

Public opinion monitoring of the state of the Russian society

As in the previous issues, we publish the results of the public opinion monitoring of the state of the Russian society conducted by ISEDТ RAS in the Vologda Oblast¹.

The following tables show the dynamics of a number of parameters indicating the social feeling and socio-political sentiment of the Vologda Oblast population in May – June 2014, these data are compared with the data for 2013, as well as for 2011, when D.A. Medvedev's presidential term was due to expire, and for 2007, when V.V. Putin's second Presidency was coming to an end. We sum up the intermediate results of studying the changes in public opinion in the first half of 2014.

Estimation of performance of the authorities

How do you assess the current performance of..?,
as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	2007*	2011*	2013*	Aug. 2013	Oct. 2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-). the last 6 surveys in comparison with		
											2013	2011	2007
RF President													
I approve	75.3	58.7	55.3	55.1	54.3	57.3	56.1	62.8	66.6	58.7	+3	0	-17
I do not approve	11.5	25.6	29.4	28.9	28.7	28.9	29.3	25.4	21.8	27.2	-2	+2	+16
Chairman of the RF Government *													
I approve	-	59.3	48.9	50.4	49.0	51.1	49.3	52.5	55.8	51.4	+3	-8	-
I do not approve	-	24.7	32.8	30.4	30.6	32.5	32.9	30.9	26.4	30.6	-2	+6	-
Governor													
I approve	55.8	45.7	44.4	44.8	45.9	44.1	42.8	41.6	38.5	43.0	-1	-3	-13
I do not approve	22.2	30.5	33.2	31.1	32.4	35.3	36.9	39.0	40.9	35.9	+3	+5	+14
* Included into the survey since 2008.													

¹ The polls are held six times a year in Vologda, Cherepovets, and in eight districts of the oblast (Babayevsky District, Velikoustyugsky District, Vozhegodsky District, Gryazovetsky District, Kirillovsky District, Nikolsky District, Tarnogsky District and Sheksninsky District). The method of the survey is a questionnaire poll by place of residence of respondents. The volume of a sample population is 1500 people aged from 18 and older. The sample is purposeful and quoted. Representativeness of the sample is ensured by the observance of the proportions between the urban and rural population, the proportions between the inhabitants of settlements of various types (rural communities, small and medium-sized cities), age and sex structure of the oblast's adult population. Sampling error does not exceed 3%.

More details on the results of ISEDТ RAS polls are available at <http://www.vscс.ac.ru/>.

In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?*,
as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	2007	2011	2013	Aug. 2013	Oct. 2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last 6 surveys in comparison with		
											2013	2011	2007
Strengthening Russia's international standing													
Successful	58.4	46.2	45.7	45.3	47.7	47.5	45.9	48.6	53.7	48.1	+2	+2	-10
Unsuccessful	24.9	33.7	36.2	36.4	33.7	35.8	35.7	35.5	31.7	34.8	-1	+1	+10
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>133.5</i>	<i>112.5</i>	<i>109.5</i>	<i>108.9</i>	<i>114.0</i>	<i>111.7</i>	<i>110.2</i>	<i>113.1</i>	<i>122.0</i>	<i>113.3</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>+1</i>	<i>-20</i>
Imposing order in the country													
Successful	53.2	36.6	39.4	39.9	41.7	44.5	42.7	46.7	49.5	44.2	+5	+8	-9
Unsuccessful	34.0	50.0	47.5	46.7	46.7	45.5	43.7	40.9	39.5	43.8	-4	-6	+10
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>119.2</i>	<i>86.6</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>93.2</i>	<i>95.0</i>	<i>99.0</i>	<i>99.0</i>	<i>105.8</i>	<i>110.0</i>	<i>100.3</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>+14</i>	<i>-19</i>
Protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms													
Successful	44.4	32.4	31.8	34.7	33.5	32.8	32.3	36.3	40.1	35.0	+3	+3	-9
Unsuccessful	37.0	48.3	51.0	48.5	50.9	51.6	50.1	48.7	43.9	49.0	-2	+1	+12
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>107.4</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>80.8</i>	<i>86.2</i>	<i>82.6</i>	<i>81.2</i>	<i>82.2</i>	<i>87.6</i>	<i>96.2</i>	<i>86.0</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>+2</i>	<i>-21</i>
Economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare													
Successful	47.2	30.7	31.3	32.6	31.9	32.6	31.5	34.9	35.8	33.2	+2	+3	-14
Unsuccessful	39.1	56.1	56.8	53.4	57.7	59.7	57.1	54.3	53.5	56.0	-1	0	+17
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>108.1</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>79.2</i>	<i>74.2</i>	<i>72.9</i>	<i>74.4</i>	<i>80.6</i>	<i>82.3</i>	<i>77.3</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>+3</i>	<i>-31</i>

