

**PM**

**AGORA**

**co - creation event for  
project managers**



**Project Managers Promotion of Wellbeing –  
Research Results**

**By Alessandro Carbone  
Athens, 3/10/2024**

## **Why research over EU project Managers' Wellbeing?**

**Everything started from personal understanding as PM and relating to colleagues. The experience is connected to the sense of overwhelming, being in a hurry, recurrent thinking of work activities, etc. but few talk about it systematically, nobody focuses on the matter scientifically.**

## Why Well-being of Project Managers gets ignored?

- **Focus on Deliverables and Outcomes:** The setting for project management happens to be highly focused on actualizing the deliverables of a project along with achieving their objectives, timelines, and budgets. Delivering such results outshines the issues and attention related to the well-being of the professionals entrusted with managing them.
- **Perceived Resilience of Project Managers:** Project managers create an impression of resilience, adaptability, and ability to cope with stressful situations; therefore, they are not perceived as needing special intervention or concern for their well-being.

- **Organizational Culture:** The financial bottom-line outcomes and successful completion of projects are considered to be taking precedence over issues related to well-being matters of staff members in most organizations, thus putting such issues as secondary. Such a cultural perspective may also provide additional disincentives in examining the psychological and mental well-being of project managers.
- **Ignorance:** Not enough awareness exists that wellbeing will translate into project outcomes. The organization might simply fail to perceive this key linkage-that good health on the part of the project managers in terms of mental and emotional health equates to good project performance-and hence any less apparent research priority.

- **Temporary and dynamic nature of project-based work, therefore, may make recordable long-term well-being issues harder to realize or address. Since projects are mostly short-term, the organizations might fail to figure out the accumulated stress faced by a project manager over various projects.**
- **Generalization of Studies on Stress: Most wellbeing studies relate to general workplace stress or specific high-pressure industries such as health or finance and have not tailored studies to the unique stressors faced in multidimensional roles such as a project manager.**

## Wellbeing, how it was identified

**Preparatory activity via “Literature research” that provided an internal document that focuses on project manager well-being, particularly in the context of managing EU-financed projects. It explores well-being at individual, professional, and corporate levels, emphasizing the impact of stress, leadership, and organizational support.**

## How wellbeing for Project Managers was identified (1)

### Individual Level:

**Stress and Anxiety:** Project managers face significant stress due to the complexity and high stakes of EU-funded projects. The uncertainty of proposal acceptance and the pressure to meet deadlines contribute to heightened anxiety, which can lead to burnout.

**Work-Life Balance:** The demanding nature of managing EU projects disrupts work-life balance, often leading to burnout and exhaustion.

**Perfectionism:** Personal traits like perfectionism can increase vulnerability to stress, especially during the proposal development phase. High personal standards may exacerbate stress levels.

**Coping Strategies:** Effective stress management interventions like mindfulness training and organizational support mechanisms are critical for fostering resilience and well-being.

## How wellbeing for Project Managers was identified (2)

### Professional Level:

**Time Management Challenges:** The need to juggle proposal development, project execution, and regulatory compliance creates intense pressure on project managers. Poor time management can lead to delays and budget overruns.

**Scope Creep:** Expanding project requirements can cause project delays and frustration, further complicating the project manager's role.

**Continuous Professional Development:** Project managers must continuously update their skills to navigate the dynamic EU project environment successfully. Skills in financial acumen, regulatory knowledge, leadership, and communication are crucial.

**Burnout:** The intense workload, tight deadlines, and administrative burdens contribute to emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction.



## How Wellbeing for Project Managers was identified (3)

### Corporate Level:

**Organizational Support:** Adequate resources, training, and an encouraging work environment are vital for reducing stress. Organizational support acts as a buffer against job demands and can improve project managers' performance and well-being.

**Leadership Style:** Transformational leadership fosters well-being by inspiring and supporting project managers. In contrast, transactional leadership can lead to micromanagement and decreased morale, negatively impacting well-being.

**Team Dynamics:** Positive teamwork, clear communication, and mutual respect reduce stress and contribute to project success. Conversely, dysfunctional teams can increase stress and impede progress.

**Organizational Culture:** A culture that values work-life balance and employee well-being enhances job satisfaction and reduces stress. On the contrary, toxic cultures contribute to high turnover and burnout.

## The identified wellbeing indicators:

### Personal wellbeing

- **Personal feelings of wellbeing (e.g. confidence, energy, love, interest, relaxation, etc)**
- **Wellbeing related activities (e.g. physical, relational and social, spiritual, active citizenship, public and events)**
- **Signs of distress experienced (e.g. anxiety, lack of enjoyment, sadness, hopelessness, etc)**

### Corporate wellbeing

- **Sense of support**
- **Sense of working team belonging**
- **Support system (e.g. communication, responsibilities, leadership, work-sharing, supervision, etc)**

### Professional life wellbeing

- **Sense of professional satisfaction**
- **Factors for satisfaction (e.g. benefits, salary, professional growth, job security, teamwork, etc)**
- **Manageability of work**
- **Work-life balance**
- **Professional development opportunities**
- **Training for development and time management**
- **Stressful items (e.g. multitasking, non-approval of projects, overtime work, pressure, deadlines, etc.)**
- **Distress items**
- **Coping mechanism and choices**

## **Methodology for the data collection tool: the online survey**

**Types of questions: Matrix, Rating scales, Sliders, multiple choice, open.**

**23 questions (duration about 13 minutes to be filled in)**

**Devided into three sections:**

- **Individual wellbeing aspects**
- **Professional wellbeing aspects**
- **Corporate wellbeing aspects**

**Final demographics (gender, age, time in the profession, working context)**

## Timing and sharing of the survey

- **Opening date 15/7/2024**
- **Closing date 25/9/2024**

**Engagement tools to invite respondents:  
Mails, SM posts and promotions, newsletter,  
personal invitation**

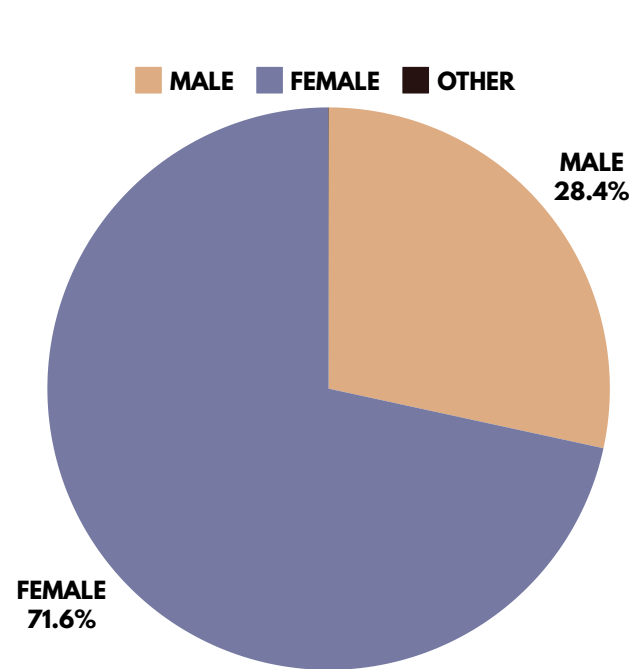
- **Contexts:**
- **PM Community on LinkedIn**
- **PM Agorà promotional channels**
- **Networks of colleagues (previous and running projects)**
- **Partners of organisers projects**

# THE RESULTS



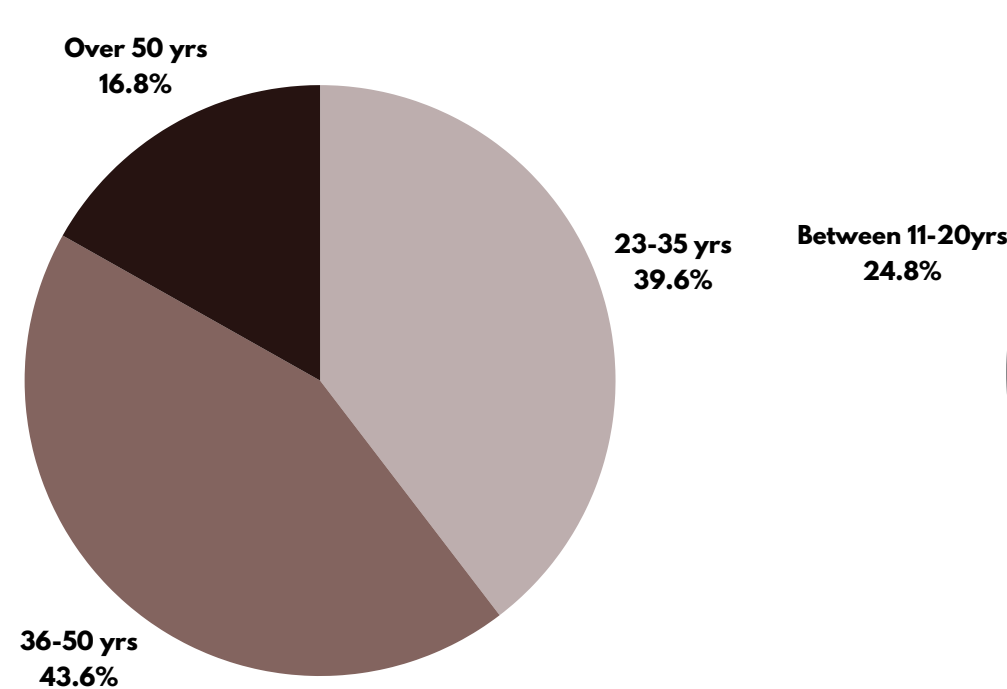
**Total respondents: 112**  
**However, some items have been neglected by some respondents thus not all questions are address by the total sample.**

