From obstacles to growth in private security

How young security professionals view their jobs in the Netherlands

Panteia

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Executive summary

This perception study among 253 Dutch private security professionals under 35 reveals the challenges and possible solutions for attracting and retaining young people working in the sector. Young employees work relatively often in full-time positions and typically enter the sector through personal networks rather than formal recruitment campaigns. Most have vocational (MBO) backgrounds.

Important expectations before entering the field often include variety in tasks and environment while working, financial stability, and good career development opportunities. For some, reality matches these expectations, but many express disappointment, particularly regarding salary, work-life balance, and career prospects. Onboarding is generally positive but considered too short and unstructured.

Salary and secondary employment benefits are the dominant factors when choosing, staying in, or leaving a job. Work-life balance and health also play central roles. While most professionals see the sector as valuable for public safety and security, they feel this value is insufficiently recognized in public discourse. Working conditions are rated less favourably than the Dutch average, with areas for improvement being a higher pay, more regular schedules and a lower workload.

Perceptions of equal treatment in the work place are mixed. While equal treatment of people with a different background regarding religion, ethnicity, and gender equality are largely recognized, there is less certainty about equality for sexual orientation and people with disabilities. However, due to privacy concerns we did not ask respondents to provide their own religious belief, ethnic background, sexual orientation or whether or not they are disabled. This may result in underrepresentation of certain types of discrimination people face in the workplace. Job security is generally experienced as good, but respondents call for quicker access to permanent contracts and better investment in long term prospects.

Views on the career opportunities in the sector are divided: Many aspire to managerial roles, especially in security management, but only a minority expect to remain in the sector in the long term, mainly due to dissatisfaction with pay and career perspectives. Training programs are considered adequate by about half of the respondents. However, young professionals emphasize the need for more focus on soft skills such as communication and conflict management, alongside stronger IT and digital skills training.

In summary, the private security sector offers career stability for young security professionals and they place great value in and recognize the important value the industry brings to public security. However this study suggests the sector may face challenges in attracting and retaining younger professionals. Key areas the young professionals themselves see as important to improve on include higher salaries, a better work-life balance, including more regular scheduling. This matches with the general picture across the Netherlands according to the most recent European

Working Conditions Survey 2024[1]. Salary and job security together with a good work-life are the most important reasons for employees in the Netherlands to consider working in a sector and also stay working there. Also more than 90% of working in the Netherlands in that survey indicate have good working hours is very important for them.

Young security professionals also want to see longer and more structured onboarding followed by more transparent career paths, and training that better balances interpersonal and digital skills. The yearly conducted Dutch survey on working conditions (Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden)[2] also paints a picture of employees having the need for training or courses and this was even higher for younger employees. Stimulating and facilitating lifelong learning opportunities both by the employer and managers or supervisors is an important area to look into.

[1] https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/european-working-conditions-survey-2024-first-findings
[2] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/20/nea-2024-resultaten-in-vogelvlucht
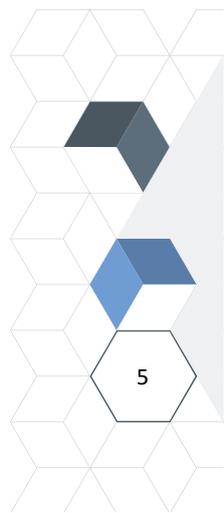
1   Introduction

Since 1992, **CoESS** and **UNI Europa** have worked together in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue, focusing on improving working conditions and strengthening the sector as a whole. This joint effort targets both workers and employers. Funding has been received through the European Commission for the project 'INTEL: NextGeneration', which is a follow-up to the earlier project 'INTEL: Skills Intelligence for the Private Security Sector'.

This new project includes a perception study targeting young workers in the private security services industry. The study aims to find out how these workers value their workplace and to what extent they consider the private security industry an attractive workplace. Special attention will be paid to their perceptions and expectations in terms of training, working conditions and the content of their missions/tasks. The aim of the study is to help Sectoral Social Partners better understand how to enhance the attractiveness of the sector among a young and more diverse workforce. By understanding the needs and expectations of young workers, targeted measures can be taken to make the sector even more attractive to this target group.

Panteia conducted the perception study for the Netherlands. The results of this study are laid out in this report.

The perception study consisted of a survey amongst security professionals under the age of 35 in the Netherlands. The survey was distributed, with help from the **Nederlandse Veiligheidsbranche**, amongst seven large to medium private security companies in the Netherlands. A total of 253 respondents participated which allows us to make indicative statements about the whole group of security professionals under 35 working in the country.
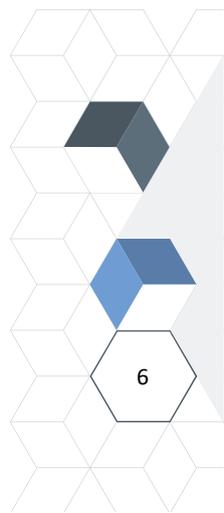
2   Results

This chapter mainly consists of the results of the online survey conducted supplemented with additional data. These additional data sources are referenced were applicable. As for the survey results: due to rounding, or questions where multiple answers are possible, it is possible that percentages do not add up to 100%.

2.1   Current employment situation

In 2024 a total of 30.710 persons were working in the private security sector in the Netherlands according to the most recent branchereport. A total of 36% of these persons were under the age of 35, or around 11.000 persons.[3]

The distribution of respondents in the survey closely matches the distribution of age in the total number security professionals under 35 working in the private security sector in the Netherlands, see table 1.

Table 1   What age category do you belong to? (n=253)

	Survey results		Total number of workers <35 in sector
	%	N	%
18 – 20 years	11%	27	42%
21 – 24 years	30%	76	
25 – 29 years	31%	78	58%
30 – 34 years	28%	72	

Source: Branchescan Ilisia Marketingservice, 2025; Panteia, 2025

Furthermore of the 30.710 persons working in the sector 71% was male and 29% was female. In the survey 61% identified as male and 38% as female (1 respondent identifies as X). We don't have sufficient information to determine if this is representative of the younger demographic in general or if this just means that relatively more women have filled out this survey.

Looking at the current work situation, 57% of the professionals under 35 are currently working full-time. This is higher than the average of 48% in the sector, according to the branchereport. Additionally, 26% of employees under 35 work part-time and 16% are students or trainees.

