

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 on the average for the last six polls in December 2013 – October 2014. These data are compared with the data for 2013, 2011 (when D.A. Medvedev's presidential term was due to expire), and 2007 (when V.V. Putin's second presidency was coming to an end). We do not provide comparisons with 2012, since it was an incomplete year of V.V. Putin's presidency (his inauguration took place on May 7, 2012).

Estimation of performance of the authorities

In comparison to 2013 the level of approval of the RF President's performance has increased by 7 percentage points (from 55 to 62%), the share of negative assessments has decreased by 5 p.p. (from 29 to 24%).

For reference: according to Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) (data for the first half of October 2014), the nationwide level of approval of the RF President's performance is 88.9%, the share of negative assessments is 6%.

The approval of the Prime Minister has increased by 4 p.p. (from 49 to 53%) on average for the last 6 polls compared to 2013; the proportion of disapproving characteristics has decreased by 4 p.p. (from 33 to 29%).

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.vssc.ac.ru/>.

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

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 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	57.3	56.1	62.8	66.6	66.4	66.8	62.7	+7	+4	-13
I do not approve	11.5	25.6	29.4	28.9	29.3	25.4	21.8	19.3	18.5	23.9	-5	-2	+12
Chairman of the RF Government*													
I approve	-	59.3	48.9	51.1	49.3	52.5	55.8	55.2	56.2	53.4	+5	-6	-
I do not approve	-	24.7	32.8	32.5	32.9	30.9	26.4	26.8	23.9	28.9	-4	+4	-
Governor													
I approve	55.8	45.7	44.4	44.1	42.8	41.6	38.5	38.8	39.7	40.9	-4	-5	-15
I do not approve	22.2	30.5	33.2	35.3	36.9	39.0	40.9	40.1	39.6	38.6	+5	+8	+16

* Included into the survey since 2008.

The level of approval of the President's performance increased in all socio-demographic categories of the population (by 5–9 p.p.) on average for December 2013 – October 2014 compared to 2013, especially among the 20% of the wealthiest people (from 64 to 73%), among the people with secondary vocational education (from 56 to 65%), and the residents of Cherepovets (from 64 to 73%).

Dynamics of the level of approval of the RF President's performance
by different social groups, as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Indicator	2007	2011	2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last 6 surveys in comparison with...		
											2013	2011	2007
<i>Sex</i>													
Men	73.6	55.6	52.4	52.5	55.4	58.7	65.5	63.4	62.9	59.7	+7	+4	-14
Women	76.7	61.2	57.7	61.1	56.6	66.1	67.5	68.8	69.9	65.0	+7	+4	-12
<i>Age</i>													
Under 30	76.6	58.3	52.9	52.7	53.0	61.1	63.4	68.8	67.9	61.2	+8	+3	-15
30-55	75.1	57.6	55.4	56.5	54.9	62.4	67.3	61.8	67.3	61.7	+6	+4	-13
Over 55	74.6	60.7	57.1	61.6	59.8	64.7	67.7	71.4	65.5	65.1	+8	+4	-9
<i>Education</i>													
Secondary and incomplete secondary	70.3	54.9	51.4	55.8	51.9	58.1	60.0	60.0	56.2	57.0	+6	+2	-13
Secondary vocational	76.4	59.8	55.8	58.1	58.0	62.1	68.6	68.7	72.4	64.7	+9	+5	-12
Higher and incomplete higher	80.1	61.3	59.1	58.2	58.8	69.2	72.0	70.6	73.1	67.0	+8	+6	-13
<i>Income groups</i>													
20% of the poorest people	65.1	45.7	49.6	62.7	46.1	48.9	54.6	59.7	57.3	54.9	+5	+9	-10
60% of the people with middle-sized income	78.0	60.4	56.1	56.4	57.9	64.4	69.4	67.0	69.0	64.0	+8	+4	-14
20% of the most prosperous people	82.6	68.9	63.6	64.6	69.4	72.6	77.7	78.0	76.8	73.2	+10	+4	-9
<i>Territories</i>													
Vologda	74.1	58.3	53.2	55.2	53.1	61.0	66.6	65.3	65.2	61.1	+8	+3	-13
Cherepovets	82.8	68.5	63.7	65.0	66.8	73.2	74.4	77.8	81.3	73.1	+9	+5	-10
Districts	72.2	53.9	51.9	54.1	51.8	58.1	62.3	60.7	59.8	57.8	+6	+4	-14
Oblast	75.3	58.7	55.3	57.3	56.1	62.8	66.6	66.4	66.8	62.7	+7	+4	-13

