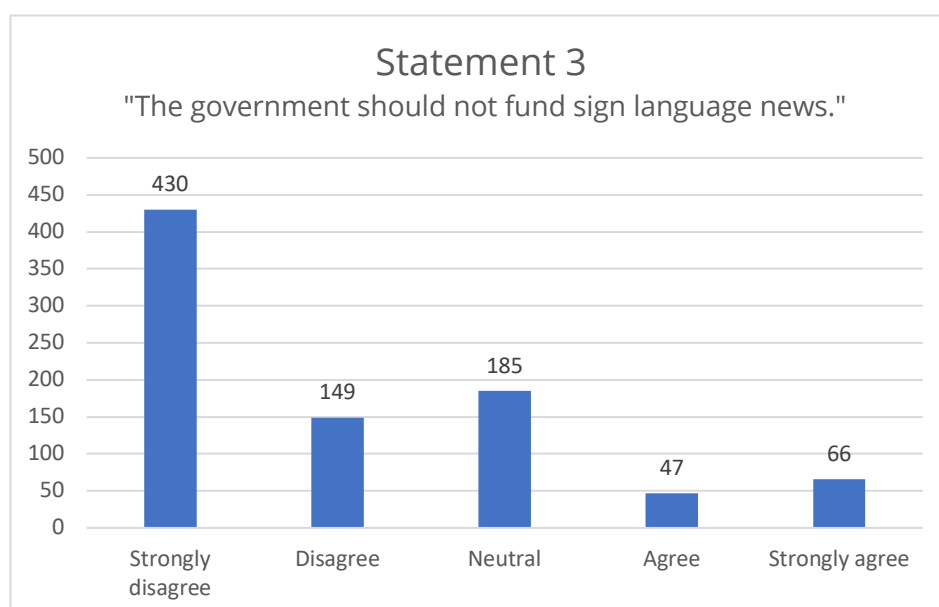
Out of 877 respondents, 588 (67%) agreed that access to news and information in sign language should not require payment. This sentiment was particularly strong in Flanders, where 189 out of 223 respondents (84.7%) supported the statement. In contrast, the percentages were lower in France (47 out of 102 respondents, 46.1%) and Slovakia (59 out of 105 respondents, 56.2%).

A substantial majority of 632 respondents (72.1%) agreed that sign language news should be offered for free. However, in France, this percentage was lower, with 56 out of 102 respondents (54.9%) supporting the statement, while 28 respondents (27.4%) remained neutral.



*Figure 49 – Responses to statement 2*

A total of 579 respondents (66%) disagreed with the statement that the government should not fund sign language news. In Germany, it is noteworthy that only 80 out of 186 respondents (43%) disagreed with this statement, while 72 respondents (38.7%) remained neutral.



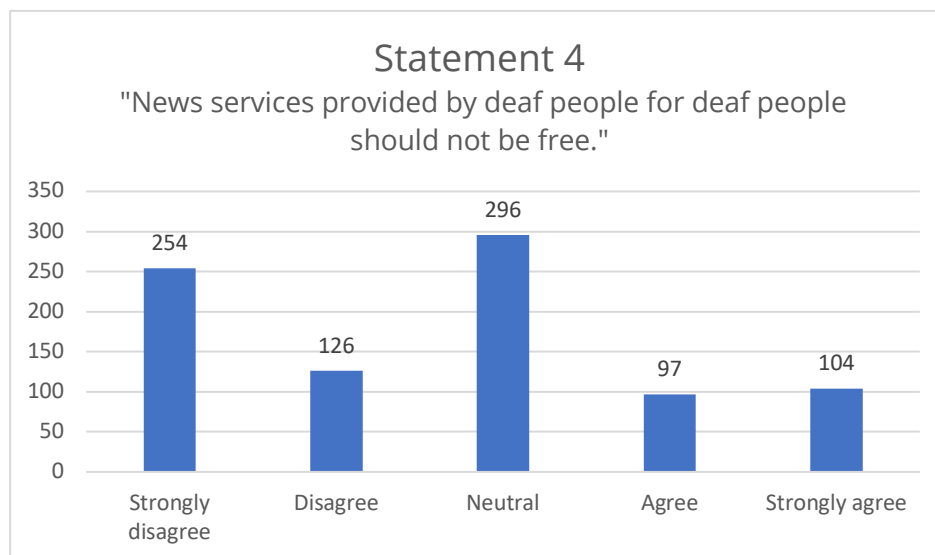
*Figure 50 – Responses to statement 3*

It is important to note that the financing of public broadcasters varies significantly from country to country:

- In Flanders, VRT is primarily financed by the Flemish government. The model in this country focuses on direct government funding, but with safeguards in place within the management agreement to prevent political influence.

- In Germany, public broadcasting is not directly financed by the government, but rather through a separate levy known as the "*Rundfunkbeitrag*". This system is designed to ensure the independence of public broadcasters. The revenue from the *Rundfunkbeitrag* is managed by an independent organisation responsible for distributing funds to the various public broadcasters.
- In the Netherlands, public broadcasters are largely financed through tax revenues, which are allocated via the government's media budget.
- In Slovakia, RTVS is funded by a combination of a broadcast fee, which is paid by households and businesses. Additionally, the public broadcaster receives supplementary funding from the national budget.
- In Sweden, SVT is financed through a special income-dependent tax, which is automatically collected through the income tax system.
- In France, since 2022, the French public broadcaster has been fully funded through the general state budget via tax revenues.

These different models are defined in each country based on the notion that a public broadcaster must be able to ensure its independence. As a result, this question may not be relevant in certain countries, particularly with regard to Germany.



*Figure 51 – Responses to statement 4*

Regarding the statement that news services provided by deaf people for deaf people should not be offered for free, 380 respondents (43.3%) disagreed, while a substantial group of 296 respondents (33.7%) remained neutral. Follow-up inquiries indicated that respondents experienced some ambiguity with this question. Did it imply that deaf individuals should work on news services voluntarily (as has been the case with some DJE consortium news

services in the past), or did the question entail whether or not there should be a charge for accessing this news content?

Further clarification revealed a general preference for making news and information that is also accessible to the general public available for free, with government funding or through one of the taxation systems. However, a smaller group of respondents expressed that if deaf-led businesses wish to produce independent news accessible in sign language, in addition to existing sign language news services provided by the government and national public broadcasters, there should be a charge. This was especially the case when it came to deaf-related news that is not typically covered by government-funded mainstream news services.

#### 4.3.3.2. Deaf news

Respondents were also asked whether they agreed that sign language news services should include content specifically about deaf individuals, deaf communities, and sign languages. The question provided various examples, such as news about the Deaflympics, the European Union of the Deaf (EUD), or the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD).

