

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 December 2014 – February 2015 and also on average for the last six surveys (April 2014 – February 2015). These data are compared with the data for 2013.

Estimation of performance of the authorities

In December 2014 – February 2015 the level of approval of the RF President's performance did not change significantly and amounted to 66%. The share of negative opinions was 21%. In general, people's estimates are better than they were in 2013, when the level of support of the head of state was 55%, and the share of negative characteristics was 29%.

The level of approval of performance of the Chairman of the RF Government in February 2015, compared with December 2014, did not change either. The share of positive assessments is 56%, negative assessments – 25%. For comparison: people's estimates in 2013 were worse: 49% supported the Chairman of the RF Government, the share of negative judgments was 33%.

For reference: according to VTSIOM, at the beginning of February 2015 the nationwide level of approval of the performance of the RF President did not change, compared to December 2014, and it is 86% (the proportion of negative estimates is 7%). The level of support of the Chairman of the RF Government in December 2014 – beginning of February 2015 was 69–70% (the proportion of negative estimates is 18%).

On average for the last six surveys the level of support to the federal authorities remains higher than in 2013.

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. The 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	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
												2013	2011	2007
RF President														
I approve	75.3	58.7	55.3	64.1	62.8	66.6	66.4	66.8	66.0	66.3	65.8	+11	+7	-10
I do not approve	11.5	25.6	29.4	22.3	25.4	21.8	19.3	18.5	19.7	20.5	20.9	-9	-5	+9
Chairman of the RF Government *														
I approve	-*	59.3	48.9	54.2	52.5	55.8	55.2	56.2	56.3	56.1	55.4	+7	-4	-
I do not approve	-	24.7	32.8	27.6	30.9	26.4	26.8	23.9	24.7	24.7	26.2	-7	+2	-
Governor														
I approve	55.8	45.7	44.4	40.1	41.6	38.5	38.8	39.7	39.3	38.3	39.4	-5	-6	-16
I do not approve	22.2	30.5	33.2	38.9	39.0	40.9	40.1	39.6	37.0	37.4	39.0	+6	+9	+17

* Included into the survey since 2008.

The share of the Oblast residents, who believe that the President is successful in coping with the majority of Russia's key problems, has not changed significantly for the last two months. The proportion of those who support the President's efforts to strengthen Russia's international standing is 50–51%, 50–52% support his efforts to impose order in the country, 40–41% support his efforts to protect democracy and strengthen the citizens' freedoms.

At the same time, it is necessary to point out the decline in the share of the Oblast residents who believe that the actions of Russia's President promote economic recovery and help increase the welfare of citizens. In December 2014 – February 2015, the proportion of positive ratings decreased from 38 to 34%, which is lower than the average for the last six surveys. The index of success over the past two months has decreased from 87 to 83 points².

² The indices are calculated as follows: the share of negative answers is subtracted from the share of positive answers, then 100 is added to the obtained value, so as not to have negative values. Thus, completely negative answers would give the total index of 0, and completely positive answers would give the total index of 200; the balance between the former and the latter expresses the value of the index 100, which is, essentially, a neutral mark.

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	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
												2013	2011	2007
Strengthening Russia's international standing														
Successful	58.4	46.2	45.7	50.4	48.6	53.7	50.9	52.3	50.8	50.4	51.1	+5	+5	-7
Unsuccessful	24.9	33.7	36.2	32.4	35.5	31.7	30.0	31.0	30.3	29.5	31.3	-5	-2	+6
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>133.5</i>	<i>112.5</i>	<i>109.5</i>	<i>118.0</i>	<i>113.1</i>	<i>122.0</i>	<i>120.9</i>	<i>121.3</i>	<i>120.5</i>	<i>120.9</i>	<i>119.8</i>	<i>+10</i>	<i>+7</i>	<i>-14</i>
Imposing order in the country														
Successful	53.2	36.6	39.4	48.0	46.7	49.5	47.5	49.4	52.1	50.3	49.3	+10	+13	-4
Unsuccessful	34.0	50.0	47.5	39.1	40.9	39.5	37.8	37.8	35.1	37.3	38.1	-9	-12	+4
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>119.2</i>	<i>86.6</i>	<i>91.9</i>	<i>108.9</i>	<i>105.8</i>	<i>110.0</i>	<i>109.7</i>	<i>111.6</i>	<i>117.0</i>	<i>113.0</i>	<i>111.2</i>	<i>+19</i>	<i>+25</i>	<i>-8</i>
Protecting democracy and strengthening the citizens' freedoms														
Successful	44.4	32.4	31.8	37.5	36.3	40.1	37.6	38.2	40.7	39.5	38.7	+7	+6	-6
Unsuccessful	37.0	48.3	51.0	45.4	48.7	43.9	43.7	44.3	41.9	40.9	43.9	-7	-4	+7
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>107.4</i>	<i>84.1</i>	<i>80.8</i>	<i>92.1</i>	<i>87.6</i>	<i>96.2</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>93.9</i>	<i>98.8</i>	<i>98.6</i>	<i>94.8</i>	<i>+14</i>	<i>+11</i>	<i>-13</i>
Economic recovery and increase in the citizens' welfare														
Successful	47.2	30.7	31.3	34.8	34.9	35.8	35.1	33.9	37.6	34.4	35.3	+4	+5	-12
Unsuccessful	39.1	56.1	56.8	53.4	54.3	53.5	50.2	54.4	50.8	51.5	52.5	-4	-4	+13
<i>Index of success</i>	<i>108.1</i>	<i>74.6</i>	<i>74.5</i>	<i>81.4</i>	<i>80.6</i>	<i>82.3</i>	<i>84.9</i>	<i>79.5</i>	<i>86.8</i>	<i>82.9</i>	<i>82.8</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>-25</i>

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

The structure of the Russians' preferences concerning political parties has not changed significantly over the past two months. The proportion of the Oblast residents who believe that the "United Russia" expresses their interests is 37–39%. Support for the KPRF is 8%, for the LDPR – 7–8%, for the "Just Russia» – 3–4%.