On average for the last 6 polls in comparison with 2013 the proportion of positive assessments of the President's performance in dealing with the key problems of the country has increased by 3 – 7 p.p., especially with regard to the issue of imposing order in the country (from 39 to 47%).

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

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 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	47.5	45.9	48.6	53.7	50.9	52.3	49.8	+4	+4	-9
Unsuccessful	24.9	33.7	36.2	35.8	35.7	35.5	31.7	30.0	31.0	33.3	-3	0	+8
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>133.5</i>	<i>112.5</i>	<i>109.5</i>	<i>111.7</i>	<i>110.2</i>	<i>113.1</i>	<i>122.0</i>	<i>120.9</i>	<i>121.3</i>	<i>116.5</i>	<i>+7</i>	<i>+4</i>	<i>-17</i>
Imposing order in the country													
Successful	53.2	36.6	39.4	44.5	42.7	46.7	49.5	47.5	49.4	46.7	+7	+10	-7
Unsuccessful	34.0	50.0	47.5	45.5	43.7	40.9	39.5	37.8	37.8	40.9	-7	-9	+7
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>119.2</i>	<i>86.6</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>99.0</i>	<i>99.0</i>	<i>105.8</i>	<i>110.0</i>	<i>109.7</i>	<i>111.6</i>	<i>105.9</i>	<i>+14</i>	<i>+19</i>	<i>-13</i>
Protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms													
Successful	44.4	32.4	31.8	32.8	32.3	36.3	40.1	37.6	38.2	36.2	+4	+4	-8
Unsuccessful	37.0	48.3	51.0	51.6	50.1	48.7	43.9	43.7	44.3	47.1	-4	-1	+10
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>107.4</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>80.8</i>	<i>81.2</i>	<i>82.2</i>	<i>87.6</i>	<i>96.2</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>89.2</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>-18</i>
Economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare													
Successful	47.2	30.7	31.3	32.6	31.5	34.9	35.8	35.1	33.9	34.0	+3	+3	-13
Unsuccessful	39.1	56.1	56.8	59.7	57.1	54.3	53.5	50.2	54.4	54.9	-2	-1	+16
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>108.1</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>72.9</i>	<i>74.4</i>	<i>80.6</i>	<i>82.3</i>	<i>84.9</i>	<i>79.5</i>	<i>79.1</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>+5</i>	<i>-29</i>

* Ranked according to the average value of the index of success for the last 6 surveys.

On average for December 2013 – October 2014, compared to 2013, the proportion of the Vologda Oblast residents, who characterize their mood as positive, has not changed (69%). The proportion of negative characteristics is 25–26%. It should be noted that the proportion of those who experience “normal condition, good mood” has increased by 6 p.p. from February to June 2014 and decreased by 2 p.p. from June to October.

The indicators characterizing the stock of patience have improved slightly. The share of those who believe that “everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it” has increased by 2 p.p. (from 79 to 81%) for the last six polls in comparison to 2013. The share of those who cannot bear such “plight” has decreased by 2 p.p. (from 14 to 12%).

The structure of social self-identification has not undergone any significant changes in December 2013 – October 2014, compared to 2013. The share of those who consider themselves to have middle-sized income is 43–44%, the proportion of “the poor and extremely poor” is slightly higher (47–48%).