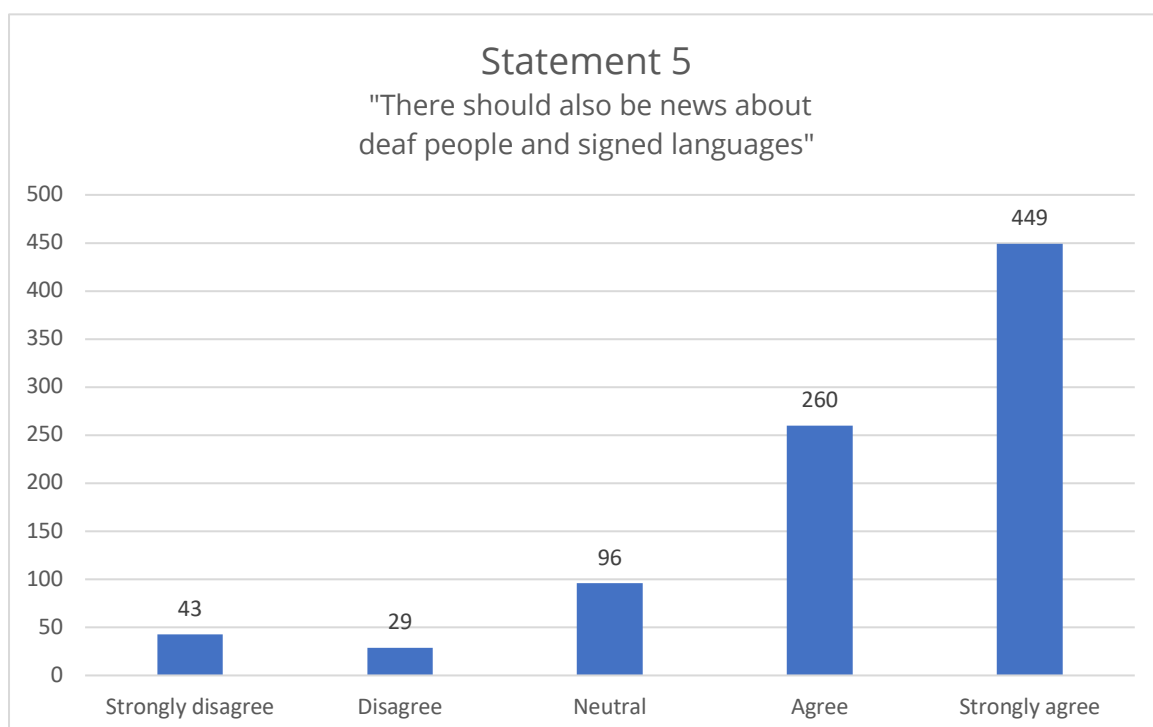


Figure 52 – Responses to statement 5

A significant majority of 709 respondents (80.8%) agreed, clearly indicated that they value being informed not only about general current events but also about topics relevant to their communities and sign language. This suggests a strong desire for news content with which they can identify and that reflects their proper experiences.

#### 4.3.3.3. Production and distribution

Two statements in the surveys sought to determine to whom respondents would prefer to entrust the production and distribution of news services in sign language. It is important to note that a neutral term, “provide”, was chosen instead of specifying whether it referred to “produce” or “distribute”. In retrospect, this choice led to some ambiguity among respondents.

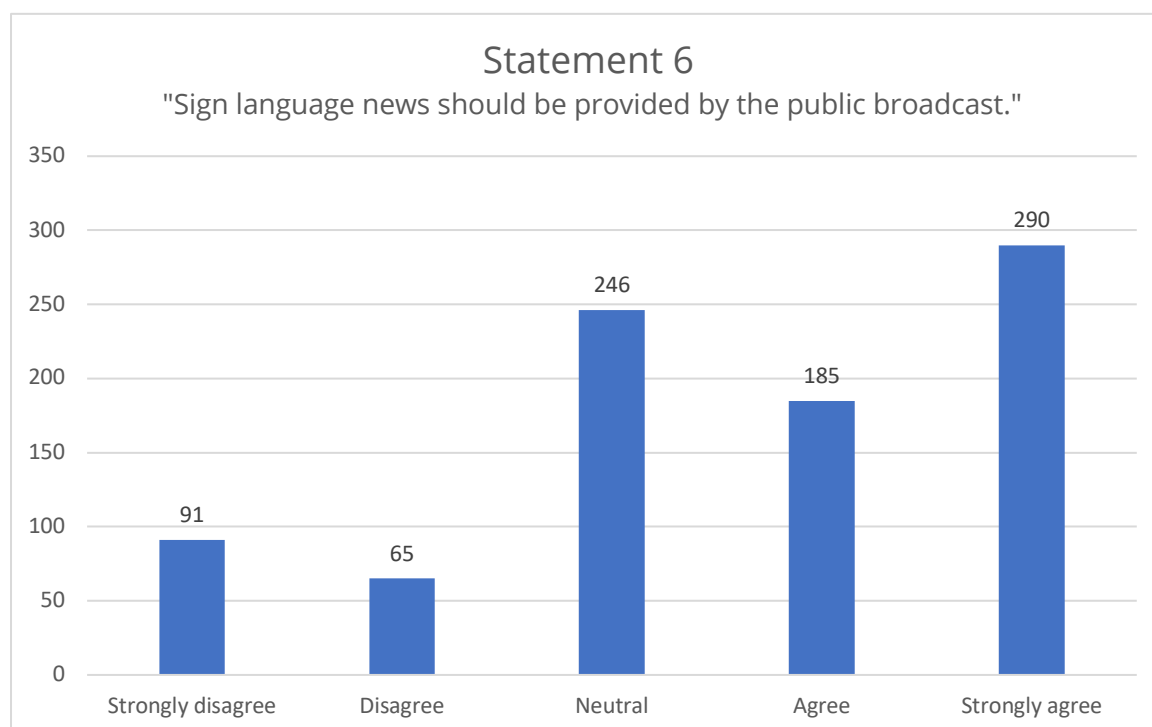
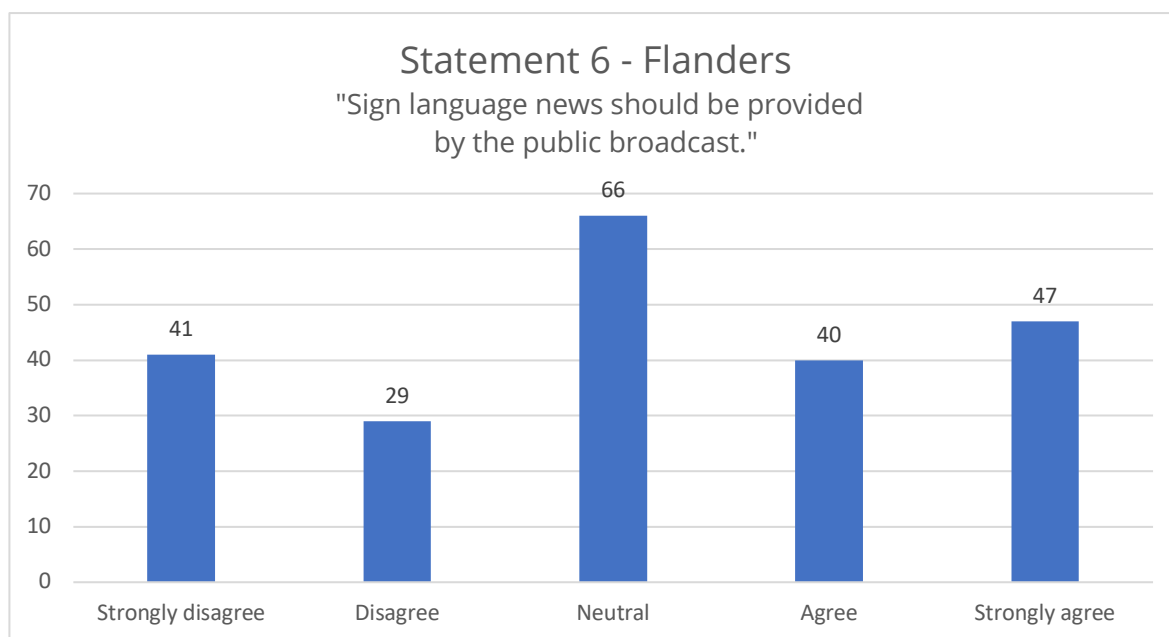