It is noteworthy that in February 2015, compared to December 2014, there has been a decrease in the share of the Oblast residents, who think that no party expresses their interests (from 33 to 30%). It is less than in 2013 (35%) and less than the average value for the last six surveys (34%); this fact indicates the increased interest of the Vologda Oblast residents in economic and political situation in the country.

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	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
														2013	2011	2007
United Russia	30.2	60.5	31.1	33.4	29.4	32.8	29.5	32.7	34.3	35.5	36.7	38.8	34.6	+5	+4	+4
KPRF	7.0	9.3	10.3	16.8	11.3	9.7	10.7	9.8	9.1	9.3	8.3	7.7	9.2	-2	-1	+2
LDPR	7.5	11.0	7.8	15.4	7.2	7.6	8.3	6.2	6.9	7.3	7.8	6.7	7.2	0	-1	0
Just Russia	7.8	8.8	5.6	27.2	4.6	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.2	4.1	3.6	-1	-2	-4
Other	1.8	–	1.9	–	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.3	0	-2	-2
No party	17.8	–	29.4	–	34.9	34.4	34.8	36.0	35.0	32.6	32.7	30.3	33.6	-1	+4	+16
It is difficult to answer	21.2	–	13.2	–	10.2	11.7	13.1	11.8	10.9	10.7	11.1	12.0	11.6	+1	-2	-10

The characteristics of social mood and stock of patience for the last two months have deteriorated significantly.

The share of the Oblast residents, who assess their mood as “good and normal”, decreased in December 2014 – February 2015 from 71 to 62%. The share of those who “feel stress, anger, fear and depression” increased from 24 to 31%.

The proportion of those, who believe that «Everything is not so bad; it’s difficult to live, but it’s possible to stand it” decreased from 80 to 74%. The proportion of those who “cannot bear such plight” increased from 14% to 17%.

In general, the assessments of social sentiment and stock of patience in February 2015 are more negative than they were in December 2014, on average for the last six surveys and on average for 2007–2014. Obviously, it is connected with the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country under the sanctions imposed by the West, and with the low and unstable exchange rate of the national currency.

More and more Russians feel the consequences of negative processes going on in the national economy. For instance, in February 2015 as compared to December 2014 the share of the Vologda Oblast residents who consider they have average income decreased from 42 до 38%, and the proportion of those who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor increased from 51 до 53%. Such a negative situation is observed for the first time in the last six surveys.

There is a continuous declining trend in consumer sentiment index (CSI) – an integrated indicator that characterizes not only the economic condition of the Russians, but also their expectations concerning the development of their well-being and economic situation in the country in general. In December 2014 – February 2015 CSI decreased from 82 to 76 points, which is significantly lower than on average for the last six surveys and for 2007–2014.

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

Answer option	2007	2011	2013	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
												2013	2011	2007
Mood														
Usual condition, good mood	63.6	63.1	68.6	69.4	69.3	71.1	70.5	69.3	70.9	61.8	68.8	0	+6	+5
I feel stress, anger, fear, depression	27.8	28.9	26.2	24.9	24.9	23.7	25.1	24.6	24.1	31.3	25.6	-1	-3	-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	80.8	81.3	81.0	82.5	80.3	80.0	74.3	79.9	+1	+5	+6
It's impossible to bear such plight	13.6	15.3	14.2	12.6	11.1	13.4	12.8	12.1	13.6	17.3	13.4	-1	-2	0
Social self-identification														
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	48.2	43.1	43.9	43.2	43.1	42.0	44.1	43.5	42.3	38.3	42.2	-2	-1	-6
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	42.4	44.3	46.9	49.1	49.1	48.4	49.6	49.3	51.0	53.3	50.1	+3	+6	+8
Consumer sentiment index														
Index value, points	105.9	89.6	90.3	87.6	90.3	90.5	87.1	84.0	82.3	75.7	85.0	-5	-5	-21

The reduction of CSI took place in June – December 1998 in the period of default.

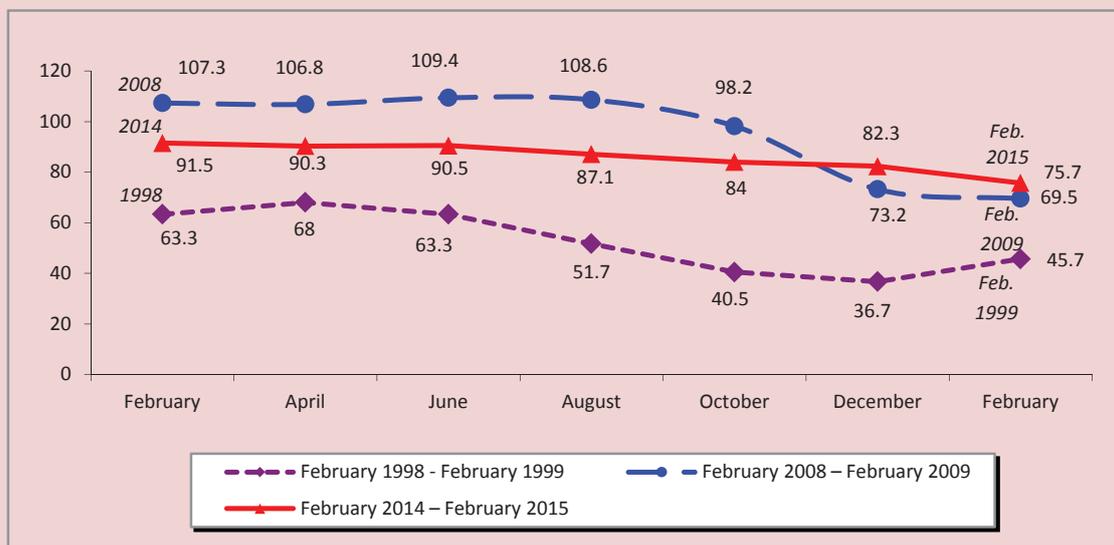
Similar changes in the Index were observed in June 2008 – February 2009, when the population was faced with the consequences of the global financial crisis.