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[3] https://www.veiligheidsbranche.nl/uit-de-branche/branchescan/
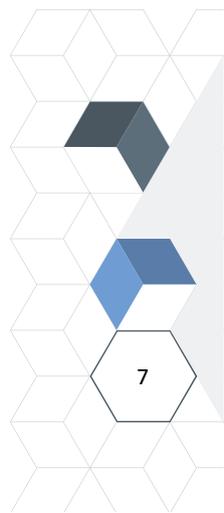
According to the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) the total number of private security firms in the Netherlands at the end of 2024 was 13.570.[4] However of this number 12.695 only consisted of 1 working persons, or in other largely consist of self-employed.

Table 2 gives a rough approximation of the share of employees working in the sector by size of the employer.[5] A majority of respondents in the survey (60%) indicate that they work in a company with 250 employees or more. 7% work in an environment with 50 to 249 employees and another 9% work in a company with 2 to 49 employees. 25% say they do not know how many employees the company has. Comparing this to the overall picture of employees in the sector we see this matches with the relatively large share of employees in the Netherlands works for large companies with more than 250 employees.

Table 2   (Approximation of the share of) employees working in public security, by size of employer (excluding self-employed).

	Survey results (employees <35)	Approx. total sector (all employees)
Company size	%	%
2-49 employees	9%	19%
50-249 employees	7%	13%
250 or more employees	60%	67%
I don't know	25%	

Source: CBS; Panteia 2025

The respondents were also asked in which region the company they work for is mainly active. For 59% of the respondents, the company they work for is active throughout the Netherlands and 9% state that the company mainly operates at Schiphol and the surrounding area.

Table 3   In which region is the company where you work mainly active? (n=253)

	%	N
All over the Netherlands	59%	149
Schiphol and surroundings	9%	23
North Brabant	6%	15
Overijssel	5%	13
South Holland	5%	13
Groningen	4%	9
North Holland (except Schiphol)	3%	8

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[4] CBS Statline: https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/81588NED/table?ts=1758290266211

[5] The exact number of employees in the sector per company size is not available. The number of employees per company size in is approximated by taking the middle of the category of the company size and multiplying by the number of companies in that category.

Gelderland	2%	5
Utrecht	2%	6
Limburg	1%	3
Flevoland	1%	3
Friesland	1%	3
Zeeland	1%	2
Drenthe	0%	1

Source: Panteia, 2025

Almost half of the respondents have relatively limited work experience in the private security sector. For example, 23% have been working in the sector for less than a year and 25% indicate that they have been active for between one and two years. The largest group (26%) has three to five years of work experience. Just under one-fifth have six to ten years of experience, while 9% have been working in the private security sector for more than ten years.

Figure 1   How many years have you been working in the private security sector currently? (n=253)
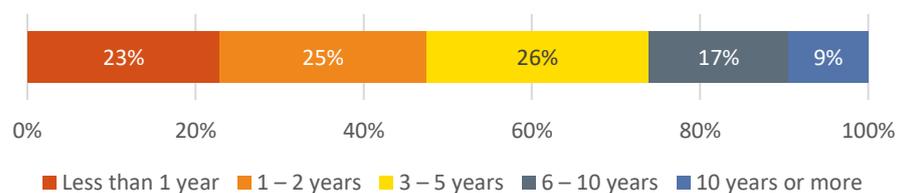
Source: Panteia, 2025

2.2   Educational background and previous experience

The vast majority of these young professionals have completed some level of vocational education (MBO 2,3,4 or MBO old structure (78%)) as their highest completed level of education, see table 4.

Table 4   What is your highest completed level of education? (n=253)

	%	N
No education / primary education / integration course / Dutch language course	1%	3
LBO / VBO / VMBO (kader- of beroepsgerichte leerweg)) / MBO 1 (assistant training)	4%	11
MAVO / HAVO or VWO (first three years) / ULO / MULO / VMBO (theoretische of gemengde leerweg) / secondary special education	2%	5
MBO 2, 3, 4 (basisberoeps-, vak-, midden-kader- of specialistenopleiding) or MBO old structure (before 1998)	78%	197
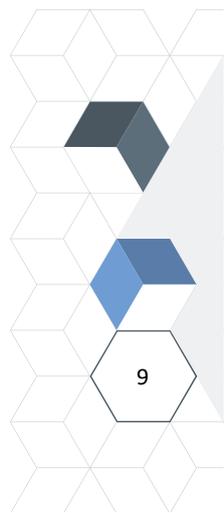
HAVO or VWO (transferred to the 4th grade) / HBS / MMS / HBO propedeuse or WO propedeuse	11%	27
HBO (except HBO master) / WO candidates or WO bachelor's degree	4%	9
WO doctoral or WO master or HBO master / postgraduate education	0%	1

Source: Panteia, 2025

Just over half of security personnel under 35 had previous work experience working in a sector other than the security sector. Of those people 70% had some sort of MBO vocational education and 61% was male. Another 29% were already working in the private security sector before they started their current job. For 12% it is their first job.

Table 5   What can you tell us about your previous work experience? (*Multiple answers possible*) (n=253)

	%	N
I was working in a different sector than the security sector	53%	134
I worked in the private security sector	29%	73
This is my first job	12%	30
I had a public function other than a security function	8%	20
I worked in public security (e.g. the army, police)	3%	8
I was working as a freelancer but not in the security sector	2%	5
I was working as a freelancer in the security sector	0%	1
I'd rather not say	8%	21

Source: Panteia, 2025

Furthermore, more than half of the respondents have thought about working in the public security sector (59%). 34% have not thought about this and another 7% do not know.