Figure 53 – Responses to statement 6

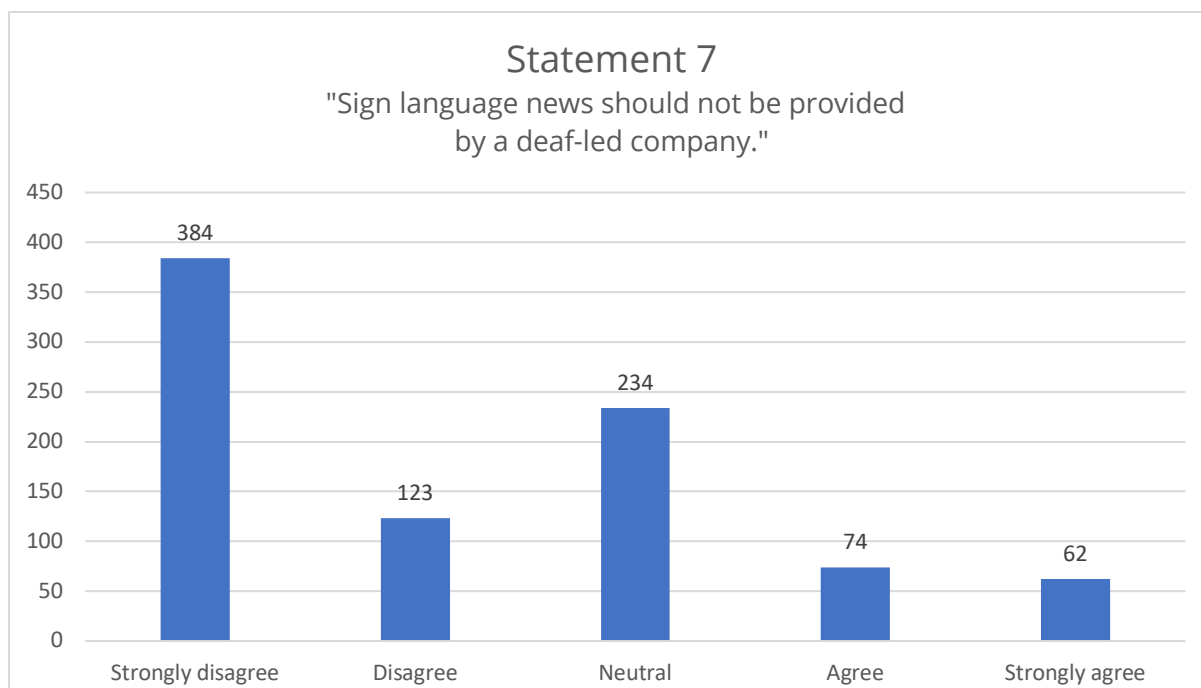
The largest group, comprising 475 respondents (54.2%), agreed that sign language news should be provided by the national public broadcaster itself. Notably, in France and Slovakia, the proportion of respondents who agreed with this statement was significantly higher than those who selected “neutral”.

Interestingly, when examining the graphs by country, Flanders (figure 54) exhibited a different trend compared to other countries and the overall graph. Of the 87 respondents (39%) in Flanders, a substantial number—70 respondents (31.4%)—disagreed with the statement, while 66 respondents (29.6%) took a neutral stance. This discrepancy may be explained by the research report by Dhoest & Rijckaert (2020), which evaluates the provision of sign language services by the public broadcaster VRT. According to the report, the comprehensibility of hearing interpreters used in news broadcasts is rated poorly, leading deaf individuals to prefer alternative forms of news delivery, such as those presented by deaf presenters, as seen with *VGT nieuws* by Visual Box. This may explain why trust in VRT is relatively low among deaf signers in Flanders, compared to other countries.



*Figure 54 – Responses to statement 6 (Flanders)*

For the statement "Sign language news should not be provided by a deaf-led company", a substantial group of 507 respondents (57.8%) disagreed, in stark contrast to only 136 respondents (15.5%) who agreed with it. It is possible that the ambiguity of the question—whether it referred to production or distribution—contributed to the 234 respondents (26.7%) who chose a neutral stance.



*Figure 55 – Responses to statement 7*



Notably, in Flanders (70.8% of 223 respondents) and France (59.8% of 102 respondents), the proportion of respondents advocating for news services provided by deaf-led companies is larger than those who take a neutral position.

To further clarify the ambiguity surrounding these two statements, inquiries were made with deaf signers to explain the apparent contradiction in their responses—namely, the belief that sign language news should be provided by both national public broadcasters and by deaf-led companies. Two prominent explanations emerged. On the one hand, respondents expect that deaf-led companies will take responsibility for the production of sign language news, while the public broadcaster manages its distribution. On the other hand, respondents discussed the distinction between general news and deaf-related news, arguing that these two types of news services (from public broadcasters and deaf-led production companies) can and should coexist. Additionally, some deaf individuals advocated for multiple news sources and services in sign language, rather than being limited to a single sign language offering.