The current negative dynamics of CSI has started in June 2014, and its rate is increasing. In December 2014 – February 2015 CSI decreased by six points (from 82 to 76 p.). For comparison, it has not declined by more than four points for the last six polls (this happened in June – August, 2014, the decline was from 91 to 87 p.).

Consumer sentiment index declined in all the socio-demographic categories of the population in the past two months, including all the income and age groups. Especially negative changes are observed among people with higher and incomplete higher education (CSI decreased from 91 to 81 p.), among 20% of the most prosperous (from 101 to 93 p.), and among the Vologda residents (from 84 to 75 p.).

It is alarming that the decrease in CSI has already become a steady trend in most socio-demographic groups. This trend has been observed since June 2014.

Dynamics of consumer sentiment index (CSI) in 1998, 2008 and 2014 (in points).



Consumer sentiment index in different socio-demographic groups (in points)

Category of population	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
													2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	107.8	90.3	92.2	91.0	87.6	91.3	90.1	86.6	82.9	82.6	76.8	85.1	-6	-5	-23
Women	104.4	89.1	91.0	89.8	87.6	89.6	90.8	87.5	84.9	81.9	74.8	84.9	-5	-4	-19
Age															
Under 30	115.2	95.0	97.0	94.5	93.0	97.4	93.4	94.7	89.3	87.8	82.7	90.9	-4	-4	-24
30–55	107.1	89.1	91.9	91.4	87.5	90.1	92.2	86.3	83.1	80.1	73.0	84.1	-7	-5	-23
Over 55	95.7	86.0	86.3	85.6	84.2	85.5	86.1	82.9	81.8	81.6	74.9	82.1	-3	-4	-14
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	100.2	85.6	84.9	83.4	80.5	84.4	82.5	79.0	78.8	75.0	69.6	78.2	-5	-7	-22
Secondary vocational	105.9	87.9	90.2	88.7	86.9	89.5	89.5	86.5	82.2	82.0	76.9	84.4	-4	-3	-21
Incomplete higher, higher	113.1	95.5	98.8	99.2	96.3	98.4	100.2	96.9	92.1	91.0	80.7	93.2	-6	-2	-20
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	88.2	74.8	77.6	71.2	69.8	72.3	73.2	66.5	67.8	64.2	58.6	67.1	-4	-8	-21
60% of the people with middle-sized income	105.5	89.0	90.3	90.8	87.0	88.9	88.5	87.0	83.6	81.9	76.5	84.4	-6	-5	-21
20% of the most prosperous people	124.7	105.3	107.5	108.9	107.5	112.4	111.3	105.7	103.7	101.2	92.5	104.5	-4	-1	-20
Territories															
Vologda	104.2	90.9	93.6	92.3	90.8	93.6	94.9	90.8	87.8	84.3	74.7	87.7	-5	-3	-17
Cherepovets	114.9	98.9	100.2	97.7	95.3	99.0	96.8	93.6	90.1	90.0	82.7	92.0	-6	-7	-23
Districts	102.3	84.4	86.2	85.3	81.7	83.8	84.6	81.5	78.7	76.9	72.4	79.7	-6	-5	-23
Oblast	105.9	89.6	91.5	90.3	87.6	90.3	90.5	87.1	84.0	82.3	75.7	85.0	-5	-5	-21

The powerful influence of people's financial situation on how they assess their own social condition is proved by the fact that **for the last two months the proportion of the Oblast residents who describe their mood as “good, normal, fine” has also decreased in all the socio-demographic categories.** At that the largest decrease in positive assessments of social mood is observed among the 20% of the poorest (by 17 percentage points, from 55 to 38%).

Social mood in different socio-demographic groups (answer option “Good mood, usual, good condition”, as a percentage of the number of respondents)

Category of population	2007	2011	2012	2013	2014	Apr. 2014	June 2014	Aug. 2014	Oct. 2014	Dec. 2014	Feb. 2015	Average for the last six surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the last six surveys in comparison with...		
													2013	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	65.9	64.5	69.1	69.9	68.9	68.5	71.3	69.5	68.8	69.7	61.7	68.3	-2	+4	+2
Women	61.7	62.0	65.8	67.5	69.8	70.0	71.0	71.4	69.8	72.0	61.9	69.4	+2	+7	+8
Age															
Under 30	71.3	70.0	72.3	75.5	75.1	70.8	76.1	79.1	76.6	76.4	71.3	75.1	0	+5	+4
30–55	64.8	62.5	67.9	69.2	69.5	70.0	71.8	70.3	68.3	69.8	58.3	68.1	-1	+6	+3
Over 55	54.8	58.3	62.1	62.4	65.4	67.2	66.7	64.9	66.1	69.1	60.7	65.8	+3	+7	+11
Education															
Incomplete secondary, secondary	58.4	57.4	57.2	60.6	62.5	61.3	61.7	63.3	65.4	67.8	54.8	62.4	+2	+5	+4
Secondary vocational	64.6	63.6	66.7	68.1	70.4	70.7	72.2	71.3	70.2	71.8	65.2	70.2	+2	+7	+6
Incomplete higher, higher	68.6	68.3	77.0	77.4	76.2	78.1	80.4	77.7	73.3	73.5	65.8	74.8	-3	+7	+6
Income groups															
20% of the poorest people	51.6	45.3	51.5	46.2	50.8	47.4	54.9	54.1	50.2	55.1	38.3	50.0	+4	+5	-2
60% of the people with middle-sized income	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	72.3	72.6	72.7	71.5	73.5	75.0	65.2	71.8	0	+6	+9
20% of the most prosperous people	74.9	75.3	81.1	83.3	84.8	82.7	89.0	89.6	79.0	81.6	80.3	83.7	0	+8	+9
Territories															
Vologda	63.1	67.1	73.6	75.0	76.4	75.6	78.6	80.7	75.5	75.6	66.4	75.4	0	+8	+12
Cherepovets	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.3	76.3	79.0	79.9	76.5	72.8	73.2	63.1	74.1	-1	+3	+6
Districts	61.6	57.1	59.8	61.6	61.8	60.7	62.3	61.5	64.0	67.1	58.6	62.4	1	+5	+1
Oblast	63.6	63.1	67.3	68.6	69.4	69.3	71.1	70.5	69.3	70.9	61.8	68.8	0	+6	+5

Conclusion:

The crisis phenomena in the Russian economy started in 2011–2012. They are caused by internal reasons and now they have acquired a system-wide character. Economic sanctions and the unstable national currency have only aggravated their consequences. According to the surveys conducted in February 2015, the Vologda Oblast experiences the deterioration in the structure of social self-identification and the decline in consumer sentiment index.