## Demographics:



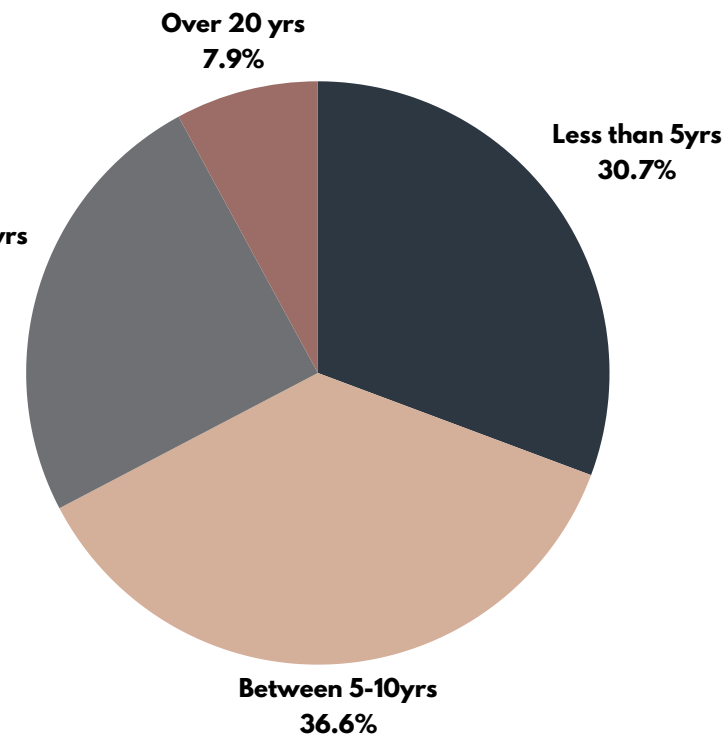
**Gender:**

- M 29 – 28,4%
- F 73 – 71,57%
- 10 did not share their gender



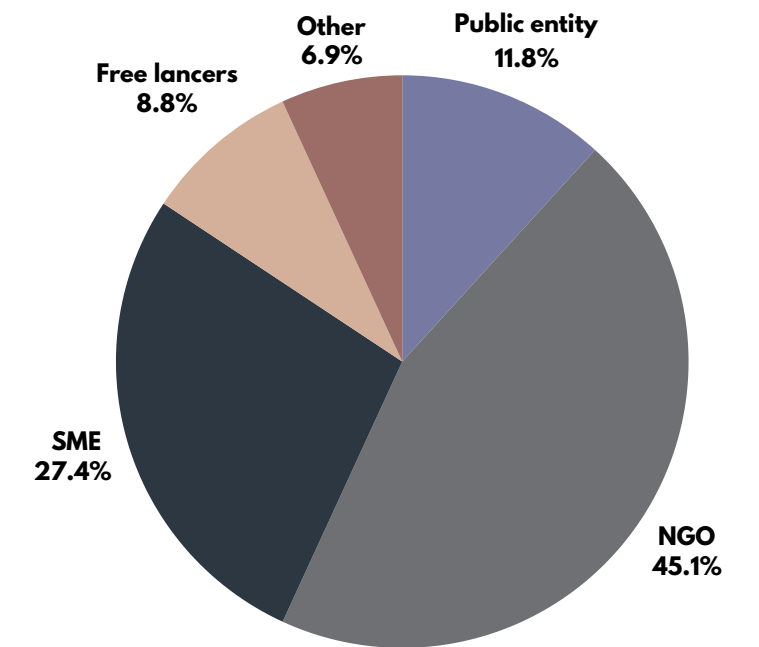
**Age:**

- 23-35 hrs 40 – 39,60%
- 36-50 yrs 44 – 43,56%
- Over 50 yrs 17 – 16,83%



**Years in the profession:**

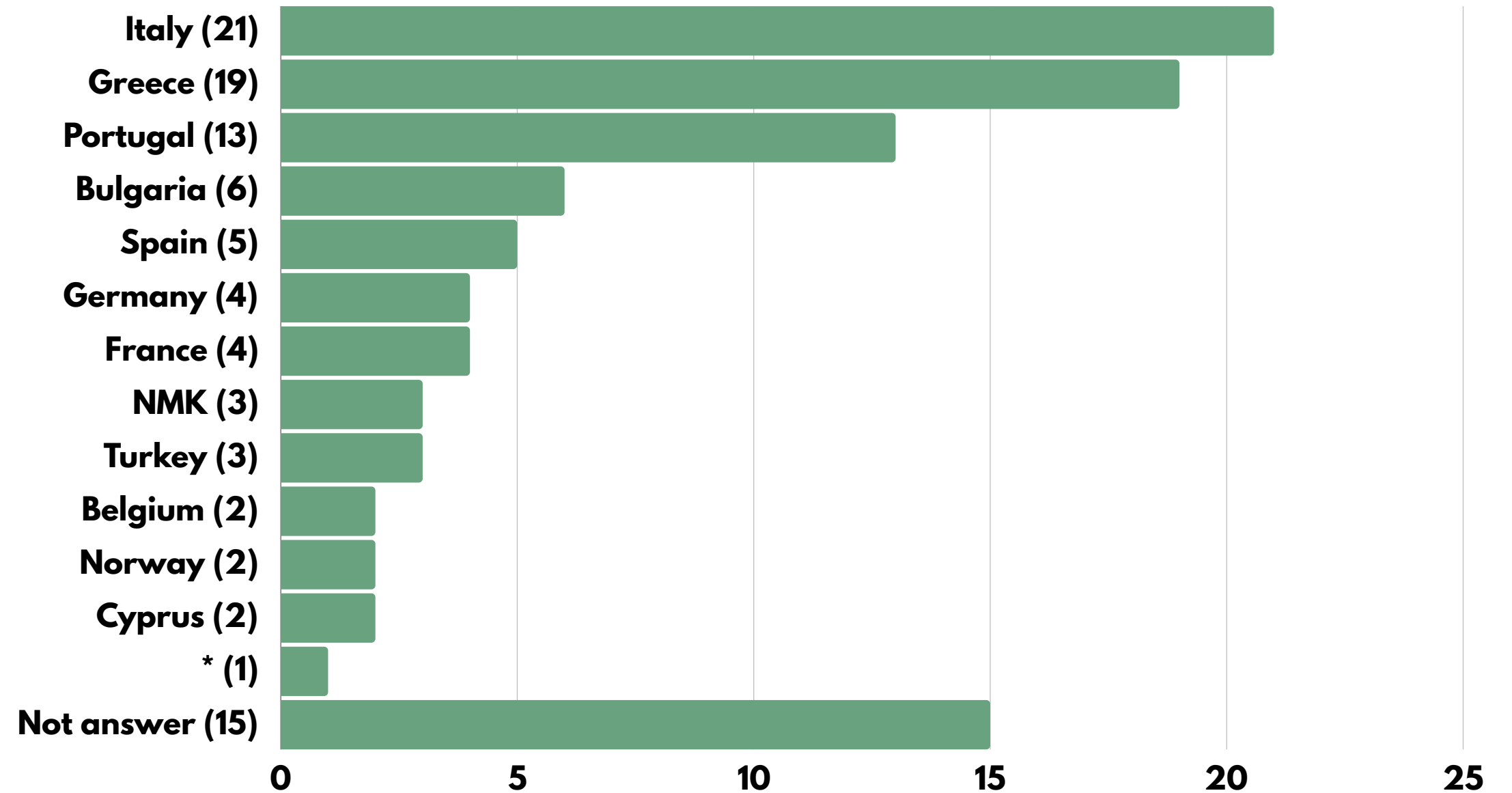
- Less than 5yrs: 31 – 30,69%
- Between 5-10yrs: 37 – 36,63%
- Between 11-20yrs: 25 – 24,75%
- Over 20 yrs: 8 – 7,92%



**Organisation where PMs are working:**

- Public entity 12 – 11,76%
- NGO 46 – 45,10%
- SME 28 – 27,45%
- Free lancers 9 - 8,82%
- Other (Chamber of Commerce, cooperative, social enterprise, etc.) 7%

## Countries



\*(Slovenia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Romania, Lithuania, Lebanon, Iceland, Hungary, Croatia, Austria)

# Personal wellbeing

## Over the last few weeks how often did you experience the following feelings?





## In the last year, besides your work and domestic life, how often did you do the following?

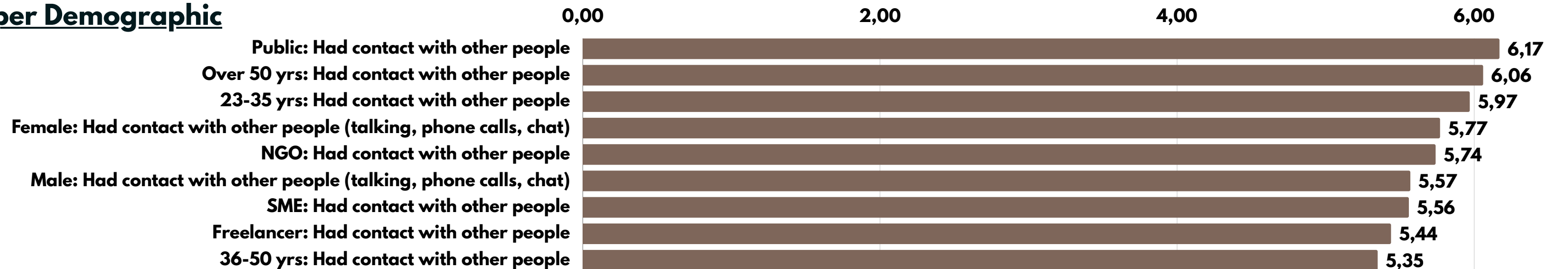
### Highest score:



### Lower score:

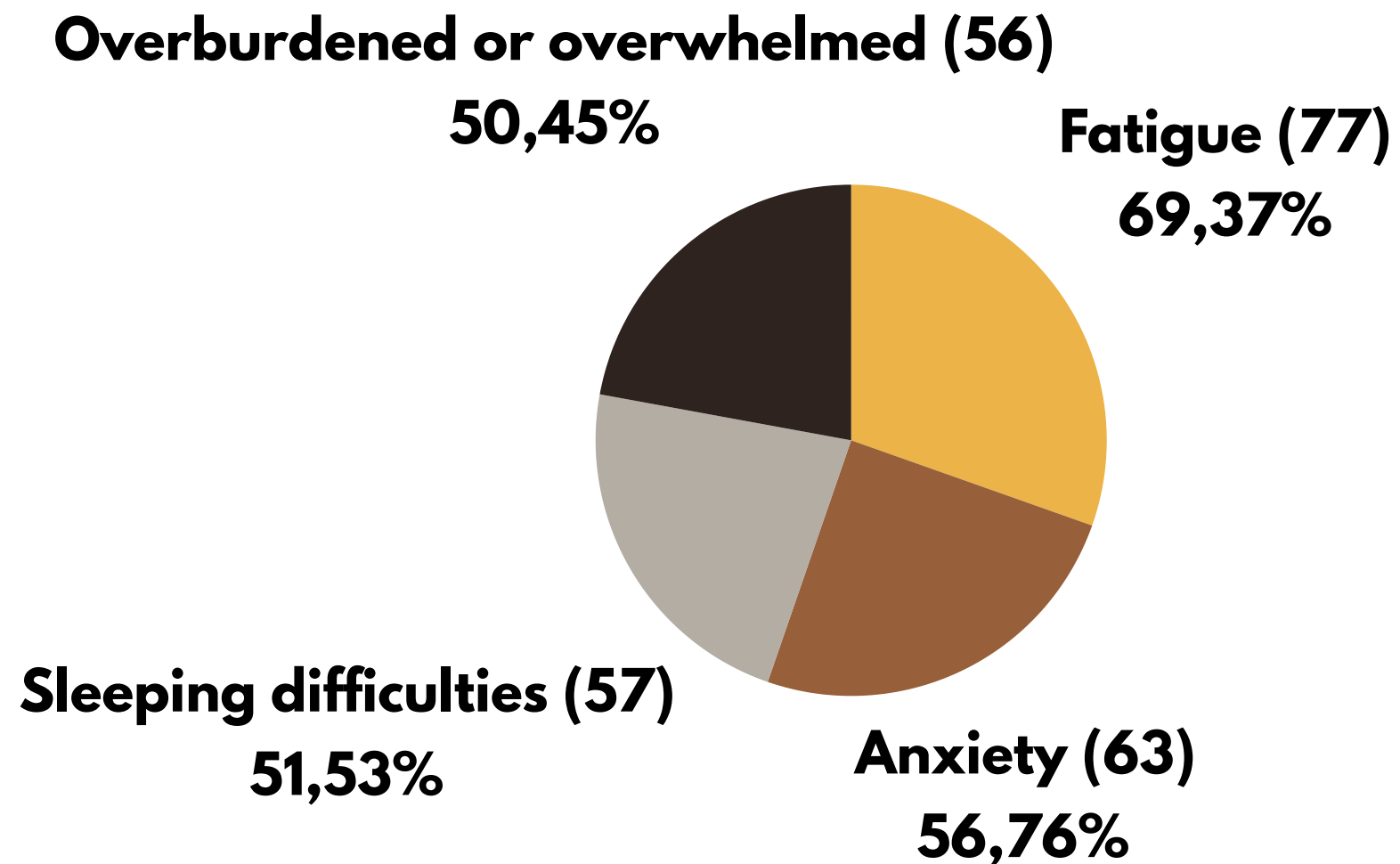


### Highest per Demographic

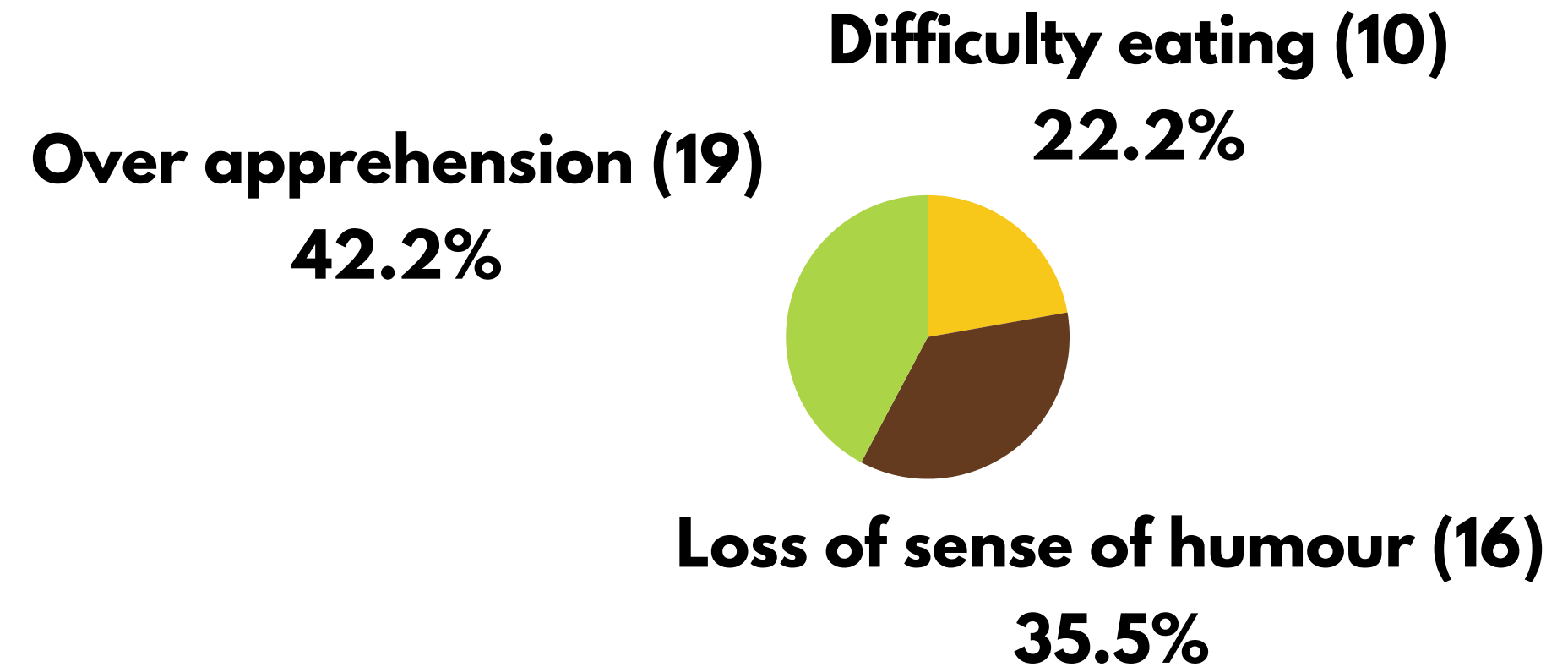


**In the last year, which of the following signs of distress did you experience on a personal level**

**Ranking highest:**



**Ranking lowest:**



## In the last year, which of the following signs of distress did you experience on a personal level

### Highest per Demographic



Comments

weight support  
performance anxiety  
difficulty  
balance family  
**Responsibilities**  
colleagues  
working day  
closing overwhelmed  
wellbeing friends

**PROFESSIONAL LIFE WELLBEING**

**Overall, how satisfied are you with your job as a project manager for EU-funded projects?**

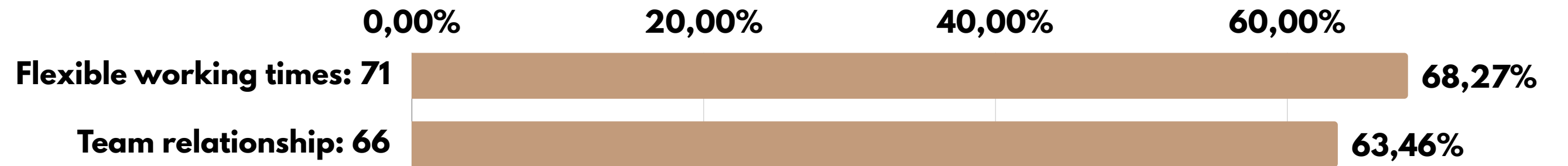
**1 -100 (Negative – Positive)**

**Average is 70**

**We have as low as 0**

## What factors contribute most to your job satisfaction?

Highest score:

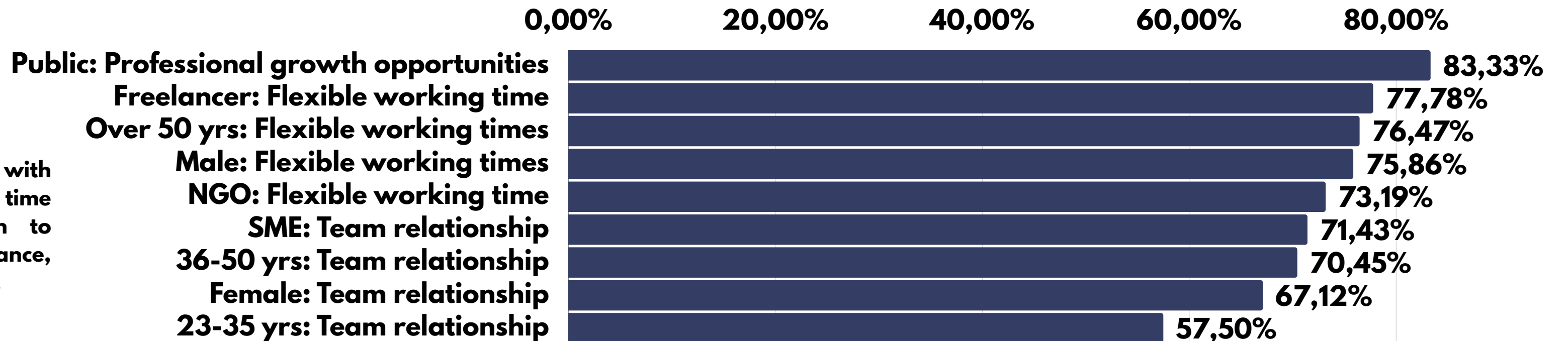


Lowest score:



Other mentioned also:

- Networking, working with different people, time schedule, contribution to society, work life balance, autonomy, experience.