#### 4.3.3.4. Ongoing news availability

All news services provided by the DJE consortium are only available during weekdays and not on weekends. Additionally, due to staff entitlement to leave and limited resources, no news is provided during public holidays, and a summer break has even been implemented. Reactions from some followers on social media indicated dissatisfaction on this matter. Consequently, two statements were added to the survey to briefly assess, without further analysis, respondents' expectations regarding the publication of sign language news during weekends and holidays.

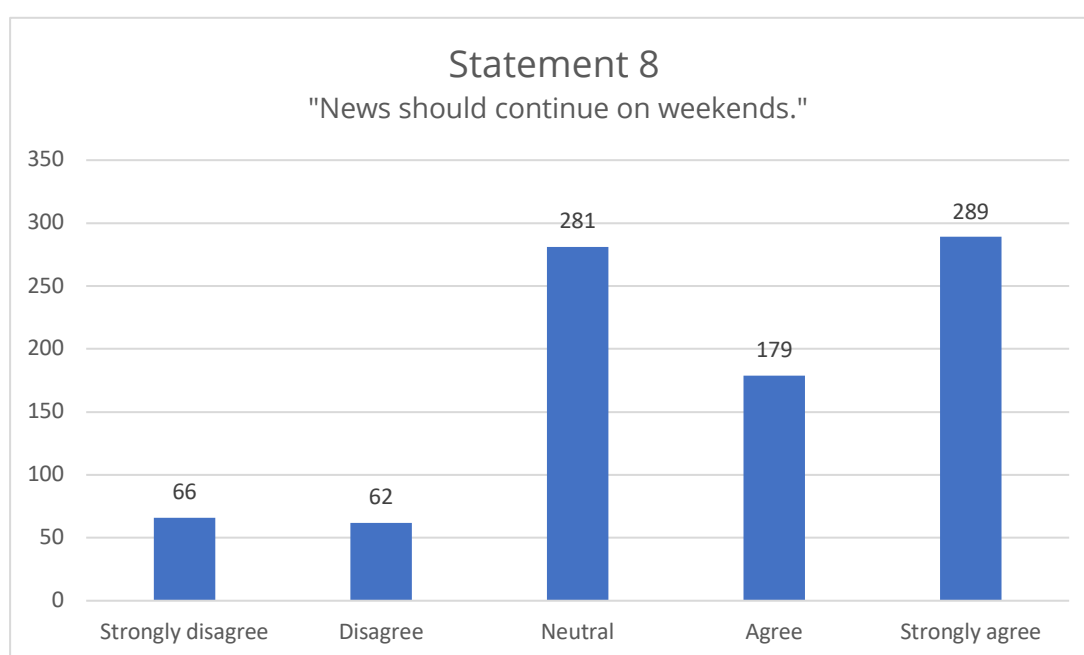
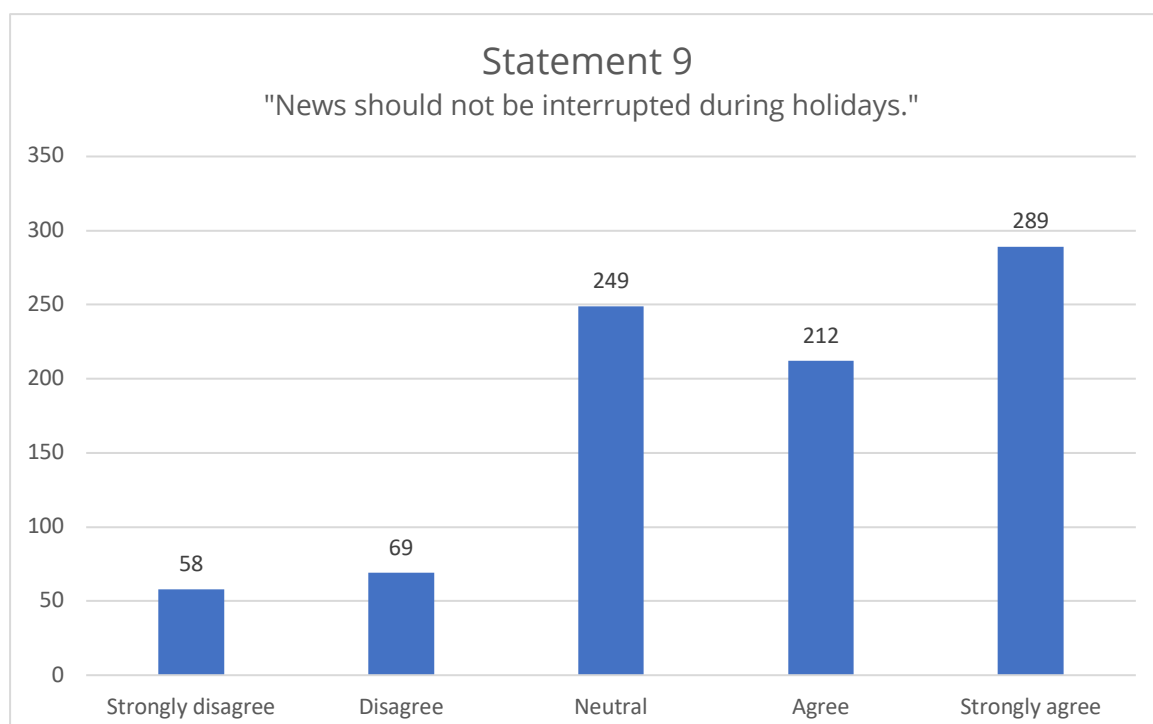


Figure 56 – Responses to statement 8

A total of 468 respondents (53.4%) indicated that news should be made available on weekends, while 281 respondents (32%) felt this was unnecessary.