* Ranked according to the average value of the indicator for the last 6 surveys. Comparisons with 2012 were not carried out, because 2012 was an incomplete year of V. Putin's presidency (the inauguration took place on May 7, 2012).

What party expresses your interests?, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Party	2007	Election to the RF State Duma 2007, fact	2011	Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact	2013	Aug. 2013	Oct. 2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last 6 surveys in comparison with		
													2013	2011	2007
United Russia	30.2	60.5	31.1	33.4	29.4	29.6	26.9	29.5	28.3	29.5	32.7	29.4	0	-2	-1
KPRF	7.0	9.3	10.3	16.8	11.3	12.0	11.9	11.8	10.9	10.7	9.8	11.2	0	+1	+4
LDPR	7.5	11.0	7.8	15.4	7.2	6.8	8.4	8.1	8.9	8.3	6.2	7.8	+1	0	0
Just Russia	7.8	8.8	5.6	27.2	4.6	4.3	4.0	4.4	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.8	-1	-2	-4
Other	1.8	-	1.9	-	0.6	3.4	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.1	1.0	0	-1	-1
No party	17.8	-	29.4	-	34.9	33.4	37.3	34.4	35.2	34.8	36.0	35.2	0	+6	+17
It is difficult to answer	21.2	-	13.2	-	10.2	10.5	10.5	10.9	12.7	13.1	11.8	11.6	+1	-2	-10

Estimation of social condition, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	2007	2011	2013	Aug. 2013	Oct. 2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last 6 surveys in comparison with		
											2013	2011	2007
Mood													
Usual condition, good mood	63.6	63.1	68.6	68.7	71.5	69.6	65.1	69.3	71.1	69.2	+1	+6	+6
Feeling stress, anger, fear, depression	27.8	28.9	26.2	26.3	24.0	26.2	27.1	24.9	23.7	25.4	-1	-4	-2
Stock of patience													
Everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it	74.1	74.8	79.3	79.7	81.6	83.1	79.8	81.3	81.0	81.1	+2	+6	+7
It's impossible to bear such plight	13.6	15.3	14.2	14.7	12.3	12.0	12.3	11.1	13.4	12.6	-2	-3	-1
Social self-identification													
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	48.2	43.1	43.9	44.9	45.7	43.7	44.2	43.1	42.0	43.9	0	+1	-4
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	42.4	44.3	46.9	46.8	45.4	46.7	46.9	49.1	48.4	47.2	0	+3	+5
Consumer Sentiment Index													
Index value, points	105.9	89.6	90.3	91.0	90.4	87.9	91.5	90.3	90.5	90.3	0	+1	-16

Trends in public opinion Concerning Russia's policy in relation to the events in Ukraine

Public opinion concerning the performance of the RF President and other federal authorities in 2014 is inextricably linked with Russia's international policy and with the situation in Ukraine.

Most of the Vologda Oblast residents approve of the policy of Russia toward Ukraine (71%), support it (65%) and express positive attitude toward the accession of the Crimea to the Russian Federation (78%). At that, more than half of the population (56%) trust Russian media in the coverage of issues related to the Ukrainian crisis (only 22% of the population trust foreign sources).