In early 2015 negative processes in the economy for the first time affected the Oblast residents' social well-being: the indicators of social sentiment and stock of patience, which in recent years (2007 –2014) were characterized by sufficient stability and positive dynamics, declined by 6–9 p.p. for the first time.

So far, the deterioration of financial situation and social sentiment is not reflected in the level of support of federal and regional authorities; however, the experience of social research (in particular, the assessment of consumer sentiment index) suggests that if decisive steps to improve the socio-economic situation are not taken, there can be serious negative changes in the near future.

Below we have placed the results of the long-term monitoring carried out by ISED T RAS; they present the assessment of the attitude of the Vologda Oblast population toward the current governmental, public and political institutions.

The graphic materials take into account the assessment results for the period from 2000 to 2014. The data show that the Vologda Oblast residents have greater trust in governmental institutions rather than in public institutions.

People’s trust in the performance of the federal authorities remains high and fairly stable. Since 2000 the trust index has been higher than the neutral level (100 points), which means that the majority of the Oblast residents firmly support the federal government.

A declining trend in the level of trust in presidential power during the period of D.A. Medvedev’s presidency (2009–2012) changed with the beginning of V.V. Putin’s third presidential term. This had a positive impact on the population’s attitude toward the Government of the Russian Federation, the Federation Council and the State Duma. The level of trust in the Vologda Oblast Government

is somewhat lower; nevertheless, generally positive assessments prevail in this regard.

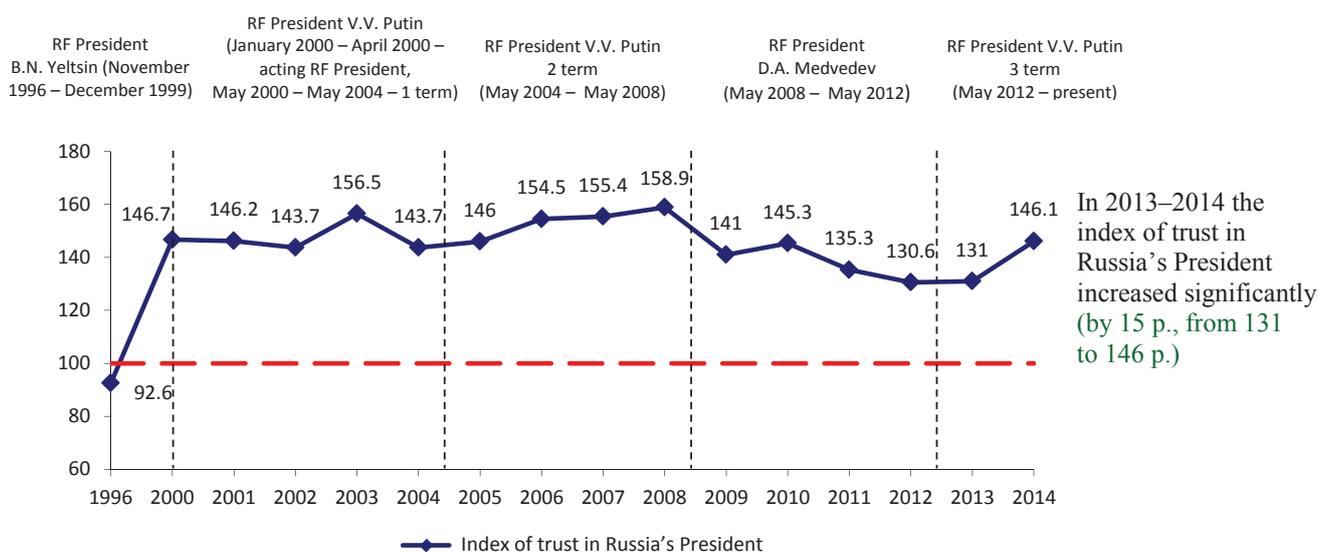
The Church enjoys the highest level of trust among non-state institutions. This attitude has remained stable since 2012.

The level of trust of the Oblast residents in security institutions (the Army, Police, Federal Security Service) and in the Court remains high. Moreover, it should be noted that the attitude toward law enforcement agencies has been improving since 2013.

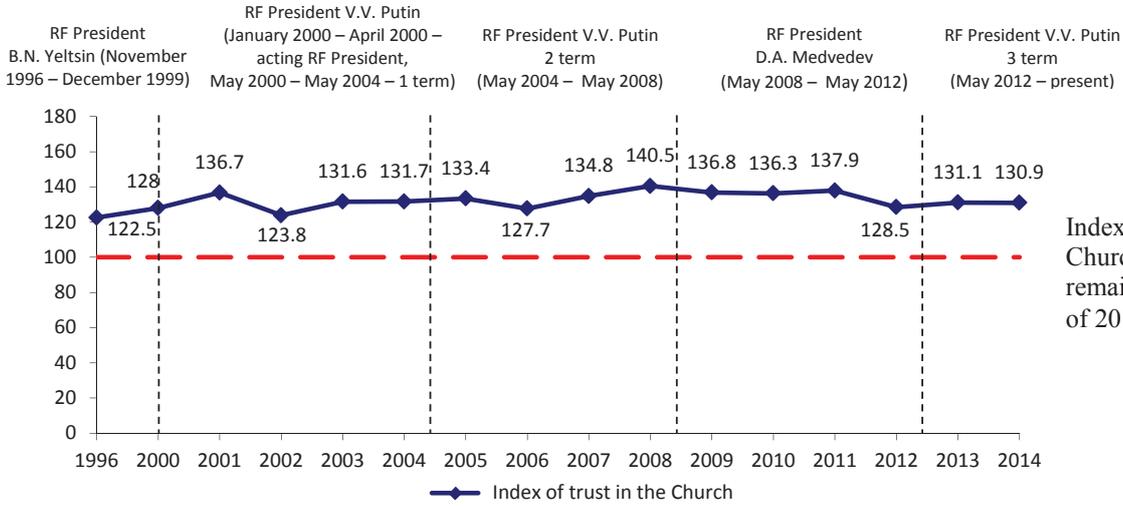
The level of people’s trust in public institutions, especially the media, CEOs, banks and business community, political parties and movements remains the lowest. The attitudes toward these institutions are mostly negative; moreover, in 2014 the level of trust has decreased significantly.