Additionally, before the respondents started their current job, a third worked full-time and another 22% worked part-time. A quarter were studying at that time and 7% were doing an internship or were following an apprenticeship program. Another 8% were looking for work when moving into their current job. Only 3% of the respondents were self-employed at that time.
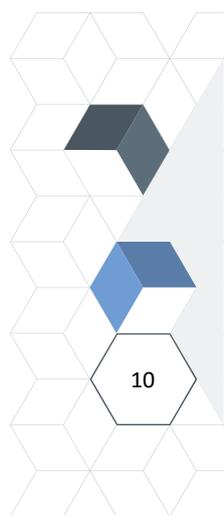
Figure 2   What was your employment situation like before you started your current job? (n=253)

33%	22%	3%	8%	25%	7%	3%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Working fulltime   ■ Working parttime   ■ Self-employed
■ Unemployed   ■ Studying   ■ Internship/apprenticeship
■ I'd rather not say
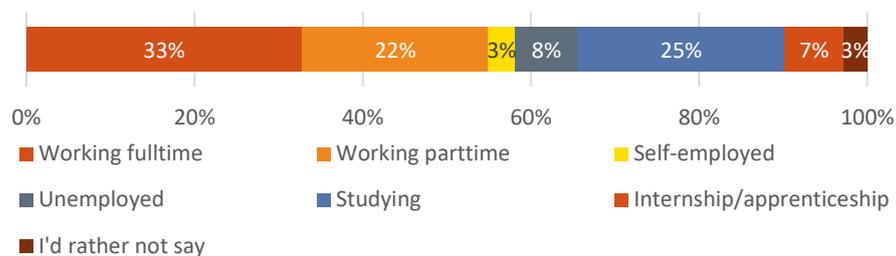
Source: Panteia, 2025

2.3   Entry into the private security services sector

These current young security professionals came in contact with the private security sector in many different ways. Just over a third had family members or people in close proximity already working in the private or public security sector before they started working in this sector (34%).

In total 36% have come into contact with the private security sector through private contact and word-of-mouth advertising from, for example, family members or friends. A fifth have sparked their interest in the sector by seeing work by security guards in public.

Table 6   How did you come into contact with the private security sector? (*Multiple answers* possible) (n=253)

	%	N
Private contact and word-of-mouth (e.g. through family members, friends, etc.)	36%	92
Interest sparked by seeing security staff work in public (e.g., airport security, access control, etc.)	20%	50
Vacancy on online portal	15%	38
Job offer on company website	13%	32
Presentation of the sector at school	10%	25
Social media campaign	6%	15
Other company campaign (e.g., job fairs, advertisements, etc.)	6%	14
Employment agency or pay-roll organization	2%	5
The UWV	1%	3
Other, namely:	13%	32
I don't know anymore	7%	18

Source: Panteia, 2025

Not many current young security professionals came in to contact with the job through promotions via school (10%), social media (6%), other campaigns (6%) or private (2%) or public employment agencies (UWV, 1%). This can therefore be an area where the sector can think about investing to attract more people to working in the sector.

2.3.1 Expectations

Furthermore, respondents were also asked what their main expectations were before starting work in the private security sector.[6] Respondents indicate that:
- they thought that the work would be varied (17x)
- that the work would offer them financial security through a good salary, good secondary employment benefits such as flexible working hours, bonusses or extra vacation days (15x)
- they would have general job security (10x).
- they expected a job in the private security sector to offer opportunities for career growth and development (9x).

According to 41% of these young security professionals, the expectations they had before starting the job were in line with reality once they started. For a third, expectations did not match the reality of working in the job and 26% say they cannot make a good judgement on that.

Most of these young security professionals gave reasons for their answers but it should be noted that the total number of answers is rather small. This means the reasoning below can only be interpreted as indicative and not representative of every young security professional working in the Netherlands. Those who indicated that their expectations corresponded to reality[7] mention that this is because:
- there is indeed varied work where no day is the same (8x).
- they believe that the working atmosphere is good with nice colleagues (5x)
- they get enough responsibility or autonomy in their work (4x).
- they have a good salary and good working conditions (4x)
- they have opportunities for growth to, for example, a managing position through training (4x).

Those whose expectations did not match the reality of the job[8] mention that:
- they are dissatisfied with the salary and secondary employment benefits (11x).
- they think that false promises were made by employers and there is too little of a healthy work-life balance (14x).
- they experience the work as monotonous (11x)
- there is a bad working atmosphere (10x)
- there are not enough career opportunities (9x).

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[6] A total of 147 respondents answered the question.
[7] Of the 104 respondents who indicated that their expectations correspond to reality, 60 respondents gave a reason.
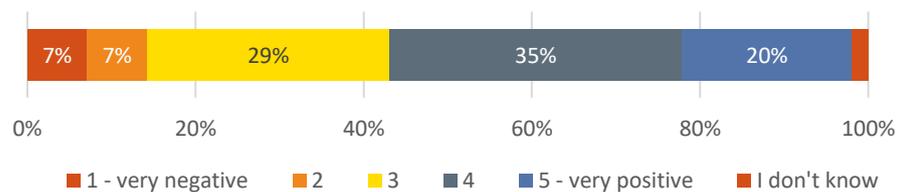[8] Of the 83 respondents who indicated that their expectations do not correspond to reality, 69 respondents gave a reason.

2.3.2   Onboarding process

The onboarding process is an important tool for employers to attract but more importantly keep new personnel. Investing in a good onboarding process is therefore an important way to keep more people working in the company. More than half of the respondents experienced the onboarding process with their current employer as (very) positive (55%). On the other hand, 14% experienced the process as (very) negative.

Figure 3   How was your experience with the onboarding process at your current employer in the private security sector? (n=253)

| 7% | 7% | 29% | 35% | 20% | |

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ 1 - very negative   ■ 2   ■ 3   ■ 4   ■ 5 - very positive   ■ I don't know

Source: Panteia, 2025

Answers to the question of what should be changed in the onboarding process are diverse. The young security professionals advised employers to do the following:[9]

- Lengthen the onboarding process as a whole (66x);
- Provide a good clear structure of the onboarding process to the new employees beforehand (23x);
- Give more guidance during the onboarding; don't let newcomers be deployed independently too quickly (20x);
- Make sure the training or instruction of new personnel during onboarding is done by a select group of permanent employees. To avoid large variation in quality of the onboarding (38x);
- Lastly, make sure the employees in charge of onboarding work with a set list of instructions and a clear structure and have received instructions on how to fulfill this role (26x).

2.4   Values in the workplace

To get an idea of the values that are important to the young security professionals working in the sector when it comes to where they work, the first question we asked was about the general topics they are most concerned about. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicate that they are concerned about inflation and the cost of living, see table 7. In addition, more than a third are concerned about their personal health (38%) and just over a third are concerned about crime, safety and security. For a quarter, economic inequality is a cause for concern. Under 'other' a small number of respondents mention that they are concerned about the housing market.