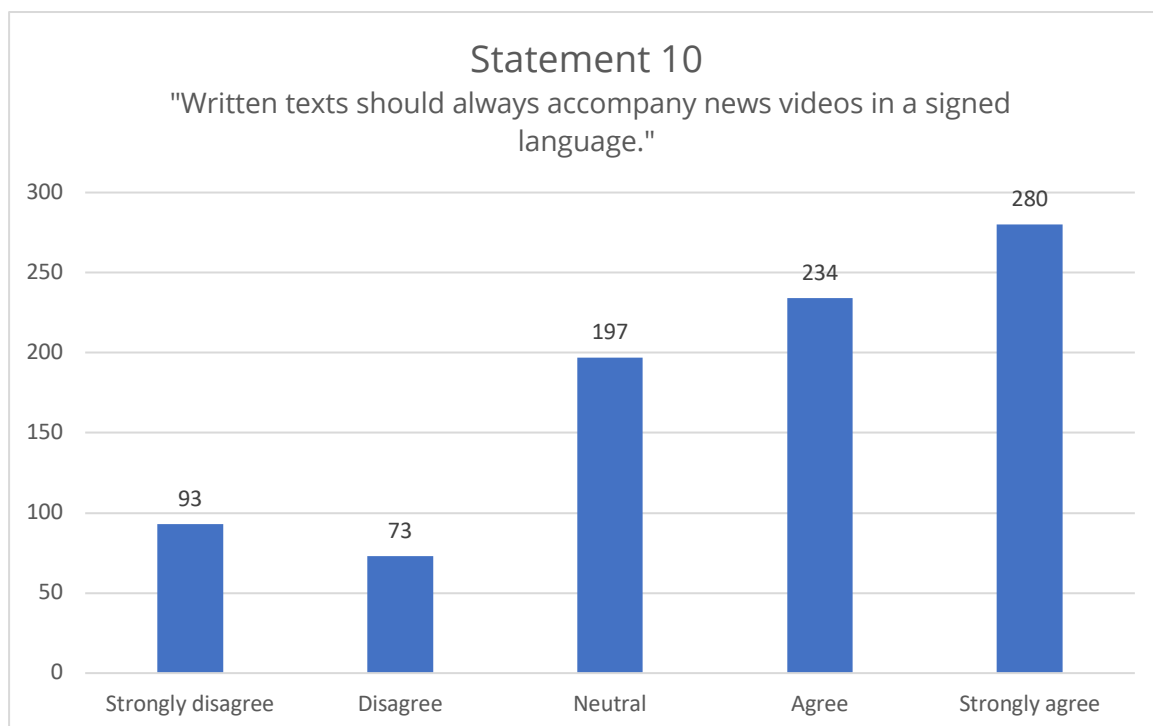
*Figure 57 – Responses to statement 9*

Furthermore, 501 respondents (57.1%) stated that news should also be available on holidays and days off, whereas 249 respondents (28.4%) believed this was not needed.

#### 4.3.3.5. The need for subtitles and transcripts

Despite the obligation from DJE that all news videos in sign language must be accompanied by written transcripts, some members of the DJE consortium question whether this is truly necessary, as it adds extra work that could reduce the number of sign language news videos produced. Therefore, the following statement was included: "Written texts should always accompany news videos in a signed language."

A significant majority of 514 respondents (58.6%) agreed with this statement. However, in Flanders, the situation was reversed: 86 respondents (38.6%) disagreed, while 74 respondents (33.2%) agreed, and 63 respondents (28.2%) took a neutral stance. Sociodemographic analysis indicates that Flanders has the largest group of respondents among all countries who identified sign language solely as their primary language.



*Figure 58 – Responses to statement 10*

## 5. Findings and conclusion

This research into the news consumption habits of deaf individuals and their willingness to pay for DJE news services in sign languages aims to support the development of a business model that explores the financial sustainability of deaf-led media companies. Furthermore, responses to the research questions provide insights to shape a marketing plan targeted at deaf people and to strengthen and refine recommendations for governments and national public broadcasters.

Below, the survey results from six different countries where the DJE consortium is active are discussed in an overarching manner. However, certain responses to specific research questions may reveal trends unique to a particular country. For the DJE consortium partner active in that country, it may therefore be valuable to independently explore these findings further in relation to its own business strategy.

### 5.1. General news consumption

The majority of respondents report that **they consume news daily**, without further specification regarding whether this is in spoken/written language or in sign language. No significant correlations were found between the frequency of news consumption and the respondents' age, nor with their first language.

Further analysis of the consulted news channels across the six countries indicates that **digital channels such as the internet and social media are currently the most utilised sources of news**. Despite the shift towards digital platforms, television still plays a role in daily news consumption, particularly in certain countries. Although general news consumption is not examined in detail, as this is not the primary focus of the research, a correlation is observable between age categories and the choice of channels for following the news. As age categories increase, the use of television becomes more prevalent. In the younger age categories, a negligible number of respondents selected "television", whereas in the older age categories, an increasing number of respondents report watching television. Conversely, in digital usage, the trend is reversed: younger respondents predominantly use social media, while older respondents less frequently engage with news that way.

Although no partner of the DJE consortium publishes its news offerings in sign language on television, further research is necessary to ascertain whether this has a significant impact on the access of deaf individuals from older age categories to DJE news services, given that the representation of this group is notably low among the respondents of our surveys.

The analysis of preferred languages for general news consumption among deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind respondents reveals a **clear preference for sign language**, although there is also significant interest in spoken or written language. A notable trend in the analysis is that the respondents' first language often corresponds to their preferred

language for following the news. **Respondents who have indicated both the national sign language and spoken or written language as their first languages demonstrate a preference for consuming news in both forms.** These findings underscore the essential role that sign language plays in providing access to news and information for deaf communities.

Additionally, **many respondents reported sign language as their first language but also opted for written language to follow the news.** This may stem from a desire to learn and maintain this "second language", for example, by acquiring new socially relevant vocabulary that appears in the news. Conversely, the same applies to respondents who indicated that spoken or written language is their first language; they often express a preference for following news in sign language. This applies to both hearing individuals who wish to learn and maintain sign language, such as sign language interpreters, and deaf individuals who are learning sign language later in life. These groups of respondents represent equally important target audiences for sign language news offerings.

## 5.2. Consumption of news content in sign languages

Overall, the results from the surveys indicate that a **high percentage of respondents are aware of and follow the DJE consortium's news services in their national sign language, primarily via Instagram and/or Facebook.** An important note here is the low representation of older age groups among all respondents, which may impact the ability of older deaf individuals to engage with DJE news services that are exclusively available through digital channels. Alternative options, such as a WhatsApp channel or newsletters, could attract older deaf individuals who prefer to watch news offerings in sign language on television.

Although the frequency of viewing DJE news services varies by country, it is noteworthy that **the closer the news content aligns with that of mainstream news, and/or the more frequently the sign language news videos are published, the more likely respondents are to engage with these services,** particularly on a daily basis. Deaf-related news is also viewed frequently; however, this does not significantly change respondents' viewing habits regarding DJE news services compared to other general news sources.

The existence of other sign language news services provided by public broadcasters appears to impact respondents' viewing behaviour of DJE news services. The survey results reveal that **mainstream news broadcasts made accessible in national sign language, particularly those presented by hearing interpreters, are viewed less frequently.** Consequently, respondents are more inclined to seek alternative sign language news options, especially when presented directly in sign language by a deaf presenter. In countries where public broadcasters also feature news services presented by deaf presenters, the approach adopted by the DJE organisation differs. Specifically, it focuses on

delivering news related to deaf issues rather than general news. This specialised content is accessed less frequently compared to general news programming.

Thus, it is beneficial for each organisation within the DJE consortium to assess how their news offerings compare to other sign language news services in order to better understand their competitive position within the sign language media landscape of their country and to enhance their approach accordingly.