Thus, the dynamics of people’s assessments indicates that public opinion is focused more and more on the federal level of government, which is not surprising in the current unstable geopolitical situation. The society is consolidating around the federal government, and the President of the Russian Federation plays the key role in this process.

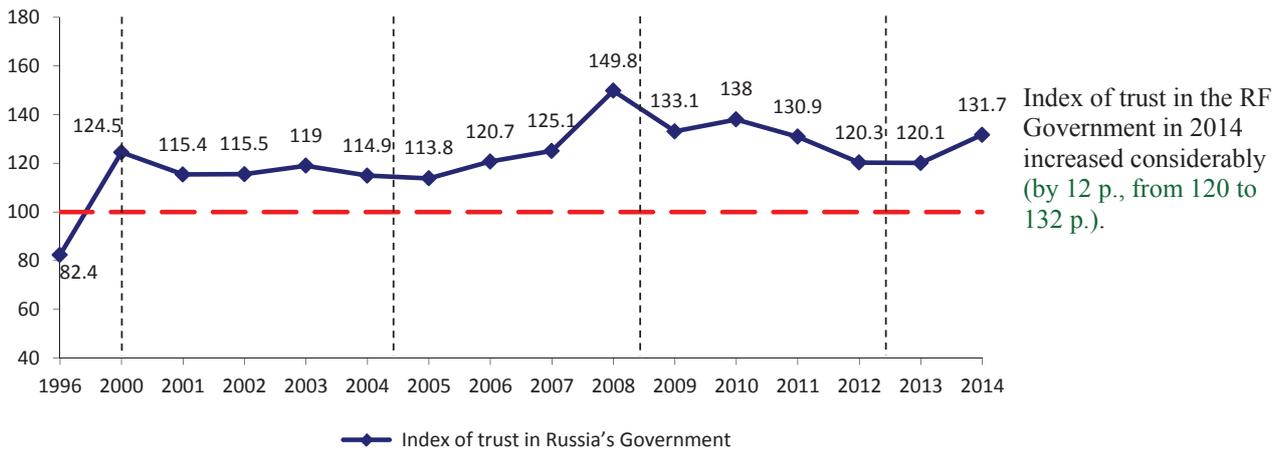
Attitude toward the President of the Russian Federation



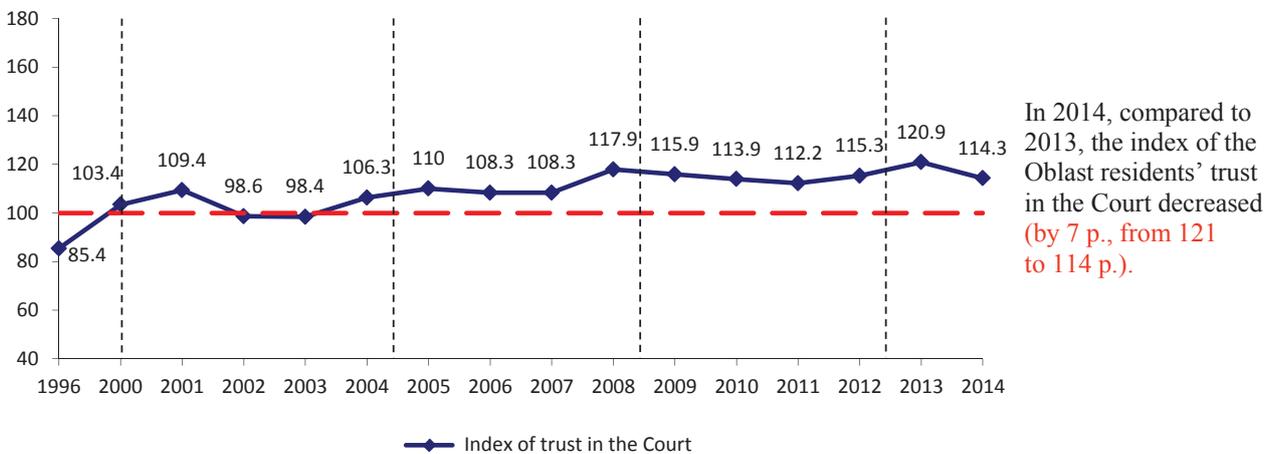
Attitude toward the Church



Attitude toward the Government of the Russian Federation



Attitude toward the Court



Attitude toward the Government of the Vologda Oblast

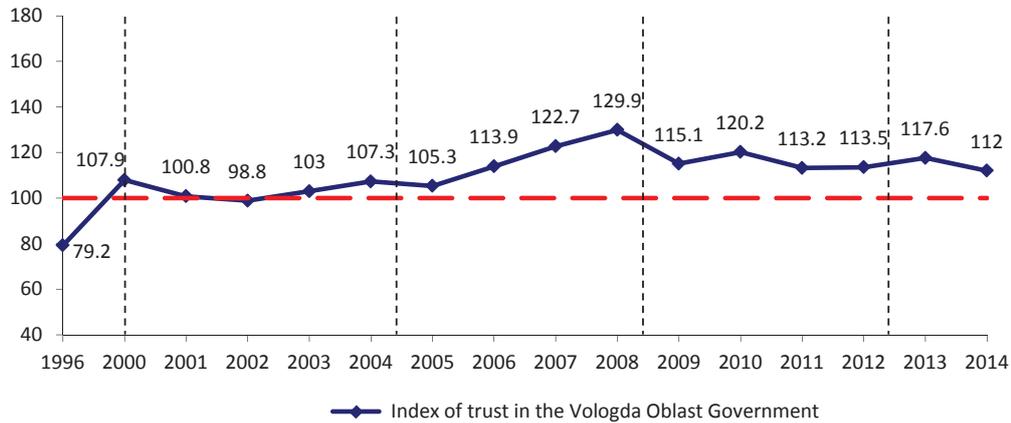
RF President B.N. Yeltsin (November 1996 – December 1999)