Assessment of Russia's policy in relation to the events in Ukraine,
(as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer options	Oblast
How do you assess the policy of Russia with regard to Ukraine? (April 2014.)	
I fully and rather approve	71.3
I fully and rather do not approve	12.0
It is difficult to answer	16.7
<i>March 16, 2014, at the referendum in Simferopol (the Crimea) more than 95% of its participants had voted in favor of the accession of the region to Russia. Do you agree or disagree with the Crimea joining our country as a subject of the Russian Federation? (April 2014)</i>	
Yes, I agree	78.0
No, I do not agree	10.4
It is difficult to answer	11.6
Do you support Russia's policy toward the events in Ukraine? (June 2014)	
I fully and rather support	65.0
I fully and rather do not support	10.0
It is difficult to answer	25.0

Analysis of public opinion concerning the performance of the RF President in the first half of 2014

In 2014 we observe a steady increase in the level of approval of the federal authorities' performance. According to WCIOM, the share of positive opinions on the activities of the President of the Russian Federation for the period from February to June 2014 has increased from 64 to 86%. Positive dynamics is observed in the Vologda Oblast as well: from February to June 2014 the level of approval of President's performance has increased from 56 to 67%.

How do you assess the current performance of..?, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Dynamics (+/-)		
				Apr.2014 to Feb.2014	June 2014 to Apr. 2014	June 2014 to Feb.2014
RF President						
I approve	56.1	62.8	66.6	+7	+4	+11
I do not approve	29.3	25.4	21.8	-4	-4	-8
RF President - WCIOM data						
I approve	64.3	82.2	85.9	+18	+4	+22
I do not approve	27.6	11.4	9.6	-16	-2	-18

The growth in the approval of the RF President's performance in February – June 2014 is observed in all socio-demographic groups of the population, especially among Vologda City residents (from 53 to 67%), and among people with higher and incomplete higher education (from 59 to 72%).

Positive trends are also observed among the socially vulnerable categories of the population: the level of approval of the President's performance increased from 46 to 55% among the 20% of the least wealthy, and from 60 to 68% among people aged over 55.

Dynamics of the RF President's activity approval by different social groups of population (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Indicator	Feb.2014	Apr.2014	June 2014	Dynamics (+ / -)		
				Apr. 14 to Feb.14	June 14 to Apr.14	June 14 to Feb.14
Sex						
Men	55.4	58.7	65.5	+3	+7	+10
Women	56.6	66.1	67.5	+9	+1	+11
Age						
Under 30	53.0	61.1	63.4	+8	+2	+10
30–55	54.9	62.4	67.3	+8	+5	+12
Over 55	59.8	64.7	67.7	+5	+3	+8
Education						
Secondary and incomplete secondary	51.9	58.1	60.0	+6	+2	+8
Secondary vocational	58.0	62.1	68.6	+4	+6	+11
Higher and incomplete higher	58.8	69.2	72.0	+10	+3	+13
Income groups						
20% of the poorest people	46.1	48.9	54.6	+3	+6	+9
60% of the people with middle-sized income	57.9	64.4	69.4	+7	+5	+12
20% of the most prosperous people	69.4	72.6	77.7	+3	+5	+8
Territories						
Vologda	53.1	61.0	66.6	+8	+6	+14
Cherepovets	66.8	73.2	74.4	+6	+1	+8
Districts	51.8	58.1	62.3	+6	+4	+11
Oblast	56.1	62.8	66.6	+7	+4	+11

Positive changes are observed in the assessments of the President's activity on solution of key problems of the development of society. In the first half of 2014 these changes were observed most clearly in relation to the President's work for the protection of democracy and strengthening freedoms of citizens (the share of positive evaluations has increased from 32 to 40%), and also in strengthening Russia's international standing (from 46 to 54%).

At the same time, we are concerned about the fact that the support of the President's actions in the sphere of strengthening Russia's international positions and restoring order in the country approached the level of 2007 only in June 2014. In 2007 more than 50% of the Vologda Oblast population considered that the President's actions for strengthening the international positions of Russia and restoring order in the country. During the subsequent period, the share of supporters was 45–48%, and it reached 50% only in June 2014.

Also there is certain degree of concern if we consider that the assessments of V.V. Putin's performance in promoting economic recovery and growth of citizens' welfare are increasing rather slowly (from 32 to 36% in February – June 2014). The figures are still far from the level of 2007, when the actions of the President in this matter were approved by 47% of the Vologda Oblast inhabitants.