### 5.3. Types of viewers

The results clearly demonstrate that **the majority of respondents prefer news presented by a deaf presenter in their national sign language**. The strength of this preference is closely linked to the level of awareness among deaf signers regarding their right to information, the evaluation of sign language news services offered by public broadcasters and the effectiveness of lobbying efforts within their national deaf communities. However, the attitudes and understanding of various stakeholders, such as government bodies, public broadcasters, NADs, and hearing interpreters within the sign language community, also play a role in determining how news services in sign languages are provided (Neves 2007, De Meulder & Heyerick 2013, Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). These aspects should be considered in the marketing plan for the DJE consortium targeted at deaf and sign language communities and could inform recommendations for government bodies and public broadcasters.

From the surveys, we can identify various types of “viewers” of news in sign languages with deaf presenters, which are relevant for the target audience analysis and the subsequent market exploration of the DJE consortium:

- **Deaf-centric viewers:** A very large group of viewers consists of those who strongly prefer news content presented directly in sign language, framed from a "deaf framework", and delivered by deaf presenters.
  - **Sign language dependents:** This group largely comprises deaf individuals who prefer to follow the news in sign language, which is often the only language they understand. A significant portion of this group does not follow news broadcasts interpreted by hearing interpreters, making them reliant solely on news services presented by deaf presenters to stay informed about current events.
  - **Bilingual consumers:** Additionally, there is a considerable group of deaf individuals who follow the news both in written language (via text or subtitles) and in sign language. They master both a national spoken language and a national sign language as their first languages. They enjoy the privilege of accessing various news sources and particularly seek out news offerings in sign language because they derive personal benefits from it, such as clear presentation in sign language and the convenience of being able to view these videos at their own pace.

- **Hybrid viewers:** A smaller number of deaf viewers who prefer sign language as their means of following the news are those who consume a “total offering” in their national sign language. They watch both regular news broadcasts with a sign language interpreter and news services presented directly in sign language by a deaf presenter.
  - **Quality seekers:** Among this group of deaf viewers, many express a preference for a deaf presenter to consume quality news in sign language, as they find it more comprehensible and it provides a foundation for better understanding the interpreted news broadcasts.
  - **Content seekers:** A smaller segment of deaf viewers prefers regular news broadcasts with a deaf interpreter, as they feel that the content and volume of news offerings presented by a deaf presenter do not fully meet their needs.
  - **Access seekers:** An even smaller group of deaf viewers prefers news broadcasts with hearing interpreters. They often do this from a position of low empowerment, feeling subservient to the power dynamics of hearing interpreters, upon whom they heavily depend in their daily lives.
- **Sign language learners:** A small number of viewers do not have sign language as their first or preferred language, yet benefit from news services in sign language to learn the language. This typically includes hearing viewers, such as interpreters, interpreting students, or teachers working in deaf education, but also encompasses deaf individuals who have become deaf later in life or who are newly introduced to sign language.
- A very small group of non-viewers exists for various reasons:
  - **Allies:** These supportive non-viewers believe news services in sign language with a deaf presenter benefits the deaf community (for their relatives who rely solely on sign language for information and communication, or for their deaf children who need deaf role models) and the deaf ecosystem (creating more job opportunities for deaf individuals).
  - **Boycotters:** This group comprises individuals who do not support the concept of news services presented in sign language by deaf presenters. This may include deaf individuals who feel insufficiently empowered and cling to the belief that they should have access to the same resources as hearing individuals, thereby advocating for regular news broadcasts featuring sign language interpreters. They may also struggle with the notion that other deaf individuals have opportunities for growth, particularly in television work, that they themselves cannot access, or that they are "assisted" by fellow deaf individuals in consuming news. Additionally, this group certainly includes hearing individuals, likely hearing interpreters, who seek to justify the profession and the role of hearing sign language interpreters in comparison to deaf interpreters or presenters, fearing that they may lose their jobs or opportunities to interpret on television.

Additionally, there is a group of individuals who simply do not watch DJE news services for various reasons, such as lack of interest, lack of time, or difficulty accessing these services.

#### 5.4. Willingness to pay for news offerings in sign languages

There is no direct correlation between subscribing to written news and the willingness to pay for subscriptions to news services in sign language. However, the proportion of respondents willing to pay for DJE news services is approximately half that of those unwilling to do so. Conversely, the number of respondents who were undecided at the time of completing the survey exceeds the groups who chose “yes” or “no”. This presents a potential opportunity for the companies and organisations within the DJE consortium to outline strategies in their marketing plans aimed at increasing the financial engagement of these respondents. In summary, there is **no clear consensus among respondents regarding their willingness to pay** for DJE news services.

Most respondents indicated a willingness to pay for DJE news services, not only to **access news in their preferred language** but also **to support the continuation of high-quality news in sign language**, particularly when it is of superior quality compared to some offerings by public broadcasters in national sign languages (especially those featuring hearing interpreters). Despite the majority of respondents stating that news and information in national sign languages should be provided free of charge, many deaf individuals expressed concern that DJE news services might cease to exist without **further financial support** (for example, from government or other tax systems). The notion behind the acronym “D.E.A.F. ”, which stands for “Deaf Expects All Free,” is evidently not entirely accurate.

Furthermore, respondents appreciate that DJE news services, whether in conjunction with general news or independently, **cover deaf-related topics**. There is a strong desire for this 'deaf news' that they can identify with and that reflects their experiences. A very small group of hearing individuals recognises that deaf presenters serve as positive role models for deaf children. It is also evident that DJE news services in sign language provide an excellent opportunity for both deaf and hearing individuals to learn and maintain their sign language skills.

**Subscriptions on an annual or monthly basis** appear to be the most appealing options for respondents. However, the amounts indicated that they are willing to pay, whether monthly or annually, initially seem insufficient for the deaf-led production houses within the DJE consortium to ensure the financial sustainability of their news services, particularly in countries with smaller populations and limited groups of sign language users. In this context, it is essential for the companies and organisations of the DJE consortium **to explore alternative financial avenues** in their business plans. For instance, advertisements from



sponsored companies could be incorporated into DJE news services, although nearly half of the respondents expressed opposition to this idea.

In addition to the legal framework stipulating that **news and information in sign language should be provided free of charge**, most respondents cited their satisfaction with existing free news sources, both in spoken/written form and in sign language, as a reason for their unwillingness to pay for DJE news services. Moreover, some respondents indicated that they lack the financial resources to afford a subscription. A smaller group noted that they do not watch sign language news videos sufficiently to justify a subscription or that they are concerned about potential technical (payment) barriers to accessing DJE news offerings.

In summary, respondents expect that news and information intended for the general public should be made available in sign language **free of charge by the government or other tax systems**. However, when deaf-led companies and organisations seek to provide independent news in sign language as a supplement—particularly when it includes deaf-related news that is often not covered by government-funded news services—a small group of respondents finds it justifiable to pay for these services.