**How manageable do you find your current workload related to EU-funded projects?**

**1 -100 (Negative – Positive)**  
**Average is 63**  
**We have as low as 17**



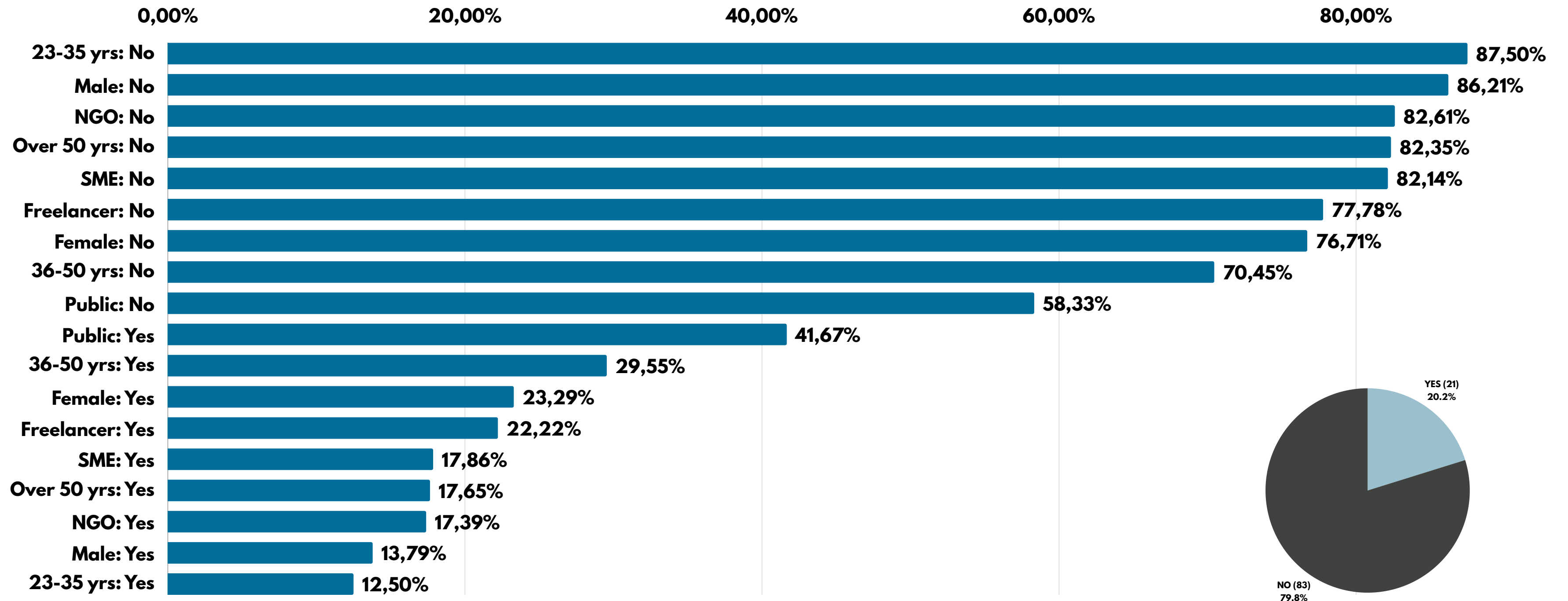
**How would you rate your work-life balance?**

**Range 1 -100 (Negative – Positive)**  
**Average is 63**  
**We have as low as 0**

**How would you rate the opportunities for professional development and training specifically for EU-funded project management that were provided to you?**

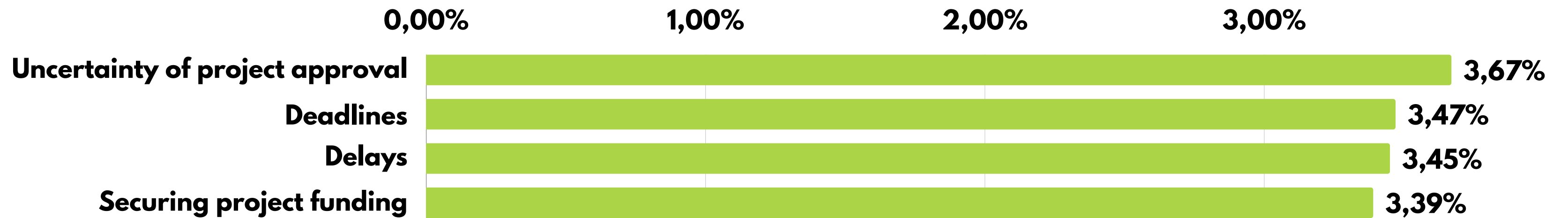
**1 -100 (Negative – Positive)**  
**Average is 55**  
**We have as low as 0**