RF President V.V. Putin (January 2000 – April 2000 – acting RF President, May 2000 – May 2004 – 1 term)

RF President V.V. Putin 2 term (May 2004 – May 2008)

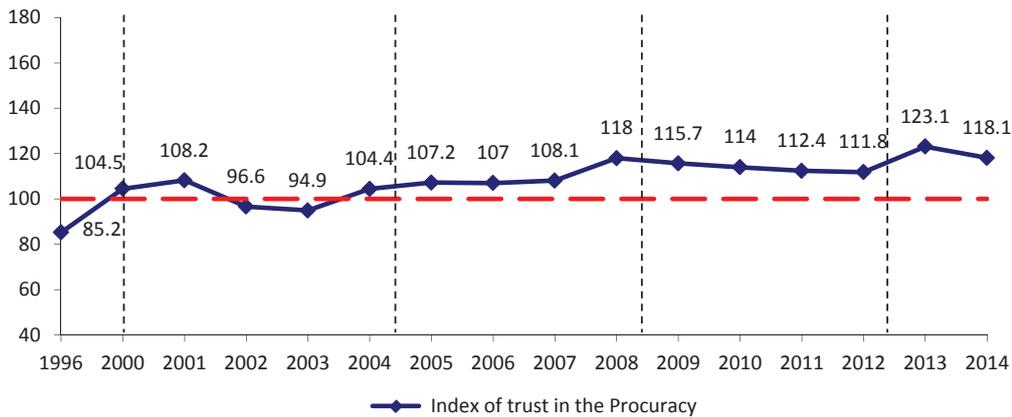
RF President D.A. Medvedev (May 2008 – May 2012)

RF President V.V. Putin 3 term (May 2012 – present)



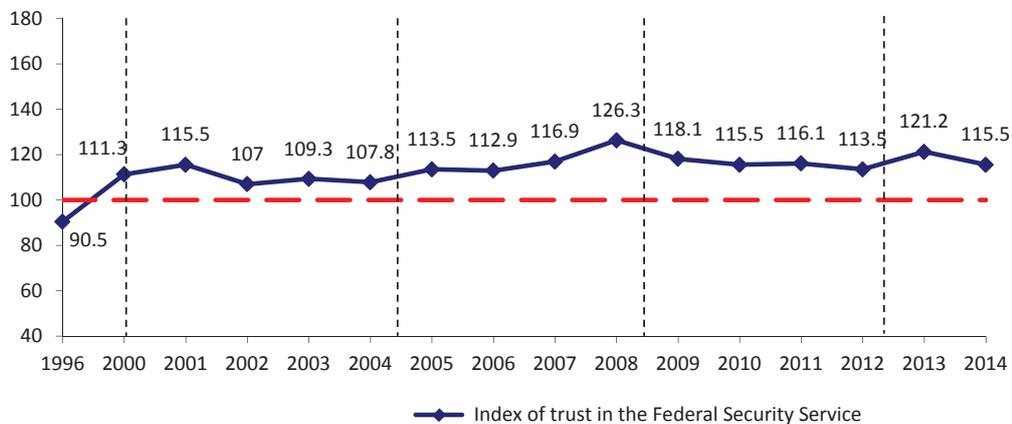
In 2014 the index of trust in the Vologda Oblast Government decreased by 6 p. (from 118 to 112 p.).

Attitude toward the Procuracy



In 2014 the index of trust in the Procuracy decreased by 5 p. (from 123 to 118 p.).

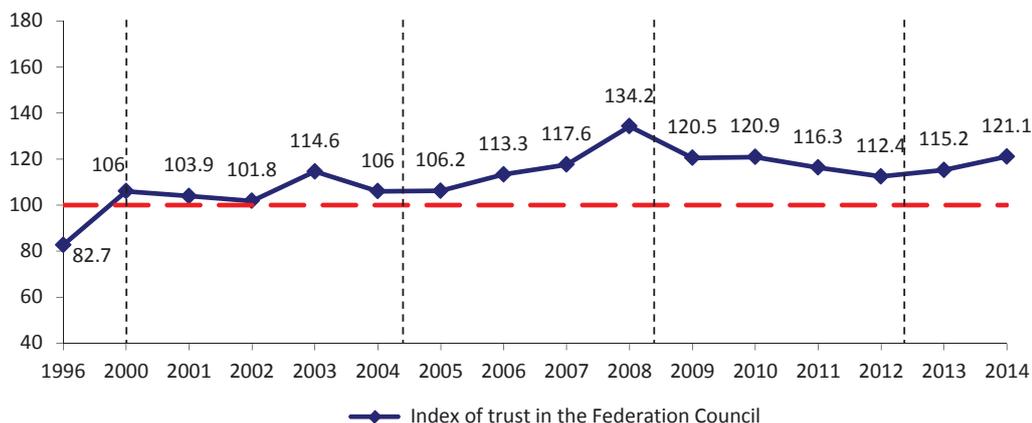
Attitude toward the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation



The level of the Oblast residents' trust in the Federal Security Service decreased in 2014 in comparison with 2013 (by 5 p., from 121 to 115 p.).