## 5.5. Professionalisation of deaf-led media companies

Whether news services in sign languages should be provided by public broadcasters largely depends on respondents' trust in these institutions. This research indicates **a slight preference for sign language news services to be delivered by deaf-led media companies**. This preference may suggest greater confidence in the output of deaf-led media companies, given their deeper insight into and closer connection with the target audience. As a result, these companies may be best positioned to adapt news services in sign language, both in terms of content and technical presentation, to meet the specific needs of deaf sign language users.

While many public broadcasters often regard accessibility for deaf and hard-of-hearing people as a burden rather than an opportunity (Neves 2007), public broadcasters may find it beneficial to outsource this service to a deaf-led company. Such an approach could stimulate competition and potentially enhance the quality of sign language news services (Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). These sign language news programmes could then be distributed via national public broadcasters, particularly on television, which remains the most frequently used medium among deaf respondents in older age groups. Additionally, respondents expressed **a need for multiple sources of sign language news, especially those covering deaf-related topics**, rather than relying on a single sign language service from a public broadcaster.

While this study does not focus on assessing the content, presentation, or sign language quality of DJE news services, it would be beneficial to explore, in each DJE organisation's

business plan, why some respondents expressed unwillingness to pay for these services due to concerns about quality. This reluctance may not necessarily reflect the performance of DJE consortium partners themselves but could instead highlight areas for improvement, such as enhancing journalistic and language skills, broadening the news offering in both depth and scope (e.g. including more in-depth coverage or supplementing it with footage from mainstream news), and ensuring timely publication of news content, with particular attention to the continued provision of sign language news during weekends and holidays. Respondents also expressed a preference for sign language videos to be accompanied by written translations, either through subtitles or transcription.

Furthermore, deaf-led companies could work to **foster media literacy and improve journalistic understanding within under-informed deaf communities**. Finally, lobbying efforts should be directed at stakeholders such as government bodies, public broadcasters, and National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) to raise awareness about the value of high-quality national sign language news services. Key objectives include raising awareness of deaf people's right to effectively understand news in their national sign language, preventing the "illusion of inclusion", promoting deaf empowerment and deaf ecosystem by producing news offerings created by deaf-led companies.

## 6. Takeaways

Below is a summary of the key findings from this research report, which should inform the development of the next three deliverables for WP4 of the DJE project.

### 6.1. Business plan for deaf-led media companies

**Strengthen competitive positioning:** There is a strong preference among deaf individuals for news directly presented in their national sign language by deaf presenters and produced by deaf-led media companies. This presents a potential competitive advantage for the DJE consortium's member organisations. Positioning strategies should consider the strengths and weaknesses of deaf-led companies compared to other news offerings within each country's sign language media landscape.

**Invest in professional development:** Improved journalistic skills and media literacy within deaf communities can help to address concerns around the quality of DJE news services, enhancing both credibility and engagement.

**Expand news offerings:** Consider expanding the volume, depth, and variety of content available, including news items specifically relevant to deaf communities, which are often overlooked by mainstream media. This differentiated approach can help meet the expectations of deaf audiences.

**Diversify delivery channels:** Given the preference among older deaf individuals for television, broadening content delivery channels to include traditional media, such as television or newsletters, alongside digital platforms could enhance audience reach.

**Explore varied revenue streams:** Although some deaf individuals are willing to pay for news services in sign language, a significant segment expects these services to be free, given their perceived public responsibility. Therefore, business plans should explore additional revenue models, such as advertising or partnerships, to achieve financial sustainability.

### 6.2. Marketing plan targeted at deaf people

**Strengthen communication on key strengths:** Marketing messages should place a strong emphasis on the unique value of DJE news services, which offer shared identity, language, and culture with deaf communities, as well as highlighting DJE's journalistic expertise.

**Increase brand visibility:** Assess which segments of the target audience have yet to be reached and identify the content and publication platforms that could be most effective in engaging them.

**Understand target audiences:** DJE news services engage a broad spectrum of deaf viewers. Approaches should therefore be tailored to the specific needs and preferences of both current viewers and potential new audiences.

**Invest in media literacy and empowerment:** Deaf individuals should be more aware of their right to fully understand news and information in their national sign language. Deaf-led media companies are ideally positioned to meet this need.

**Enhance audience engagement:** By emphasising how deaf-led news services contribute to deaf empowerment, marketing can foster loyalty, especially among viewers who value supporting deaf-owned companies.

**Strengthen community engagement:** Build relationships with the deaf community by incorporating their feedback into DJE's operations. Additionally, collaborate with National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) to create a strong lobbying position for the recognition and funding of news services directly in sign languages delivered by deaf presenters. Working together to raise understanding and positively influence attitudes among other stakeholders, such as government bodies, public broadcasters, and hearing interpreters, will further this goal.

**Encourage behavioural change among followers:** Since a portion of the audience is uncertain about willing to pay for sign language news, marketing efforts should highlight the benefits of subscription, such as the offering high-quality news content in national sign language, supporting the sustainability of DJE news services and contributing to the deaf ecosystem while recognising its broader benefits.

### 6.3. Recommendations for government and public broadcasts

**Gaining better insight into inclusion:** Governments and public broadcasters should not perceive their accessibility services as a burden but as an opportunity. They must recognise that the use of sign language interpreters in mainstream news broadcasts does not necessarily meet the language and informational needs of deaf sign language users. To avoid the “illusion of inclusion”, it is essential to understand that true inclusion is not simply about providing the same news content to deaf and hearing individuals—this is, in fact, unfeasible as hearing people have greater access to a variety of news sources. Inclusion focuses on the ultimate objective: ensuring that deaf individuals receive information on par with their hearing counterparts, in a manner that they find effective.

**Quality standards for sign language news:** Governments and public broadcasters must become more aware of the rights of deaf sign language users, not only to access publicly

available information in their national sign language but also to comprehend it effectively. Higher quality standards should be established for the delivery of news in sign language.

**Promoting employment for deaf signers:** Governments and public broadcasters should consider outsourcing the provision of news in national sign language to deaf-led media companies or, at the very least, employing deaf individuals. This approach would not only enhance the quality of news delivery in sign language for the deaf community but also align with policies promoting inclusion and diversity within the media landscape.

**Addressing structural inequities:** Governments should tackle any systemic biases that favour hearing interpreters over deaf presenters, acknowledging the significance of direct deaf representation in media. This is crucial for empowering deaf audiences and ensuring genuinely inclusive news services.

**Multiple sources of sign language news:** To mitigate over-reliance on a single source, government recommendations should advocate for a diversity of sign language news offerings. This should include both public and deaf-led sources to ensure that deaf communities have access to a variety of comprehensive news content.

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## Appendix

This appendix includes the original English version of the questionnaire, which served as the basis for each partner within the DJE consortium to create a national version in their respective spoken and signed languages, using Google Forms. To avoid adding unnecessary pages to this research report, only the "VGT Nieuws" version (Flanders) has been included.