In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Dynamics (+/-)		
				Apr.14 to Feb.14	June 14 to Apr. 2014	June 14 to Feb.14
Strengthening Russia's international standing						
Successful	45.9	48.6	53.7	+3	+5	+8
Unsuccessful	35.7	35.5	31.7	0	-4	-4
<i>Index of success</i>	110.2	113.1	122.0	+3	+9	+12
Imposing order in the country						
Successful	42.7	46.7	49.5	+4	+3	+7
Unsuccessful	43.7	40.9	39.5	-3	-1	-4
<i>Index of success</i>	99.0	105.8	110.0	+7	+4	+11
Protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms						
Successful	32.3	36.3	40.1	+4	+4	+8
Unsuccessful	50.1	48.7	43.9	-1	-5	-6
<i>Index of success</i>	82.2	87.6	96.2	+5	+9	+14
Economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare						
Successful	31.5	34.9	35.8	+3	+1	+4
Unsuccessful	57.1	54.3	53.5	-3	-1	-4
<i>Index of success</i>	74.4	80.6	82.3	+6	+2	+8

During the first half of 2014 (from February to June) there has been a growing support only of one party – United Russia (from 28 to 33%). At the same time it is alarming that there are no substantial changes in the share of those who consider that none of the present political forces reflects their interests (35–36%).

Which party expresses your interests?, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Party	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Dynamics (+/-)		
				Apr.14 to Feb.14	June 14 to Apr. 14	June.14 to Feb.14
United Russia	28.3	29.5	32.7	+1	+3	+4
KPRF	10.9	10.7	9.8	0	-1	-1
LDPR	8.9	8.3	6.2	-1	-2	-3
Just Russia	3.5	3.3	3.3	0	0	0
Other	0.4	0.2	0.1	0	0	0
No party	35.2	34.8	36.0	0	+1	+1
It is difficult to answer	12.7	13.1	11.8	0	-1	-1

In February – June 2014 the share of the Oblast residents, who have “usual condition, good mood” has increased from 65 to 71%. The share of those who think that “everything is not so bad; it’s difficult to live, but it’s possible to stand it” has not changed substantially (80–81%). At the same time, the share of people who consider themselves to have average income declined slightly (from 44 to 42%).

Consistent growth in the indicators of social mood along with a slight deterioration in the financial status of the population shows that the public opinion today is influenced to a great extent by non-economic factors: the activities of the President and the development of events in the international political arena.

Estimation of social condition, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Indicator	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Dynamics (+/-)		
				Apr.14 to Feb.14	June 14 to Apr. 2014	June 14 to Feb.14
Mood						
Usual condition, good mood	65.1	69.3	71.1	+4	+2	+6
Feeling stress, anger, fear, depression	27.1	24.9	23.7	-2	-1	-3
Stock of patience						
Everything is not so bad; it’s difficult to live, but it’s possible to stand it	79.8	81.3	81.0	+2	0	+1
It’s impossible to bear such plight	12.3	11.1	13.4	-1	+2	+1
Social self-identification						
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	44.2	43.1	42.0	-1	-1	-2
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	46.9	49.1	48.4	+2	-1	+2
Consumer Sentiment Index						
Index value, points	91.5	90.3	90.5	-1	0	-1

Conclusion

The results of the surveys conducted in 2014 show that public opinion in the Vologda Oblast is influenced mainly by the events in Ukraine, activities of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin, and Russia’s international policy. These non-economic factors have a decisive impact on the dynamics of social mood, which is still improving (from 64 to 71% for the period from 2007 to June 2014), despite the increase in the proportion of people who consider themselves “poor” and “extremely poor” (from 42% in 2007 to 48% in June 2014).

The Vologda Oblast residents trust the Russian media concerning the coverage of Ukraine events, and support the policy of the authorities in this issue. At the same time, one feels concerned that the activities of the President of the Russian Federation in coping with key problems of Russia’s development are not supported as much as they were in 2007. The assessment of V.V. Putin’s actions aimed at economic recovery and growth of citizens’ welfare arouses even greater concern: the level of approval is not only much lower than in 2007 (36 and 47% respectively), it remains practically unchanged (in August 2013 – 33%, in February 2014 – 32%, in May – 35%, in June – 36%).