The consumer sentiment index has not changed (89–90%) for the last six polls compared with 2013. Meanwhile, its value has been decreasing since June 2014 (for the period from June to September 2014 – by 7 p.p.).

Estimation of social condition (as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 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	69.6	65.1	69.3	71.1	70.5	69.3	69.2	+1	+6	+6
I feel stress, anger, fear, depression	27.8	28.9	26.2	26.2	27.1	24.9	23.7	25.1	24.6	25.3	-1	-4	-3
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	83.1	79.8	81.3	81.0	82.5	80.3	81.3	+2	+7	+7
It's impossible to bear such plight	13.6	15.3	14.2	12.0	12.3	11.1	13.4	12.8	12.1	12.3	-2	-3	-1
Social self-identification													
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	48.2	43.1	43.9	43.7	44.2	43.1	42.0	44.1	43.5	43.4	-1	0	-5
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	42.4	44.3	46.9	46.7	46.9	49.1	48.4	49.6	49.3	48.3	+1	+4	+6
Consumer sentiment index													
Index value, points	105.9	89.6	90.3	87.9	91.5	90.3	90.5	87.1	84.0	88.6	-2	-1	-17

As for political preferences of Russia's population, the leading role here is still played by the "Unified Russia" political party. Its level of support has increased by 2 p.p. (from 29 to 32%) on average for the last 6 polls in comparison with 2013. The positions of other parliamentary parties remain stable: KPRF – 10–11%, LDPR – 7–8%, "Just Russia" – 4–5%. A significant share of the population believes that none of the current parties express their interests (35%).

Which 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	Dec. 2013	Feb. 2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Average for the last 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last 6 surveys in comparison with...		
													2013	2011	2007
Unified Russia	30.2	60.5	31.1	33.4	29.4	29.5	28.3	29.5	32.7	34.3	35.5	31.6	+2	+1	+1
KPRF	7.0	9.3	10.3	16.8	11.3	11.8	10.9	10.7	9.8	9.1	9.3	10.3	-1	0	+3
LDPR	7.5	11.0	7.8	15.4	7.2	8.1	8.9	8.3	6.2	6.9	7.3	7.6	0	0	0
Just Russia	7.8	8.8	5.6	27.2	4.6	4.4	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.7	-1	-2	-4
Other	1.8	–	1.9	–	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.4	0	-2	-1
No party	17.8	–	29.4	–	34.9	34.4	35.2	34.8	36.0	35.0	32.6	34.7	0	+5	+17
It is difficult to answer	21.2	–	13.2	–	10.2	10.9	12.7	13.1	11.8	10.9	10.7	11.7	+2	-2	-10

Attitude of the population toward the bilateral sanctions of Russia, the USA and the EU countries

Most of the Vologda Oblast residents know about economic sanctions against Russia, and about its reciprocal sanctions against the United States and the EU countries (84–85%). The share of those who have a basic notion of the sanctions is slightly higher than the share of those who consider themselves well informed in this matter (43–44% vs. 41%). Five per cent of the oblast residents do not know anything about the sanctions.

For reference: according to VCIOM, in August 2014 56% of the respondents noted that they were “well aware” of Russia’s reciprocal sanctions against the United States and the EU countries, 36% “heard something, but did not know the details”, and 8% “heard about it for the first time”.

The level of awareness of bilateral sanctions is higher in the cities than in the districts. The share of those who are well informed about the sanctions is 55–56% in Vologda, 61–63% – in Cherepovets, 22% – in the districts.