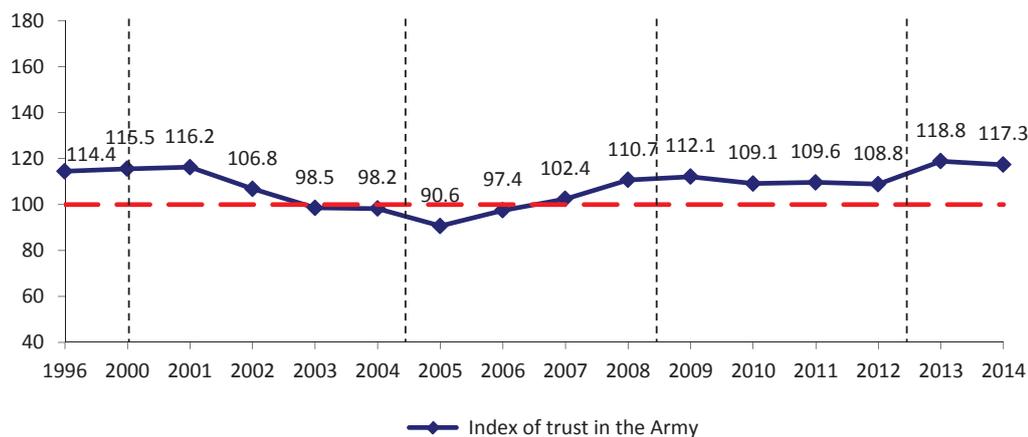
Attitude toward the Federation Council of Russia

RF President B.N. Yeltsin (November 1996 – December 1999) | RF President V.V. Putin (January 2000 – April 2000 – acting RF President, May 2000 – May 2004 – 1 term) | RF President V.V. Putin (May 2004 – May 2008) 2 term | RF President D.A. Medvedev (May 2008 – May 2012) | RF President V.V. Putin (May 2012 – present) 3 term



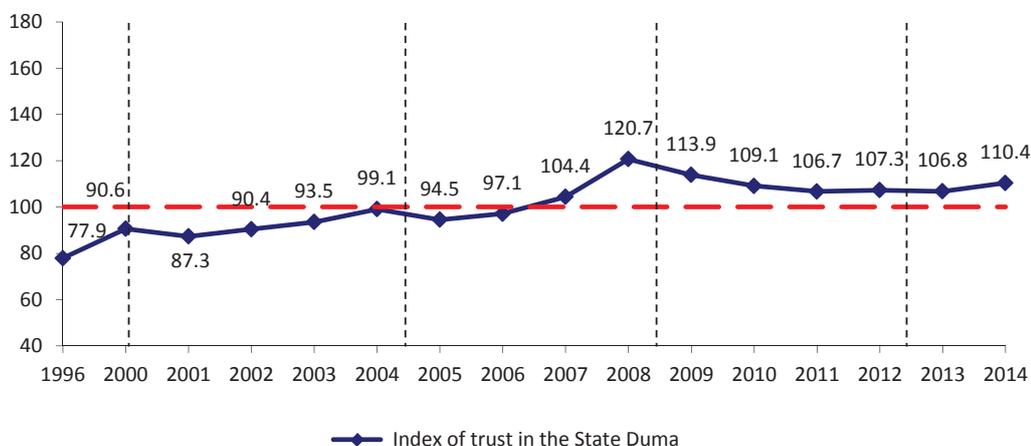
In 2014 the level of trust in the Federation Council continued to grow. The index increased by 6 p. in comparison with 2013, and by 9 p. in comparison with 2012 (from 112 – 115 to 121 p.).

Attitude toward the Army



In 2014 the index of people's trust in the Army remained at the level of 117 – 119 p.

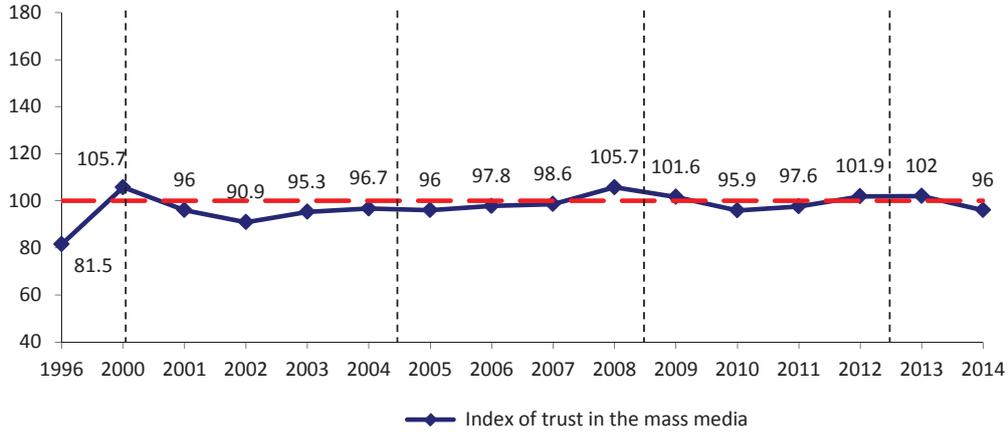
Attitude toward the State Duma



The index of trust in the State Duma in 2014 was by 3 p. higher than the level of 2011 – 2013 (110 p. vs. 107).

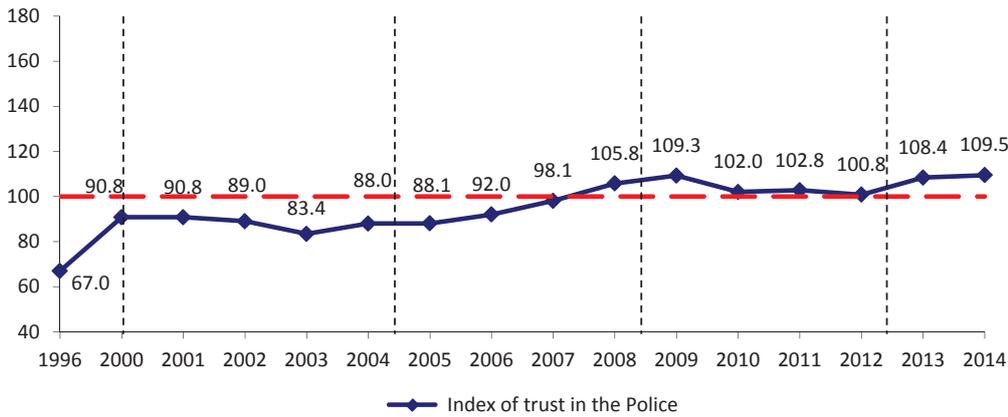
Attitude toward the mass media

RF President B.N. Yeltsin (November 1996 – December 1999) RF President V.V. Putin (January 2000 – April 2000 – acting RF President, May 2000 – May 2004 – 1 term) RF President V.V. Putin 2 term (May 2004 – May 2008) RF President D.A. Medvedev (May 2008 – May 2012) RF President V.V. Putin 3 term (May 2012 – present)