## Did you have recent training and development opportunities to improve your time management skills?

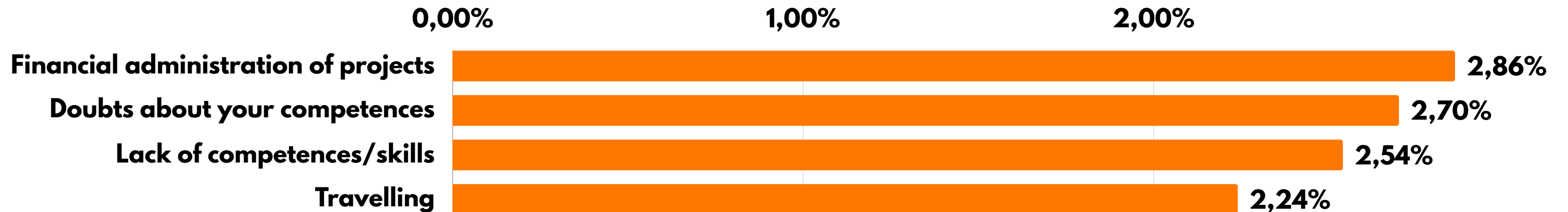


## To what extent the following items contribute to your working stress level

### Highest scores:

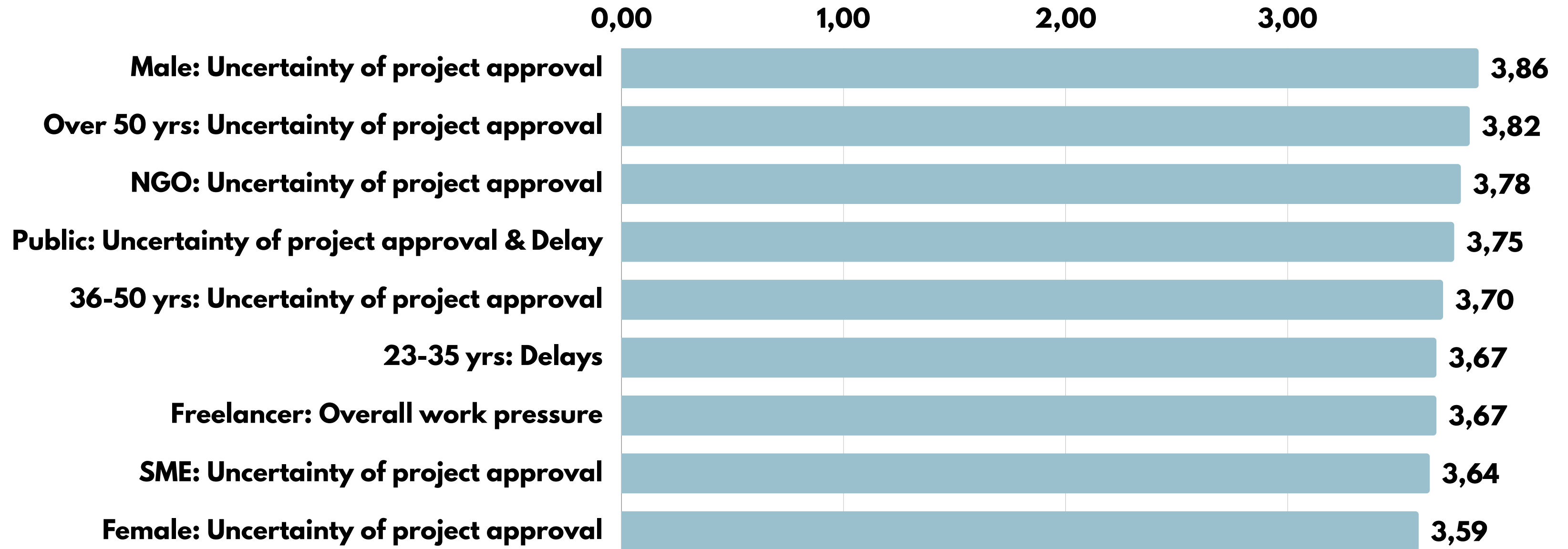


### Lowest scores:



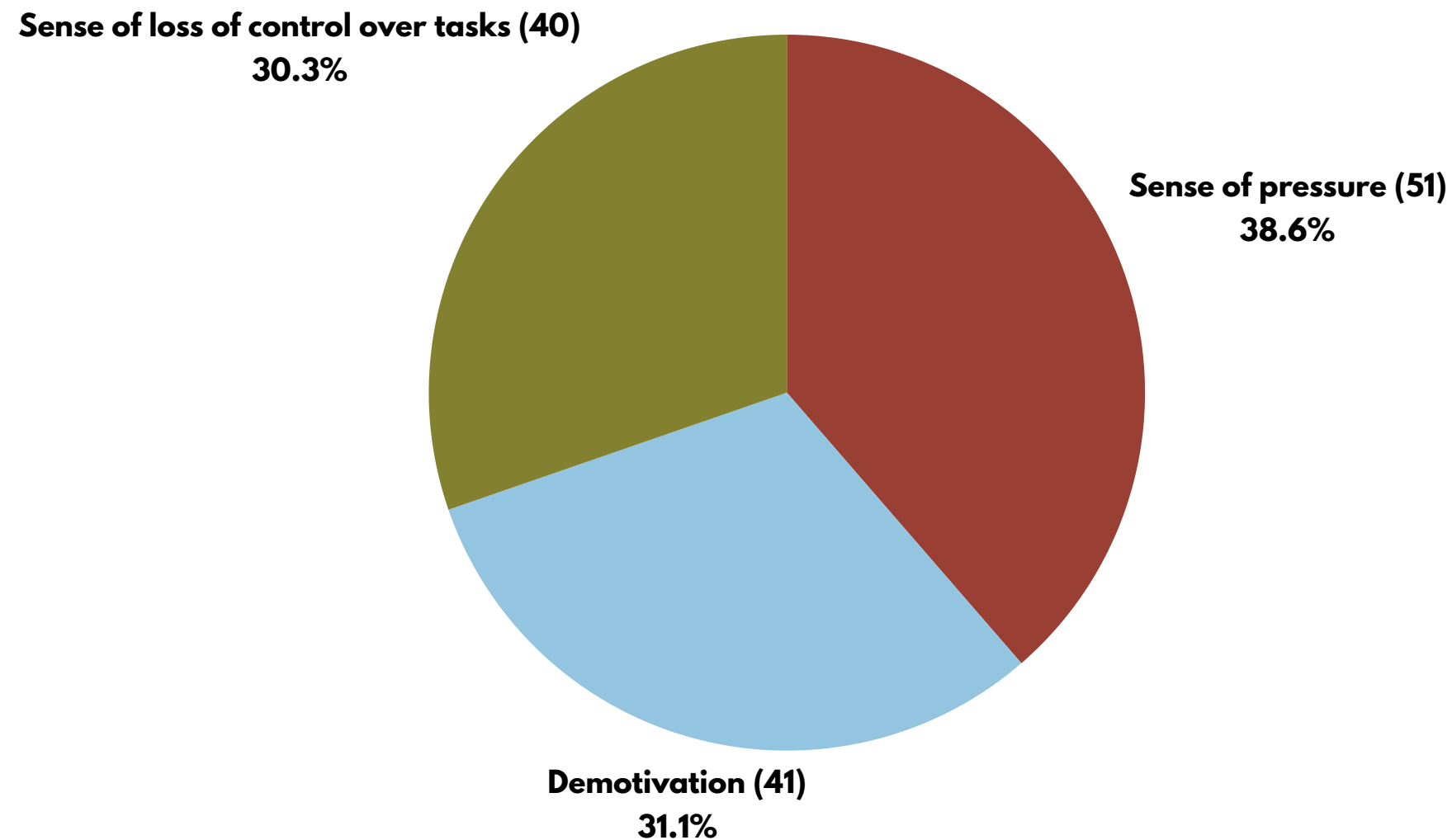
## To what extent the following items contribute to your working stress level