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[9] A total of 172 respondents answered the question.

Table 7   What topics are you most concerned about? (*Multiple answers possible, maximum 3)* (n=253)

	%	N
Inflation and cost of living	79%	199
Personal health	38%	96
Crime, safety and security	34%	86
Economic inequality	25%	64
Migration	18%	46
Discrimination	13%	32
Political climate in my country	11%	28
Unemployment	8%	21
Climate change & environment	6%	15
I'm not worried about anything	6%	16
Other	7%	18
I don't know	3%	7

Source: Panteia, 2025

The young security professionals were also asked what they think are the most important factors when choosing a new job. Salary and secondary employment benefits are the most frequently mentioned here. 89% of respondents think this is the most important. This is followed by work-life balance (67%) and health and well-being (36%). These outcomes are not surprising given that they previously indicated that for them the most pressing issues right now are inflation, cost of living and personal health. Another 31% also consider training and career development to be one of the most important reasons when choosing a new job. Additionally, these factors were also previously pointed out as being important in their expectations of working in this sector.

Table 8   What are the most important factors for you when choosing a new job? (*Multiple answers possible, maximum 3)* (n=253)

	%	N
Salary and benefits	89%	224
Work-life balance	67%	170
Health and well-being	36%	91
Education and career development	31%	78
Job security	23%	59
Job classification and nature of tasks	15%	37
Culture	15%	37
Employee participation	11%	28
Other	3%	7
I don't know	1%	2

Subsequently, the most important reason for wanting to stay in a job were also cited as salary and benefits (80%). This is again followed by work-life balance (59%) and health and well-being (31%). Another quarter (28%) consider job security an important reason to stay in a job. Under 'other', a small number of respondents mention their colleagues as an important reason for wanting to stay. Overall job security and the culture within the company become slightly more important when deciding to stay in the job, whereas salary and benefits, work-life balance and health and well-being drop slightly.

**Table 9   What are the main reasons why you would want to stay in a job?** (*Multiple answers possible, maximum 3*) **(n=253)**

	%	N
Salary and benefits	80%	202
Work-life balance	59%	149
Health and well-being	31%	78
Job security	28%	72
Education and career development	25%	64
Culture	22%	55
Employee participation	13%	33
Job classification and nature of tasks	11%	28
Other	4%	11
I don't know	1%	3

Source: Panteia, 2025

Lastly, the main reasons given for (potentially) quitting the job are again: salary and secondary employment benefits (67%), although this is relatively much lower mentioned reason than when deciding to start working or stay working as a security professional. And again work-life balance (57%) and health and well-being (43%) are also mentioned frequently. It is striking that company culture (37%) is in fourth place when it comes to the most important reasons for quitting a job and that salary.

Table 10   What would be the main reasons for quitting a job? (*Multiple answers possible, maximum 3***) (n=253)**

	%	N
Salary and benefits	67%	170
Work-life balance	57%	144
Health and well-being	43%	110
Culture	37%	94
Education and career development	19%	48
Job classification and nature of tasks	15%	38
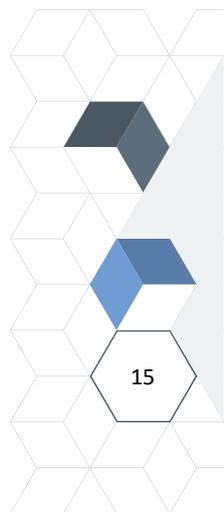
|		
Employee participation	12%	31
Job security	10%	26
Other, namely:	6%	16
I don't know	5%	13

Source: Panteia, 2025

This matches with the general picture across the Netherlands according to the most recent European Working Conditions Survey 2024[10]. 94% of employees surveyed indicated that having good pay and employees benefits is very or fairly important to them.

2.5 Perceived image and experience of working in the private security sector

In this chapter we go more into depth on how the young security professionals perceive and experience their job and the sector they are working in. Firstly, more than half of young security professionals consider the private security sector to be valuable or very valuable for public security (62%). Only 9% don't see any or little value of the sector. This is an important outcome with regards to enticing young people to go and work in the sector. High identification with the job and the knowledge you are contributing to a broader public good also have a positive impact on employee retention. We recommend the industry look into how they can utilize these findings more when developing recruitment and retention strategies.

Figure 4   How valuable do you think the private security sector is to public security? (n=253)
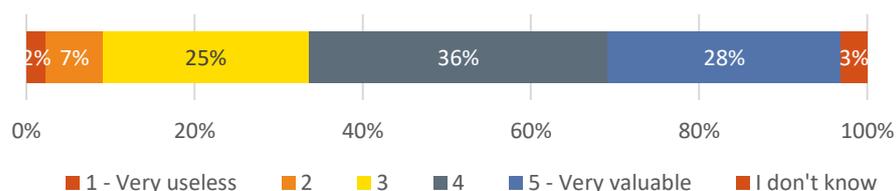
Source: Panteia, 2025

However, only 24% of these young professionals think that there is positive communication around the value of the private security sector for public security in the public discourse. 30% think that the public talks negatively about the value of the sector, but almost half of young security professionals say that it isn't clear to them how the public values the sectors contribution to public security (46%). This may indicate that investing in media relations might be helpful to improve its public image.

2.5.1   Working conditions

[10] https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/european-working-conditions-survey-2024-first-findings

Next, 39% of the young security professionals experience the working conditions in the private security sector as (very) good. While almost a fifth think the conditions are (very) bad. On a national level across all sectors the 'Nederlandse enquête arbeidsomstandigheden 2024'[11] shows a much higher level of satisfaction with working conditions. With 77% of workers saying they are (very) satisfied with their working conditions. Young security professionals are thus comparably more unsatisfied with their working conditions than the average worker in the Netherlands.