### **FLEMISH VERSION**

#### **Introduction text**

Welcome to the survey regarding 'VGT nieuws'! This news service in Flemish Sign Language debuted in 2023 thanks to the project 'Deaf Journalism Europe', co-funded by the European Union. The project concludes by the end of May 2025, and there is a lot of interest in how 'VGT nieuws' can be continued in the future. As part of the project, we want to explore sustainable strategies for its continuation. The survey consists of two parts: we would like to know about your news consumption and gauging your willingness to support 'VGT nieuws' through paid means.

Your responses will be processed anonymously unless you grant us permission to contact you. The survey responses will be analyzed, and the findings summarized in a report, which will be distributed across the national networks of partner organizations and published digitally on the website: [www.deafjournalism.eu](http://www.deafjournalism.eu).

First, we'd like to ask you some questions about yourself.

#### **Sociodemographic characteristics**

##### **QUESTION 1a: You currently reside in...**

- ☐ Belgium
- ☐ Other: .....

##### **QUESTION 1b: You are...**

- ☐ Deaf/hard of hearing/deafblind
- ☐ Hearing

##### **QUESTION 1c: What is your age?**

- ☐ Under 18 years
- ☐ 18-24 years
- ☐ 25-34 years
- ☐ 35-44 years
- ☐ 45-54 years

- 55-64 years
- 65-74 years
- 75 years and older

**QUESTION 1d: What is your first language (the language you understand and produce best)?**

- Both Flemish Sign Language (VGT) and Dutch
- Flemish Sign Language (VGT)
- Dutch
- Others: .....

<b>News consumption</b>
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**QUESTION 2: How often do you follow the news in general?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Never (proceed to question 4)

**QUESTION 3: How do you follow the news in general? (multiple answers possible)**

- ☐ Television
- ☐ Newspaper / magazines
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ News apps
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Other people
- ☐ Other: .....

**QUESTION 4: What is your preferred language for following the news?**

- Dutch
- Flemish Sign Language (VGT)
- Both Dutch and Flemish Sign Language (VGT)
- Other: .....

**QUESTION 5: Are you familiar with 'VGT nieuws'?**

- Yes (Proceed to question 6)
- No (Proceed to question 9a)

**QUESTION 6: Do you follow 'VGT nieuws'?**

- Yes (Proceed to question 8a)
- No (Proceed to question 7)



**QUESTION 7: Why do you not watch 'VGT nieuws'?**

.....

**QUESTION 8a: How often do you watch 'VGT nieuws'?**

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Occasionally

**QUESTION 8b: Through which channel do you watch videos of 'VGT nieuws'? (multiple answers possible)**

- ☐ Via the website of Visual Box
- ☐ Via Instagram
- ☐ Via Facebook
- ☐ Via YouTube
- ☐ Via newsletters

**QUESTION 9a: Which other news programs presented with/in sign language do you follow? (multiple answers possible)**

- ☐ Het Journaal met tolken VGT
- ☐ Karrewiet met tolken VGT
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: .....

**QUESTION 9b: Which method do you prefer the most for watching the news in signed language?**

- ☐ With a deaf presenter directly in signed language
- ☐ With a hearing interpreter in signed language
- ☐ With a deaf interpreter in signed language

<b>Willingness to pay</b>
---------------------------

**QUESTION 10a: Do you pay to access written news (newspapers/magazines/ news app subscriptions/...)**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**QUESTION 10b: Currently, 'VGT nieuws' is offered for free thanks to the co-funded European project 'Deaf Journalism Europe'. This project ends by the end of May 2025. Would you be willing to pay to watch the videos of 'VGT nieuws' after this?**

- ☐ Yes (Proceed to question 11)

- No (Proceed to question 13)
- Maybe (proceed to question 11 and 13)

***QUESTION 11a: Why are you willing to pay for access to 'VGT nieuws'? Please select all reasons that apply from the following options:***

- ☐ To support the continuation of quality sign language news content.
- ☐ Because I value having access to news in my preferred language.
- ☐ I believe it's important to financially support initiatives that benefit the Deaf Community.
- ☐ Other (please specify): .....

***QUESTION 11b: On what frequency would you prefer to pay for news in signed language?***

- Per video
- Per day (average of three videos per day)
- Per week (average of 15 videos per week)
- Per month (average of 60 videos per month)
- Per year (access to all videos daily)

***QUESTION 12a: How much would you be willing to pay for a news video in signed language, depending on the payment frequency you prefer? Fill in your maximum amount in euros for one video below.***

.....

***QUESTION 12b: How much would you be willing to pay for a news video in signed language, depending on the payment frequency you prefer? Fill in your maximum amount in euro for one day below.***

.....

***QUESTION 12c: How much would you be willing to pay for a news video in signed language, depending on the payment frequency you prefer? Fill in below your maximum amount in euro for a weekly subscription.***

.....

***QUESTION 12d: How much would you be willing to pay for a news video in signed language, depending on the payment frequency you prefer? Fill in your maximum amount in euro for a monthly subscription.***

.....

**QUESTION 12e:** *How much would you be willing to pay for a news video in signed language, depending on the payment frequency you prefer? Fill in your maximum amount in euro for an annual subscription below.*

.....

**QUESTION 13:** *Why are you unwilling / not able to pay for access to 'VGT nieuws'?*  
***Please select all reasons that apply from the following options:***

- ☐ I don't have the financial means to pay for news content.
- ☐ I believe sign language news should be freely accessible to everyone.
- ☐ I am satisfied with the free news sources available to me.
- ☐ I'm uncertain about the quality of 'VGT Nieuws'.
- ☐ Other (please specify): .....

**QUESTION 14:** *Would you watch the news if it contained advertisements (from sponsoring companies for example)?*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

**QUESTION 15:** *Do you agree with these statements?*

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Access to news and information should not require payment.					
Sign language news should be offered for free.					
Written texts should always accompany news videos in signed language.					
The government should not fund sign language news.					
Sign language news should be provided by the national television.					
Sign Language news should not be provided by a company/organisation run by deaf people.					
News should continue on weekends.					

News should not be interrupted during holidays.					
There should also be news about deaf people and signed languages (e.g. Deaflympics, EUD, WFD, ...).					
News services provided by deaf people for deaf people should not be free.					

**QUESTION 16: Thank you for your participation! If we have further questions, may we contact you for a potential in-depth interview?**

- I wish to remain anonymous.
- You can contact me. (proceed to question 17)

**QUESTION 17a: Please fill in your name: .....**

**QUESTION 17b: Please fill in your email address: .....**

DON'T FORGET TO CLICK 'SUBMIT' TO SEND YOUR ANSWERS!

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