### Highest per Demographic

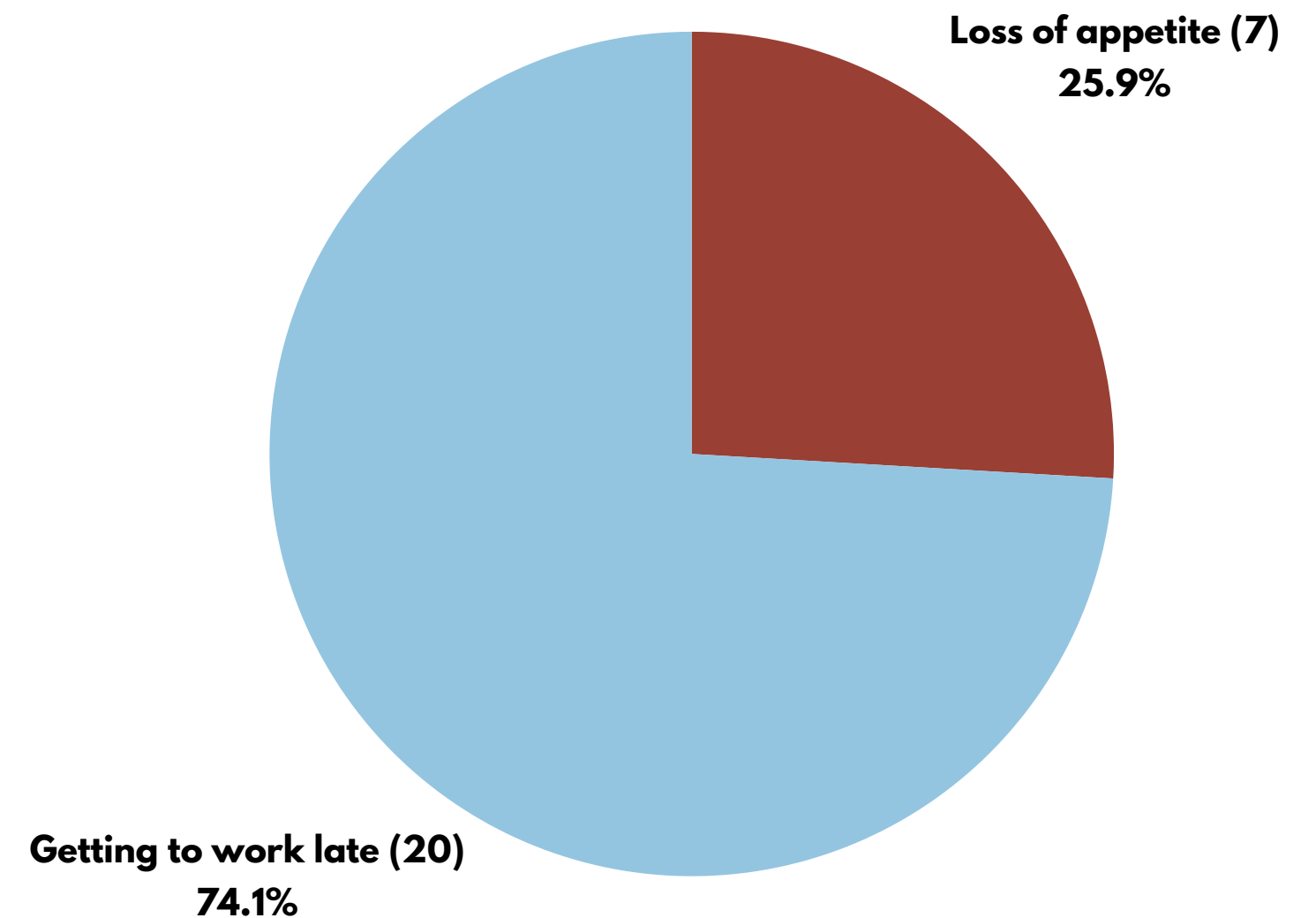


## Which of the following signs of distress did you experience on a professional level in the last months

### Highest scores

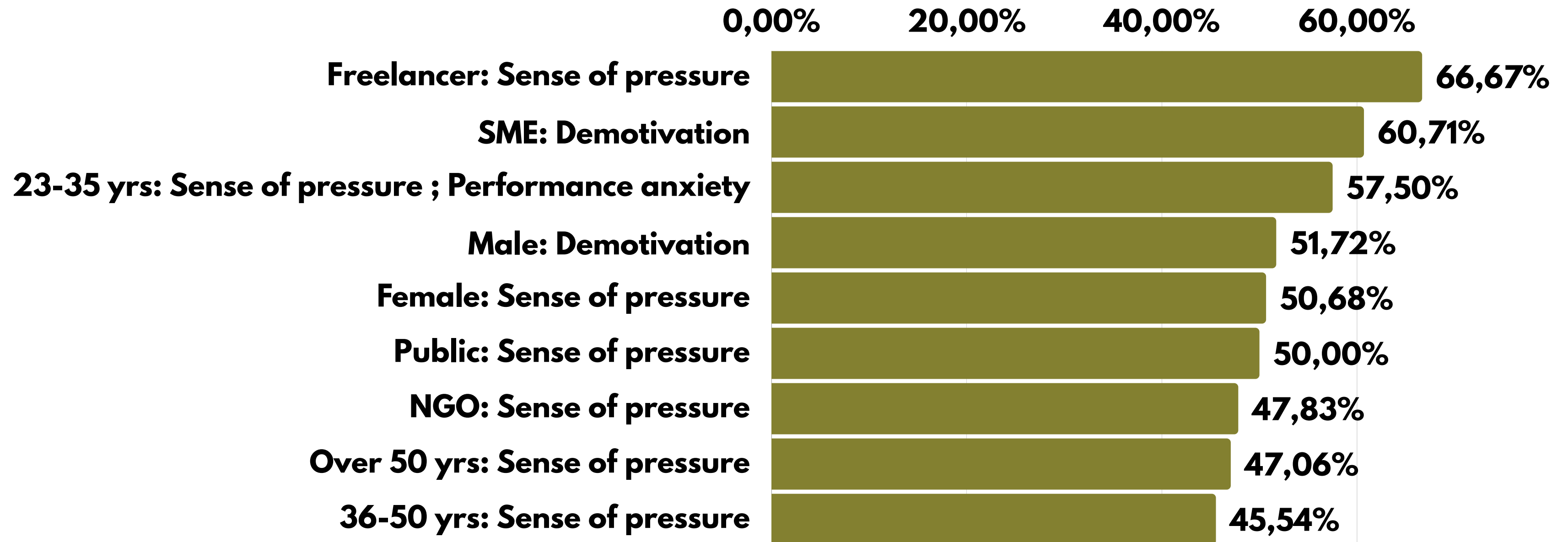


### Lowest scores



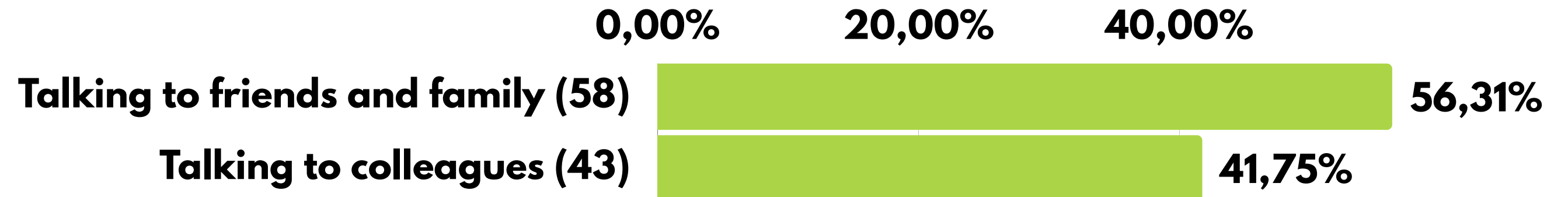
## Which of the following signs of distress did you experience on a professional level in the last months

### Highest per Demographic

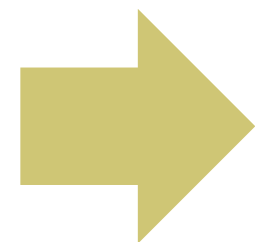
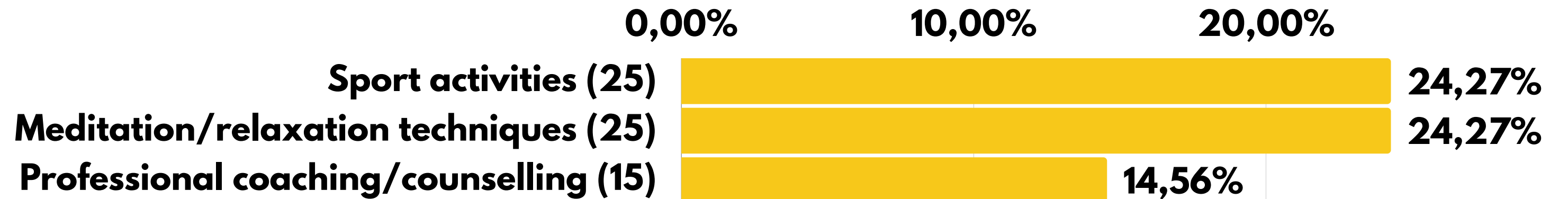


## How do you typically cope with work-related stress?

### Highest score



### Lowest scores

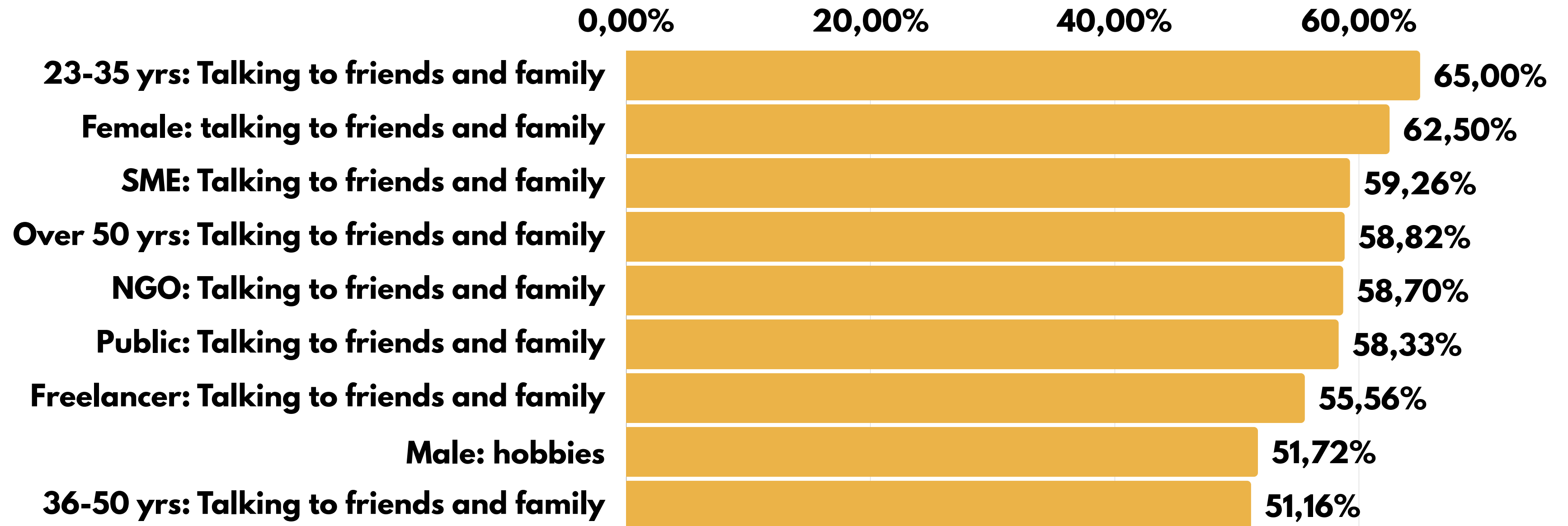


Other requested elements are psychological sessions, “stop caring”, sex relationship, faith (spending alone time with God), prayers.



## How do you typically cope with work-related stress?

### Highest per Demographic



Comments

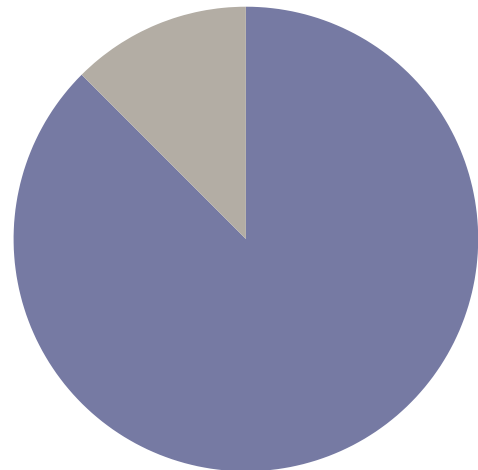
recognition  
energy formal colleagues  
communication clear  
setting good lack advice  
low organizations management  
fundings objectives work amount  
drawing mentorship time EU  
PM professionalism  
motivation accessing  
Stress

**CORPORATE WELLBEING**

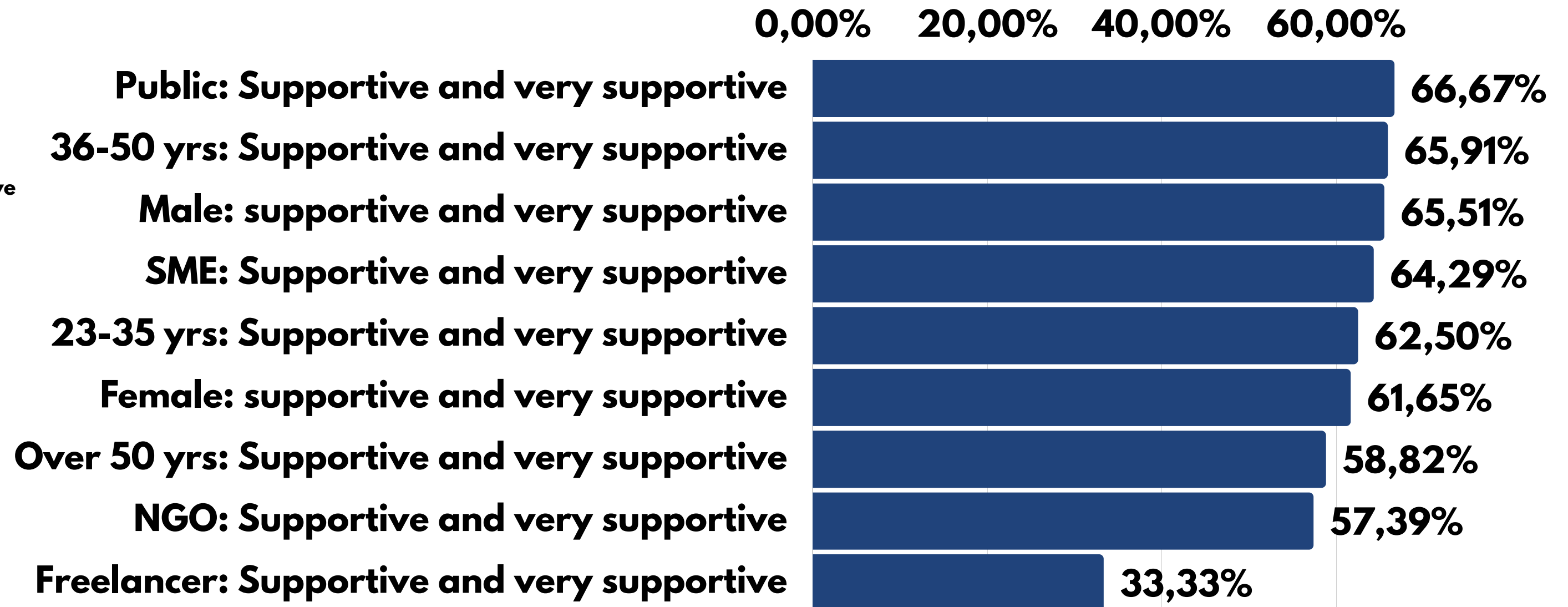
## How supportive do you find your workplace/organisation in your tasks as an EU project manager?