People’s awareness of the bilateral sanctions of Russia,
the USA and the EU countries, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Answer option	In connection with the conflict in Ukraine some countries have introduced sanctions against Russia in recent months. Do you know that?				The Russian Government has imposed a one-year ban on the importation into Russia of agricultural products, raw materials and foodstuffs from the countries that have imposed sanctions against our country, first of all, the USA and the EU. Do you know that?			
	Vologda	Cherepovets	Districts	Oblast	Vologda	Cherepovets	Districts	Oblast
I am well aware of that	56.3	61.0	21.7	41.1	54.5	63.1	21.6	41.1
I hear something, but I don’t know the details	33.1	32.3	53.9	42.8	35.1	30.5	56.2	43.9
I hear about this for the first time	2.0	3.1	7.8	5.1	3.5	2.8	7.7	5.3
It is difficult to answer	8.6	3.6	16.5	11.1	6.8	3.6	14.6	9.7

The share of those who believe that the sanctions imposed by foreign countries will have a positive effect on the Russian economy is 26%. The opposite view is expressed by 20% of the oblast residents. The proportion of pessimistic forecasts is higher in the cities and towns than in the districts (in Vologda – 28%, in Cherepovets – 31%, in the districts – 10%).

The proportion of the oblast residents who believe that the sanctions of foreign countries will have a positive effect on the region’s economy is 23%. 17% of the population give pessimistic forecasts, in Vologda and Cherepovets – 26%, in the districts – 7%.

One in three residents of the oblast finds it difficult to evaluate the effects of bilateral sanctions on the nationwide and regional economy (32 – 33%). At that, the share of those who found it difficult to answer is higher in the districts (38 – 39%) than in Vologda (28 – 31%) and Cherepovets (24%).

Opinion of the population about the consequences of the sanctions imposed by the USA and the EU for the Russian economy and the Vologda Oblast economy, as a percentage of the number of respondents

Answer option	In your opinion, how will the sanctions imposed by foreign countries affect Russia's economy?				In your opinion, how will the sanctions imposed by foreign countries affect the Vologda Oblast economy?			
	Vologda	Cherepovets	Districts	Oblast	Vologda	Cherepovets	Districts	Oblast
The sanctions will have a positive effect, they will improve the situation	26.5	24.4	26.8	26.1	22.0	22.8	24.2	23.3
The sanctions will have a negative effect, they will aggravate the situation	28.0	30.8	9.9	20.1	25.8	26.2	7.3	17.1
Nothing will change, everything will remain as it has been	17.2	20.5	25.8	22.1	21.7	27.4	29.6	26.9
It is difficult to answer	28.3	24.4	37.5	31.7	30.6	23.6	38.9	32.7

The share of those who believe that the reciprocal economic sanctions of Russia against the United States and other countries will do more good than harm is 45%. The share of positive assessments is 46 % in Vologda, 61% – in Cherepovets, 36% – in the districts.

Sixteen per cent of the population give pessimistic forecasts.

The share of those who find it difficult to forecast the consequences of Russia's reciprocal sanctions is 39%. At that, the proportion of such residents is higher in the districts than in the cities and towns (49% vs. 38% in Vologda and 22% in Cherepovets).

For reference: according to VCIOM, in August 2014, 80% of the Russians believed that the ban on the import into Russia of certain foreign foodstuffs would do more good than harm. The opposite point of view was expressed by 9% of the population.

Opinion of the population about Russia's reciprocal sanctions against the USA and the EU, as a percentage of the number of respondents

In your opinion, will the ban on the import into Russia of certain foreign foodstuffs do Russia more good or harm?				
Answer option	Vologda	Cherepovets	Districts	Oblast
Sooner more good	46.0	60.8	36.0	45.1
Sooner more harm	16.4	16.9	15.1	15.9
It is difficult to answer	37.6	22.3	48.9	39.0

Conclusion

The results of the surveys conducted in October 2014 show that the public opinion of the Vologda Oblast residents is influenced mainly by the events related to the realization of national interests; it is also influenced by the problems that complicate the economic situation in the country.

The indicators of social sentiment and stock of patience remain favorable in general. The share of positive assessments is significantly higher than the proportion of negative characteristics (69–81% against 12–25%).

It is necessary to pay attention to the alarming fact that the consumer sentiment index, which is below the neutral level (less than 100 points), has been declining since June 2014 (from 91 to 84 p. in October). The experience in conducting sociological research suggests that this is a harbinger of major changes that can happen in the next 2–4 months, if the current dynamics of the consumer sentiment index does not change.