Figure 5   How do you experience the working conditions in the private security sector? (n=253)

| 5% | 13% | 39% | 29% | 10% | 3% |

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ 1 - very bad   ■ 2   ■ 3   ■ 4   ■ 5 - very good   ■ I don't know
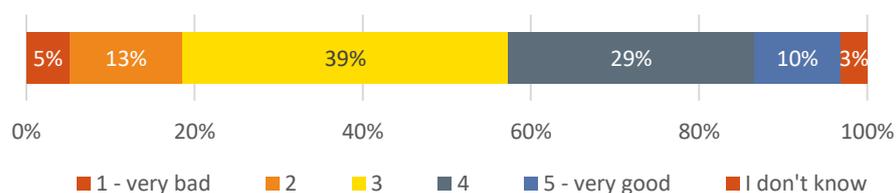
Source: Panteia, 2025

Respondents were also asked how working conditions within the private security sector could be improved[12]. Improvements that are mentioned the most are aimed at a better work-life balance (21x) and better schedules (13x) that are also communicated earlier. Schedules with more regularity and full-day shifts with sufficient moments of rest in between are desirable. In addition, the respondents would also like a higher salary (30x) and more colleagues to relieve the workload (19x).

This matches with the general picture across the Netherlands according to the most recent European Working Conditions Survey 2024[13]. Salary and job security together with a good work-life are the most important reasons for employees in the Netherlands to consider working in a sector and also stay working there. Also more than 90% of working in the Netherlands in that survey indicate have good working hours is very important for them.
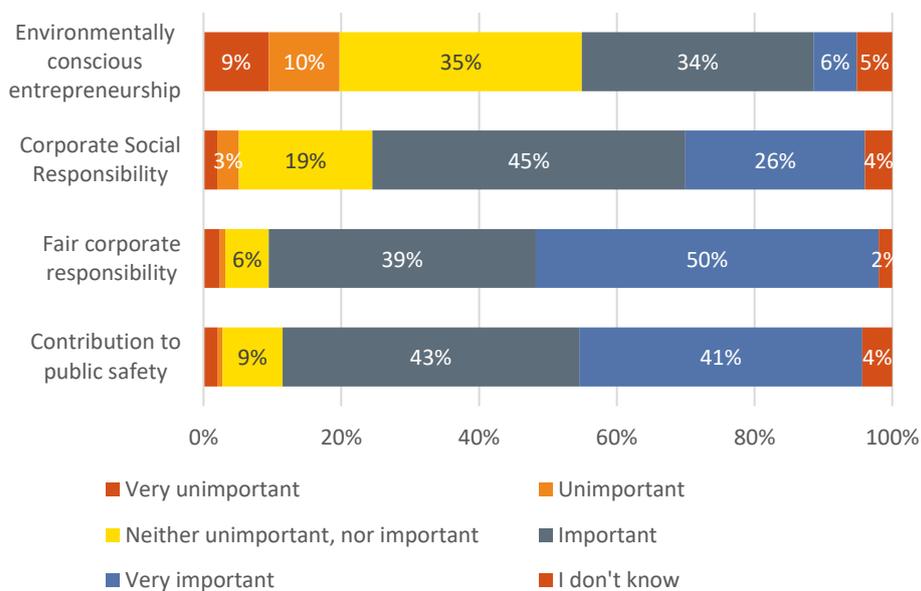
2.5.2   Corporate Social Responsibility

Of the respondents, an overwhelming majority (89%) think it is (very) important that the employer does business in a fairly responsible manner. Only 3% think it is (very) unimportant that an employer does this. In addition, an overwhelming majority also find it (very) important that an employer contributes to public security (84%). Social responsibility is considered (very) important by 71% but environmentally conscious entrepreneurship, on the other hand, plays a smaller role among the respondents. Only 40% think it is (very) important that an employer should bother with this and almost a fifth even think it is (very) unimportant.

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[11] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/20/nea-2024-resultaten-in-vogelvlucht
[12] A total of 151 respondents answered the question.
[13] https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/european-working-conditions-survey-2024-first-findings

Figure 6 How important is it to you that your employer does business in a socially responsible way, for example by acting ethically, environmentally and socially responsible? (n=253)

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither unimportant, nor important	Important	Very important	I don't know
Environmentally conscious entrepreneurship	9%	10%	35%	34%	6%	5%
Corporate Social Responsibility	3%		19%	45%	26%	4%
Fair corporate responsibility		6%		39%	50%	2%
Contribution to public safety		9%		43%	41%	4%

Source: Panteia, 2025

2.5.3 Equal treatment

We asked young security workers if people with different religious or ethnic backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation or disabilities are treated equally in their workplace. When interpreting the results in this section it is important to note the following:

- Due to privacy concerns we did not ask respondents to provide their own religious belief, ethnic background, sexual orientation or whether or not they are disabled.
- This effect the percentages shown in this section and may result in underrepresentation of certain types of discrimination people face in the workplace.

70% of respondents indicated that people of different religions are treated the same way and have the same opportunities as others, while two-thirds said that people from different ethnic backgrounds are treated equally and are given the same opportunities. About 10% don't think that is the case.

Furthermore, for two-thirds of the young security professionals, women are treated the same as men within the company and are given the same opportunities. 14% disagree. When only looking at the responses of women, about 62% agree that they get treated the same as their male counterparts. However a relatively higher amount of employees who are women disagree (19%) with this statement.

Also to the respondents, almost half of the companies treat people with a different sexual orientation equally. 12% do not agree with this statement, but more noticeably a quarter say they don't know if this is the case. This may be because they don't know

the sexual orientation of their co-workers and can therefore not give an answer to this question. Lastly, 38% of respondents state that people with disabilities are given the same opportunities and are treated equally. Again the relatively high proportion of respondents answering I don't know (34%) is noticeable. In the case of less notable disabilities this may again be hard to determine for the respondents. But even in the case of notable disabilities it can be hard to judge what is 'fair' or 'equal' given the specific disability a person has, since they may simply not be able to perform certain actions.