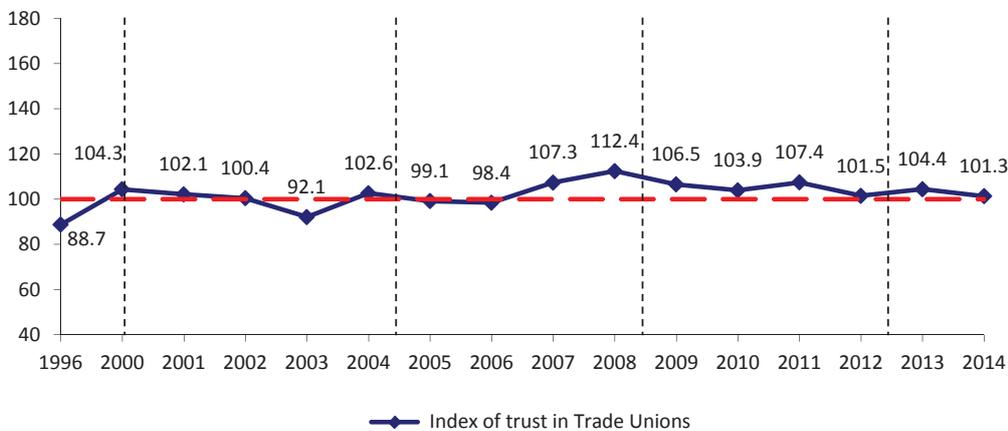
The index of trust in the mass media in 2014 decreased (by 6 p., from 102 to 96 p.).

Attitude toward the Police



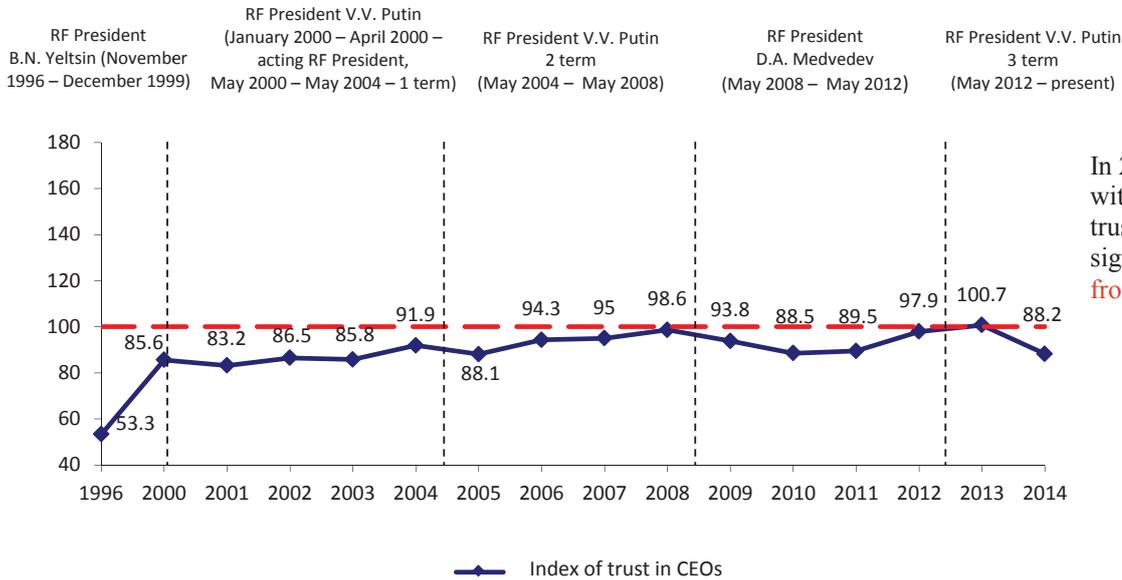
In 2014 the index of trust in the Police increased slightly (by 2 p., from 108 to 110 p.).

Attitude toward Trade Unions

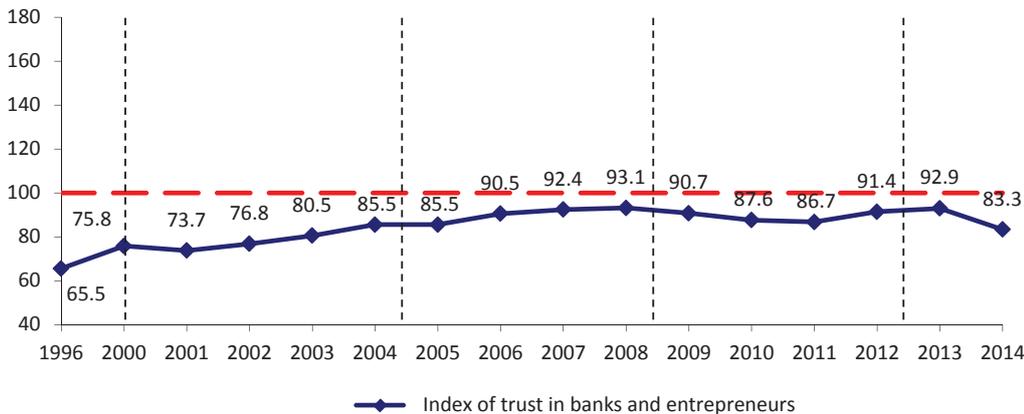


In 2013–2014 the index of trust in Trade Unions decreased slightly (by 3 p., from 104 to 101 p.).

Attitude toward CEOs



Attitude toward banks and entrepreneurs



Attitude toward political parties and political movements