Unsupportive and very unsupportive

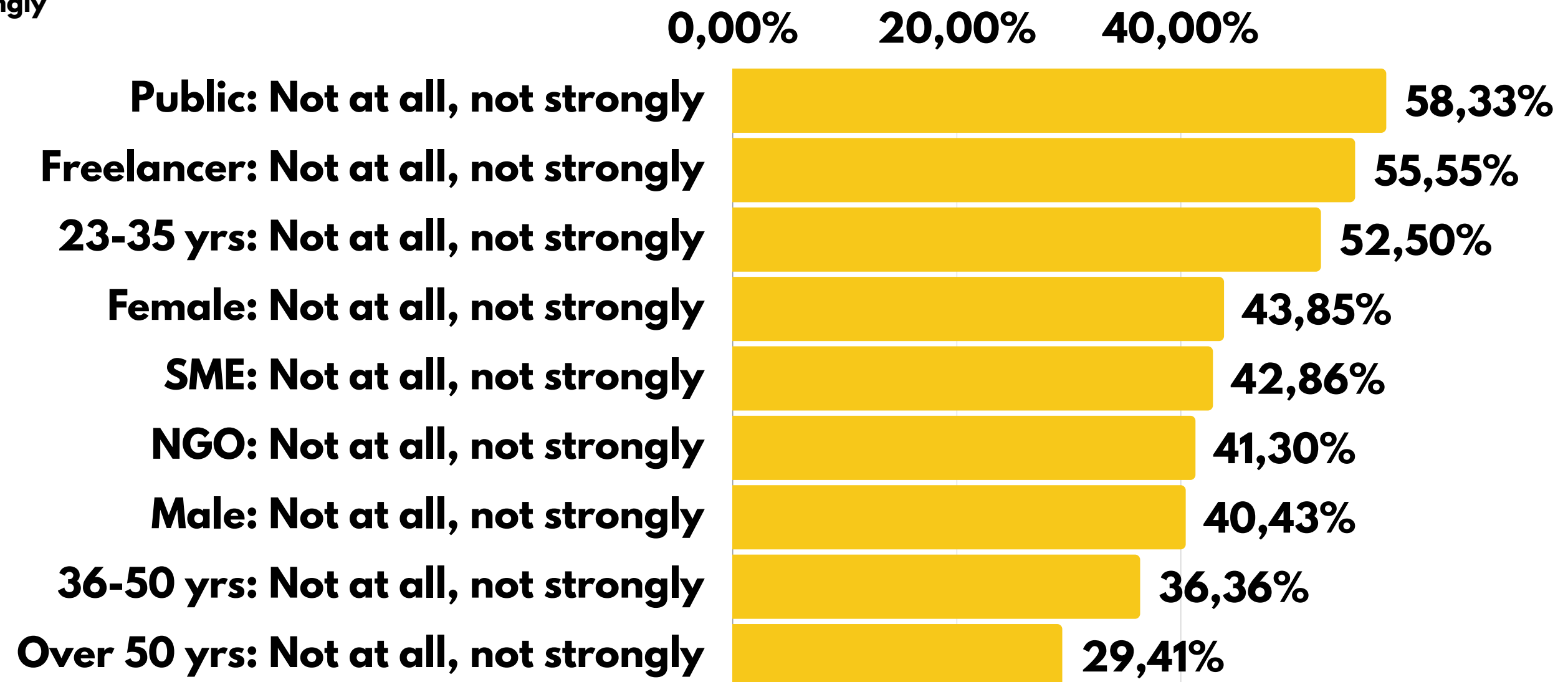
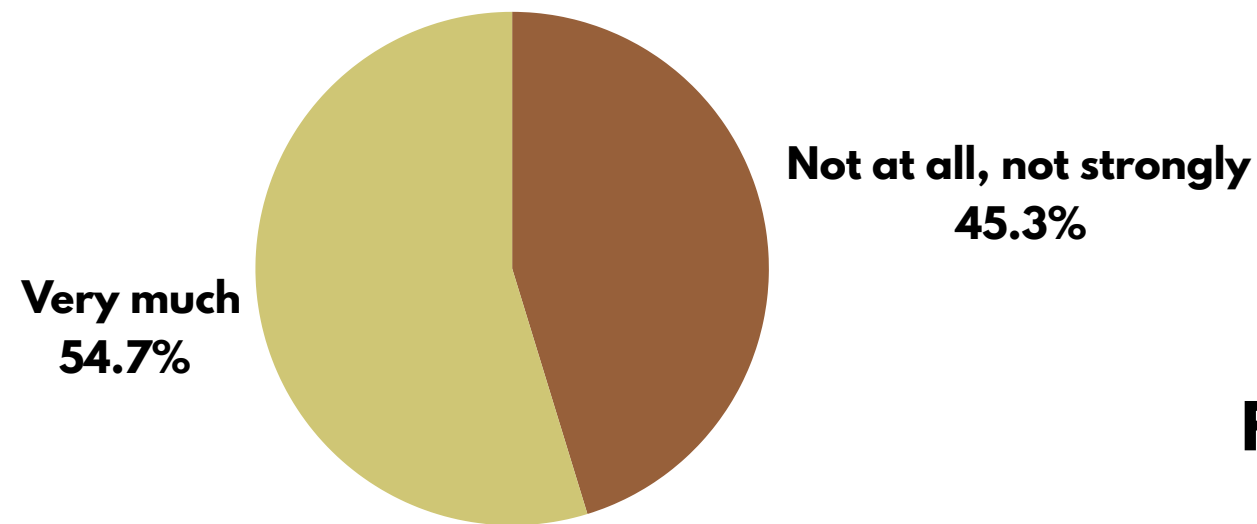
12.5%



Supportive and very supportive  
87.5%



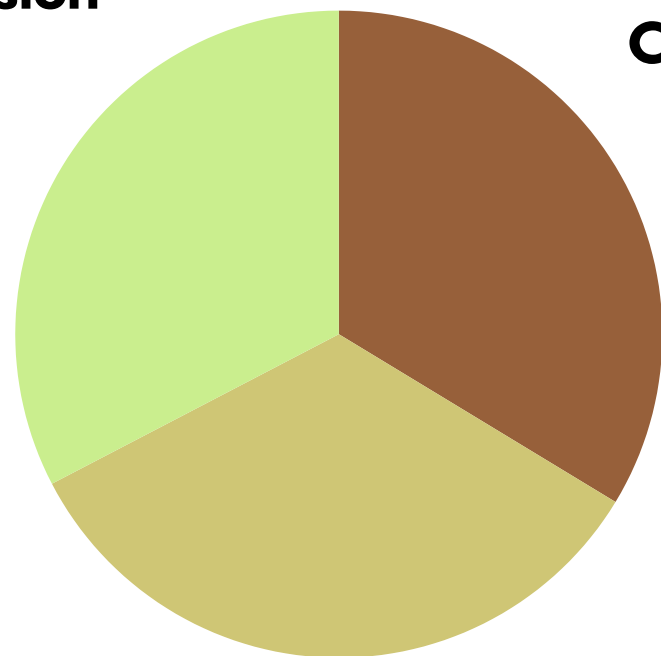
**If you work in an organisational context, how much do you feel part of a close-knit team?**



To what extent the following elements of your company's working environment properly support your wellbeing as project manager:

Highest score:

Exchange discussion  
32.6%

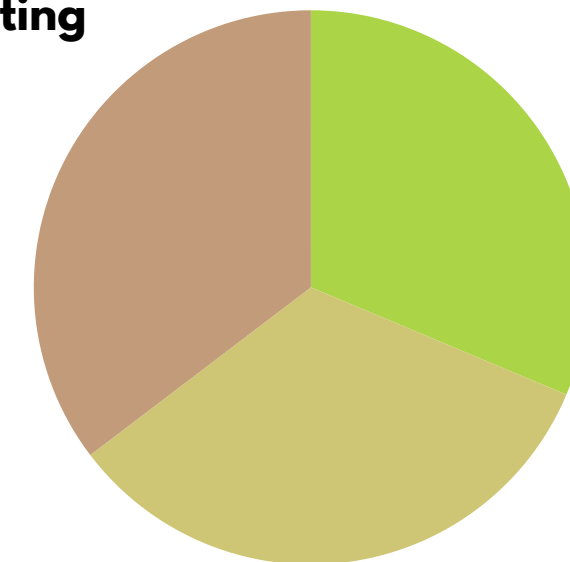


Collaboration  
33.7%

The colleagues  
33.7%

Lowest scores:

Supervision/consulting  
35.3%

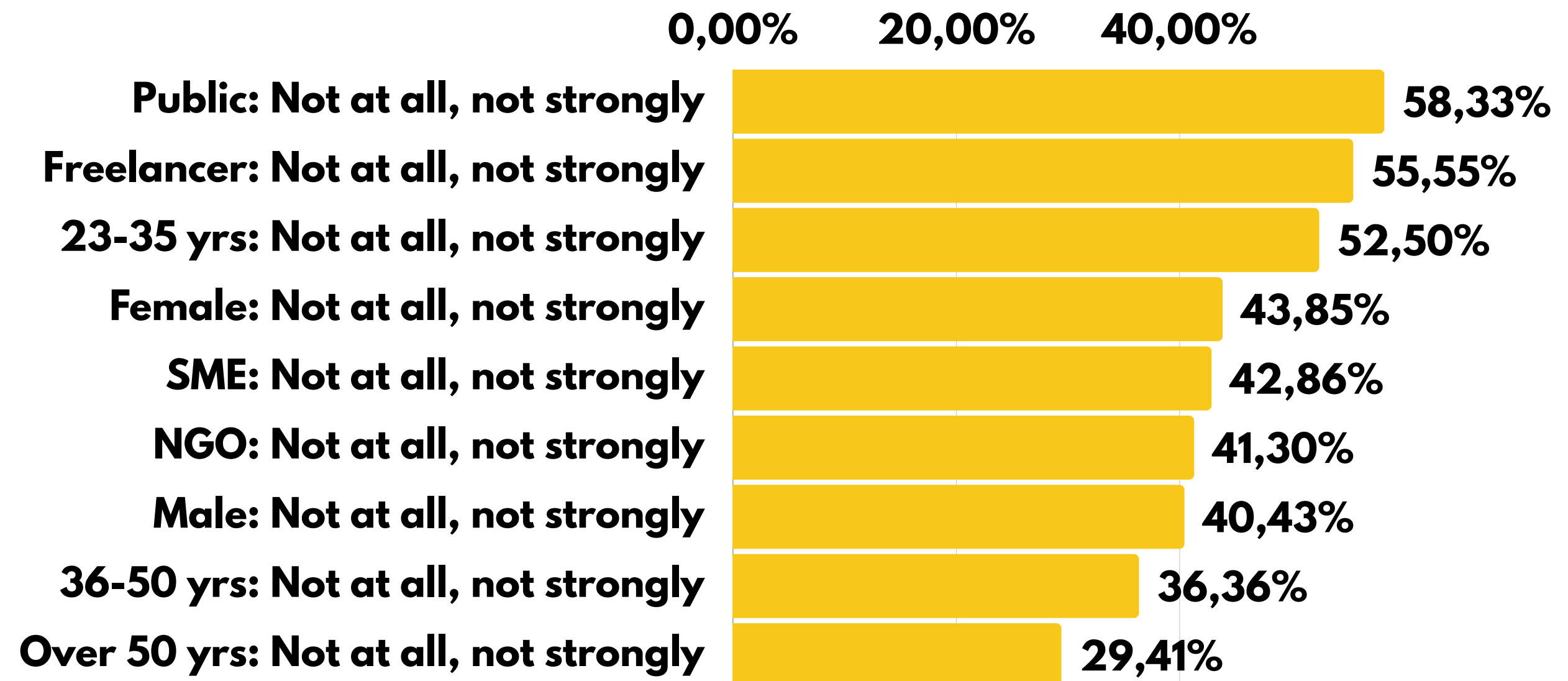


Extra works activities with colleagues  
31.3%

Financial benefits  
33.3%

**To what extent the following elements of your company's working environment properly support your wellbeing as project manager:**

**Highest score:**



Comments

climate,  
team,  
Collaboration,  
adaptive  
management



## **Some elements for reflection**

**Based on the survey data shared in the document, several conclusions can be drawn about the well-being of EU project managers. As major concerns we can mention:**

- 1. Prevalence of Stress and Fatigue: Fatigue is a leading sign of distress for project managers, with high levels of anxiety and sleeping difficulties also reported. This highlights the mental and physical strain involved in managing EU-funded projects.**
- 2. Job Satisfaction Influenced by Flexibility and Team Relationships: Flexible working hours and positive team dynamics are key contributors to job satisfaction, indicating that a supportive work environment and autonomy are essential for the well-being of project managers.**

## Some elements for reflection

- 3. Work-Life Balance and Workload Management are Concerns: Many project managers find their workload manageable to an extent (average score of 63), but challenges in work-life balance (also scoring 63) point to ongoing struggles in balancing professional and personal life demands.**
- 4. Professional Development Lacking: Opportunities for professional development and training in project management are insufficient, with many project managers reporting a lack of recent training to improve time management and essential skills. This lack of support may contribute to ongoing stress.**

## Some elements for reflection

**5. Social Support is Critical: Project managers predominantly cope with work-related stress by talking to friends, family, or colleagues. Formal methods like professional coaching or counseling are rarely utilized, suggesting that personal support networks play a larger role in stress relief than organizational or professional interventions.**

**6. High Work Pressure and Demotivation: A significant proportion of project managers experience a sense of pressure, demotivation, and a loss of control over their tasks, pointing to an underlying issue of high work pressure and a lack of clarity in managing project responsibilities.**

**7. Lack of Organizational Support for Well-being: Although 63% of respondents feel their organizations are supportive, there is still a significant minority (43%) who do not feel part of a close-knit team. Financial benefits and supervision are reported as areas where organizational support is weak.**

## Encouraging points

- 1. Strong Social Connections:** A high percentage of project managers maintain regular contact with others, including friends, family, and colleagues. This indicates robust personal and professional networks that are key in providing emotional support and helping project managers manage stress effectively.
- 2. Positive Team Dynamics:** Many respondents highlight the importance of team relationships, with 52% feeling part of a close-knit team. This sense of belonging fosters collaboration, mutual support, and contributes positively to job satisfaction.

## Encouraging points

**3. Flexible Working Conditions:** Flexible working hours are a significant factor contributing to job satisfaction, especially among freelancers and older project managers. This flexibility allows for better autonomy, helping project managers manage their professional and personal lives more effectively.

**4. Engagement in New Interests:** Respondents reported high levels of interest in new things and in others, suggesting an ongoing curiosity, personal growth, and engagement, which are positive indicators of well-being and mental resilience despite job pressures.

## Encouraging points

**5. Supportive Work Environment:** The majority (63%) of project managers feel their workplace is supportive in their role, with positive feedback on collaboration and exchanges with colleagues. This suggests that many organizations are creating environments that value cooperation and dialogue.

**6. Job Satisfaction Above Average:** While some report struggles with stress, the overall job satisfaction rating is a moderate 70 out of 100, showing that despite challenges, most project managers find a level of fulfilment in their roles.

**Some suggested interventions to be considered in protecting the wellbeing of EU project managers**

## **Personal Interventions**

**Self-Care:** Regular physical activity, mindfulness, or hobbies help in developing good ways of managing stress and maintaining good mental health. Let them have their breaks and put a line dividing work from personal life to avoid burnout.

**Establish Personal Support Networks:** Maintain close friendships and a strong family life to offer emotional support. Regular talking through challenges with close connections provides an opportunity for better understanding and management of work-related stress.

**Personal Growth:** Stay interested in, and open to, learning new things outside of the workplace. This can help boost emotional resilience, improve life satisfaction, and offer an outlet from work pressures.



## Professional related actions

**Professional Development:** Practice the habit of constant learning, such as time management, leadership, and stress management. Moving with the most recent trends concerning EU project management methodologies and skills will greatly boost an individual's confidence and make them less stressed in their work environment.

**Effective Time Management Skills:** Doing the right work at the right time, delegating when necessary, and setting dead-live dates appropriately would be a great tip for effective time management. Such time management will help reduce feelings of being overwhelmed and allow work-life balance to be handled properly.

**Peer Networking:** Attend project management networks or peer groups regularly. By sharing their experiences with other professionals, an opportunity to get a better overview of others' coping mechanisms may reduce feelings of isolation in high-pressure projects.

## Organizational Actions

**Flexible Working Hours:** Offer flexible working hours wherever possible so project managers can balance their work and personal responsibilities effectively. This will enhance job satisfaction and minimize the risk of burnout.

**Organizational Support:** This refers to the professional development opportunities that an organization provides, such as training in areas like time management, emotional intelligence, and leadership. Such coaches and mentors could respond to the call of the managers and assist through the EU project complexities.

## Organizational Actions

**Group Dynamism:** This speaks to team spirit and collaboration. Team spirit and collaboration can be enhanced by encouraging team-building activities or open communication. A friendly, supportive working environment possibly cushions the impact of stress and has positive implications for morale.

**Address Workload and Role Clarity:** Workloads are considered not to be excessive, and the roles and responsibilities of project managers are well delineated. The avoidance of scope creep and the addition of more administrative support may lighten some of the stresses.

**Improve Well-being Support:** Provide wellness programs with access to resources for stress management, support for mental health issues, and in-person counselling. An enabling organizational culture promotes a good work/life balance.

# PM AGORA



**THANK YOU SO MUCH !**

**Here's the link to download the  
summary data of all respondents to the  
survey.**

**SCAN ME**