Table 11 Indicate to what extent you agree with the statements below? (n=253)

	Completely disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Completely agree	I don't know
Within my company, people of different religions are treated in the same way and are given the same opportunities as others.	4%	7%	10%	41%	29%	9%
Within my company, women are treated the same as men and are given the same opportunities.	6%	8%	13%	37%	29%	7%
Within my company, people of different ethnic origins are treated in the same way and are given the same opportunities as others.	5%	5%	13%	38%	27%	12%
Within my company, people with a different sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+) are treated in the same way and are given the same opportunities as others.	6%	6%	13%	30%	19%	26%
Within my company, people with disabilities are treated in the same way and are given the same opportunities as others.	3%	8%	16%	23%	15%	34%

Source: Panteia, 2025

CoESS & UNI Europa have put out a joint statement in 2024 stressing the importance of advancing the principles of Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination in
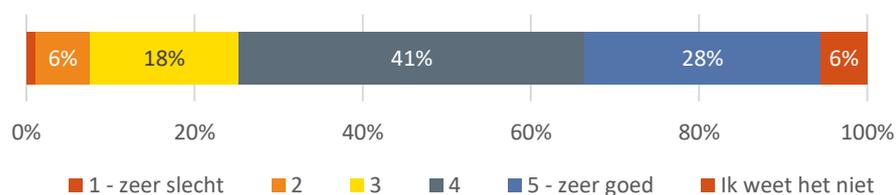
the European Private Security Services and note this contributes to a more diverse workforce within a rapidly aging, male-dominated workforce.[14]

2.5.4 Job security

A total of 69% of respondents perceive job security in the private security sector as (very) good. Only 7% experience job security as (very) poor. This is important to note as job security was an important factor for a quarter of young professionals when choosing a new job. Moreover, good job security can also contribute to lowering the negative impact of inflation and cost of living concerns young professionals have currently.

Figure 7   How do you experience job security in the private security sector? (n=253)

| 6% | 18% | 41% | 28% | 6% |

| 0% | 20% | 40% | 60% | 80% | 100% |

■ 1 - zeer slecht   ■ 2   ■ 3   ■ 4   ■ 5 - zeer goed   ■ Ik weet het niet

Source: Panteia, 2025

Subsequently, we also asked how job security within the private security sector can be improved[15]. This matches the general trend within the Netherlands according to the The yearly conducted Dutch survey on working conditions (Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden)[16] where the share of working being worried about their job security decreased form 30% in 2014 to 12% in 2024.

Since most respondents thought job security was good they didn't give an answer to this question. The workers who did cited that permanent contracts could be given more quickly (27x). In addition, a small number of respondents also mentioned that providing a better salary and working conditions (14x) and investing in staff, for example through training and career opportunities (7x) and good guidance could help.

2.5.5 Career and development opportunities

Thus career opportunities and a possible clear career path have been mentioned as being (very) important to young professionals when deciding to start, continue or stop working in the sector. When asked directly on how they experience their current career opportunities the answers vary. 31% believe that the career opportunities are (very) good, but another 30% say that they are (very) bad. Workers with a higher educational background are more positive, but since most of the respondents have some sort of vocational education background the answers from the former group are not representative. Also, women tend to be more positive about their career opportunities within the sector than men. This is a positive sign given the earlier

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[14]
https://www.coess.org/download.php?down=Li9kb2N1bWVudHMvdW5pLWV1cm9wYS1jb2Vzcy1qb2ludC1zdGF0ZW1lbnQtZGl2ZXJzaXR5LWVxdWFsaXR5LWluY2x1c2lvbi1maW5hbC5wZGY
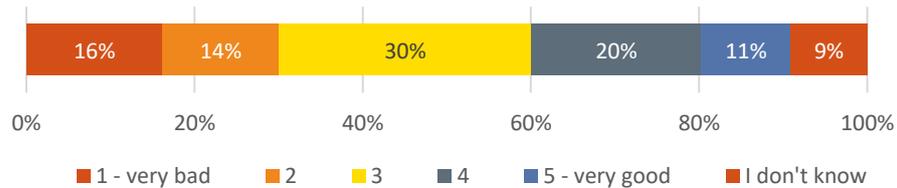
[15] A total of 77 respondents answered the question.

[16] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/20/nea-2024-resultaten-in-vogelvlucht

answer of 19% of women not experiencing equal treatment or opportunities compared to men.

Figure 8   How do you experience the career opportunities within the private security sector? (n=253)

Source: Panteia, 2025

Respondents were also asked how they think career opportunities in the private security sector could be improved.[17] Answers are given such as offering more training (21x) and there should also be enough opportunities for growth (42x). Other possible ways of improvement are mentioned by just a few young professionals. Such as only promoting employees who deserve it on the basis of performance and to discourage favoritism. They prefer clear and transparent communication about career opportunities.

Furthermore, an attempt was made to create insight into what the respondents find important within their work environment regarding furthering their career and growth opportunities. Just over half of the respondents say they prefer personal contact to digital contact in their work environment. In addition, 40% want his or her manager to be immediately accessible and approachable. Almost a quarter want more regular evaluations and conversations with HR management and another fifth want a dedicated mentoring program within the company.

Table 12   Which of the following factors are important for your work environment? (*Multiple answers possible*) (n=253)

	%	N
I prefer face-to-face contact to digital contact;	51%	128
I want my manager to be directly reachable/approachable (for example via a direct communication channel)	40%	100
I want more regular evaluations and conversations with my HR management;	23%	59
I want a mentorship program in my company;	20%	50
I want support groups for employees in my company (e.g., through reporting channels)	15%	39
I don't know	26%	65

Source: Panteia, 2025

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[17] A total of 111 respondents answered the question.
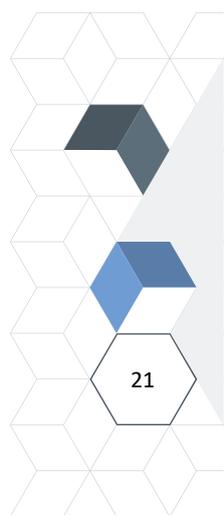
Regarding the future of private security and which areas young security professionals consider important for development, 45% indicate that the protection of critical infrastructure is going to be an interesting task to them in the future. A third find the monitoring with innovative security solutions the most interesting, a third static surveillance and another third mention aviation security as an interesting task in the future.

Table 13   Which private security tasks would be most interesting for you in the future? (*Multiple answers possible*) (n=253)

	%	N
Protection of critical infrastructure (such as military, nuclear energy, government buildings, etc.)	45%	114
Monitoring with innovative security solutions (e.g. use of drones, artificial intelligence, etc.)	33%	84
Static monitoring (permanent protection of a specific object)	33%	84
Aviation security	33%	83
Mobile monitoring (multi-object monitoring)	28%	70
Monitoring and control room	33%	84
Cybersecurity	23%	59
Event Security	24%	60
Maritime security	21%	53
Alarm response	16%	40
Consultancy	13%	34
Data-analysis	11%	27
System Installation	9%	22
Other	6%	16
I don't know	12%	31

Source: Panteia, 2025

2.5.6   Leadership position

More than half of respondents would like to have a managerial position in the future (57%). Almost a quarter do not want this (23%) and another 20% do not know. Across educational levels this result doesn't substantially change. About the same share of women indicate that would like a managerial position, however the share of women explicitly saying they don't want a managerial position is larger (30% for women and 19% for men).

Of the 144 respondents who aspire to a managerial position in the future, the majority say they want to become a security manager (73%). More than half would like to become a first-line supervisor, almost a fifth aspire to a position in business development and another almost a fifth would like to become HR or personnel manager. Regional director is also pursued by almost a fifth as a managerial position. Under 'other, namely', a position as a team leader or coordinator is mentioned, among other things.
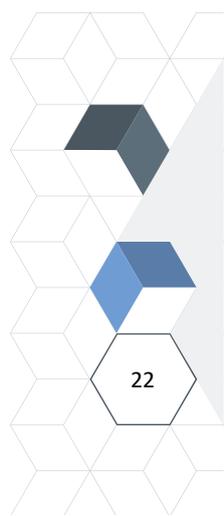
Table 14 What kind of leadership position would you like to have in your company in the future? (n=144)

	%	N
Security Manager	73%	105
First line supervisor	56%	80
Business development	18%	26
HR / Hiring Manager	18%	26
Regional Director	18%	26
Branch Manager	13%	19
Business analysis	13%	19
Consultancy	13%	18
IT and innovation	9%	13
Other	10%	15

Source: Panteia, 2025

A minority of respondents see themselves still working in the private security sector in 5 to 10 years' time. Only 27% say yes to this[18]. This also leads to a small number of total respondents giving their reason to stay. To summarize, the employees who want to stay do so mostly because the like their work and colleagues (25x). A very small number say it is directly because of career opportunities or of job security.

A third say they no longer see themselves working in this sector by then[19]. Again a small number of young professionals gave a reason for not wanting to stay. Some indicate this is because of their salary being too low (17x) or due to the lack of career opportunities (11x). Lastly, a few individuals say they want to switch to other sectors such as customs, defence or police (7x).

Important to note also is that 40% of the respondents indicate that they do not yet know whether they will still be working in the sector in 5 to 10 years.

2.6 Experience of training programs

The current basic training program is sufficient for their job (49%) according to just under half of the respondents. Just over a fifth think the training program is inadequate and 31% say they don't know.

Almost two-thirds think it is important to learn communication skills during basic training. In addition, a majority (60% and 58% respectively) also consider skills such as conflict management/de-escalation and regulatory knowledge important to learn in

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[18] Of the 69 respondents who indicated that they still see themselves working in the private sector in 5 to 10 years' time, 67 respondents gave a reason.

[19] Of the 83 respondents who indicated that they still see themselves working in the private sector in 5 to 10 years' time, 81 respondents gave a reason.
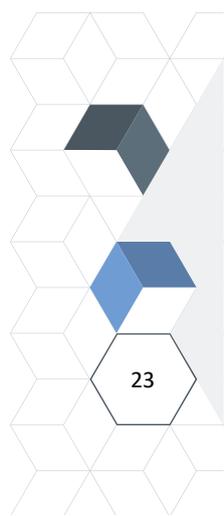
basic training. Skills that young professionals deem less important to learn during basic training are technical protection skills (31%), foreign language skills (28%) and customer service and management skills (21%)

Table 15   What skills do you think are important to learn during basic training? (*Multiple answers possible*) (n=253)

	%	N
Communication skills	65%	165
Regulatory knowledge: private security law and criminal code	60%	153
Conflict management / de-escalation	58%	148
Decision-making skills	43%	109
Technical system management (e.g. CCTV, alarm systems, electronic access control)	40%	100
Basic IT skills (e.g. use of office software, apps, basic communication systems, etc.)	35%	88
Customer service and people management skills	31%	79
Foreign language skills	28%	71
Technical protection (incl. installation, maintenance, diagnostics and repair)	21%	52
Other	4%	9
I don't know	13%	34

Source: Panteia, 2025

When it comes to additional training or upskilling programs, conflict management/de-escalation and communication skills are again the most frequently mentioned as important skills (42%). This is followed by in-depth theoretical knowledge of safety and security concepts (38%) and regulatory knowledge (private security law and criminal law) (35%). Advanced IT skills are only mentioned by 24% of the younger security professionals. With digitalization and automation becoming more and more important in almost every sector it is noticeable that these young professionals actually express a need of training on skills dealing with people rather than machines or software.

Table 16   What skills do you think are important to master with additional training or refresher programs? (*Multiple answers possible*) (n=253)

|	%	N
Conflict management / de-escalation	42%	105
Communication skills	42%	105
In-depth theoretical knowledge of safety and security concepts	38%	96
Regulatory knowledge: private security law and criminal law	35%	88
Decision-making skills	34%	87
Foreign language skills	30%	75

Technical system management (e.g. CCTV, alarm systems, electronic access control)	28%	70
Advanced IT skills (e.g., programming, data analytics, cybersecurity, etc.)	24%	61
Customer service and People management skills	24%	60
Technical protection (incl. installation, maintenance, diagnostics and repair)	19%	48
Other	2%	4
I don't know	21%	53

Source: Panteia, 2025

However, when asked specifically about IT for work training, only 13% believe they receive adequate training in this area. More than half think the training they receive is insufficient (54%). This seems to indicate that the younger security professional does see the value of good IT skills and the need for improvement, but does prioritize soft skills.

Figure 9   Do you believe that you are getting enough training in the field of IT skills for work? (n=253)
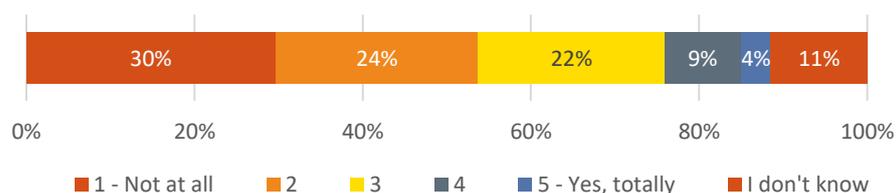
Source: Panteia, 2025

Consequently, 23% of young private security professionals think they receive sufficient training in soft skills, but 40% state that insufficient attention is paid to it.

Figure 10 Do you believe that you receive sufficient training in the field of soft skills (e.g. interpersonal skills, communication, conflict management, languages) for your job? (n=253)
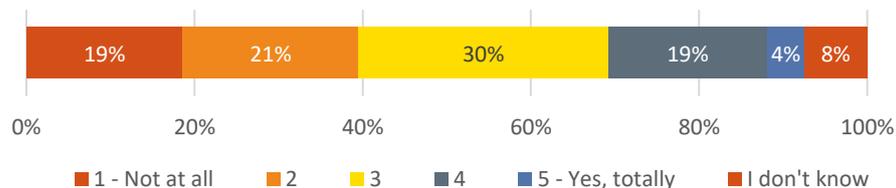
Source: Panteia, 2025

The yearly conducted Dutch survey on working conditions (Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden)[20] also paints a picture of employees in the Netherlands

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[20] https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/maatwerk/2025/20/nea-2024-resultaten-in-vogelvlucht

having the need for training or courses (41%) and this was even higher for the age group 25-55 (51%). Employees reported changes in their work due to technology (36%) and (73%) indicate technology will change their work in the future.

Furthermore, respondents were also asked how training locations, studies, basic vocational education and further training can be improved for the private security sector[21]. Suggestions for improvements include a focus on practice-based learning where practical experience can be gained and realistic situations can be practiced (14x). Training courses aimed at dealing with aggression and conflict management are also mentioned several times (8x) and mandatory training and refresher courses to ensure that skills are still present in everyone (8x).

Opinions are divided on whether digital learning methods are more efficient and desirable for training within the private security sector. 37% think this is more efficient and desirable, while 36% think it is not.

2.7   Social partners

Lastly, almost two-thirds of respondents are aware that social partners, such as trade unions, are committed to people within the private security sector. In addition, an overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents are also aware of the collective bargaining agreement (CAO) currently in place and the collective bargaining that goes on within the private security sector.

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[21] A total of 82 respondents answered the question.

3   Conclusion

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter we can draw some conclusions about the perception of young private security professionals in the Netherlands. It also points to areas that present opportunities for improvement for attracting and keeping these young professionals in the sector.

In general the study shows a sector that offers job security and societal relevance but can provide improvement in pay, working conditions, and public recognition in order to attract or keep more young people in the sector. Many young professionals want enough and clear career opportunities and responsible employers, yet doubt their future in the sector. Improving onboarding, training, salary structures, and communication about career paths could strengthen retention and attractiveness.

Employment situation and background
The sector employs around 30,000 people, of which more than one-third are under 35. Within this group, full-time work is more common than in the sector overall. Respondents are predominantly educated at vocational (MBO) level and many have some prior experience in other sectors. Family and social connections play a large role in entry into the profession, while school presentations, public employment services and social media campaigns play a much smaller role. This indicates that recruitment is still largely informal and network-driven and that making more use of these underused channels such as social media might be untapped potential.

**Expectations versus reality of working in the sector**
Expectations before entering the sector included job variety, financial stability, and career growth. About 40% found their expectations matched reality, mainly due to varied work and good atmosphere, but a third felt disappointed, citing low pay, poor work-life balance, and limited opportunities. This mismatch highlights the need for more transparent communication during recruitment and a stronger focus on retention. It also highlights the possible disparity within the sector between companies and the need for sharing good practices used across the sector.

Onboarding and workplace values
Most respondents had a positive onboarding experience, though many call for longer, more structured processes with consistent guidance. Values such as financial security, work-life balance, and well-being dominate their decision-making about jobs. Inflation cost of living are major concerns, while social issues such as inequality, discrimination, and climate change are less pressing. In light of the inflation and cost of living concerns the strong job security that the sector provides for a majority of employees is a strength of the private security sector.

Perceptions of the sector
Young professionals generally see the work of the private security sector as valuable for creating public security as well, though they perceive weak public recognition of this role. Working conditions are assessed less positively than in the Dutch workforce at large (39% versus 77%), with areas for improvement mentioned by the young
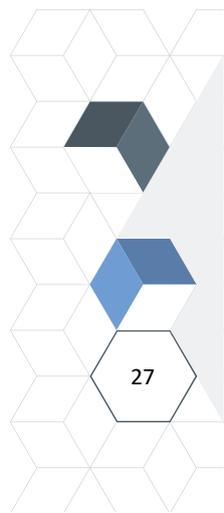
professionals themselves higher salaries and secondary employment benefits along with providing more regular schedules and lower workload. These areas therefore also seem important when looking at developing retention strategies.

Equal treatment and job security

Most respondents perceive equal treatment for different religious, ethnic, and gender groups, but fewer are confident to express their opinion on the equality for LGBTQIA+ employees or people with disabilities. Due to privacy concerns we did not ask respondents to provide their own religious belief, ethnic background, sexual orientation or whether or not they are disabled. This may result in underrepresentation of certain types of discrimination people face in the workplace. Job security is mostly rated positively, although workers ask for faster permanent contracts and stronger investment in staff.

Career opportunities and ambitions

Views on career prospects are divided and seem to strongly depend on the individual employer: roughly a third see good opportunities, while another third find them poor. Requests include more training, clearer career paths, and merit-based promotion. Many aspire to managerial roles, especially security management, but relatively few expect to remain in the sector in 5–10 years, often due to low pay and limited development. This represents a potential retention challenge. However, 40% of young security professionals remain undecided on whether to stay working in the sector in the next 5-10 years. This group should be a focus point for the sector in creating the right opportunities to stay working in the sector.

Training and development

Basic training is considered sufficient by about half of respondents, yet many stress the importance of soft skills such as communication and conflict management. IT training is viewed as inadequate, despite digitalization being increasingly relevant. It should also be noted that that these young professionals actually express a need of training on skills dealing with people rather than machines or software. These young security professionals show interest in more innovative security solutions, but little in the skills that come with it. Suggestions for improvement include practice-based learning, mandatory refreshers, and more focus on de-escalation.

Awareness of social partners

Most respondents know of the collective bargaining agreement and the role of unions, suggesting that formal structures are visible to young employees.