

PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING

Public Opinion Monitoring of the State of the Russian Society

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

The following tables show the dynamics of several parameters indicating the social feeling and socio-political sentiment of the Vologda Oblast population in June – August 2018, and also on average for the latest six polls (October 2017 – August 2018)

The results of the research are compared with the data for 2007 (the last year of Vladimir Putin's second presidential term, when the assessment of the President's work was the highest), for 2011 (the last year of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency), and for 2012 (the first year of V. Putin's third presidential term).

The yearly dynamics of the data are presented for the last two years (2016–2017).

We carry out a comparative analysis of the dynamics of public opinion concerning the work of the head of state in the first months (April – August) of V. Putin's first, second, third, and fourth presidential terms.

In connection with the beginning of a new political season coinciding with V. Putin's last (according to the Constitution of the Russian Federation) presidential term, we pay special attention to the analysis of the current (monthly) dynamics of public opinion concerning the work of the head of state. Relevant tables are presented on pages 3–4.

In June – August 2018, the level of approval of the work of the President of the Russian Federation significantly decreased (by 4 p.p., from 70 to 66%). This is the lowest rate of support for the head of state in recent months (from October 2017 to August 2018) and years (2015–2017).

The share of Vologda Oblast residents who give positive assessments concerning the work of the Prime Minister, over the past two months decreased by 5 p.p. (from 52 to 47%). Currently, it is also the minimum indicator in the annual and current dynamics.

During the period from April to August 2018 (the first months of V. Putin's fourth presidential term), the share of negative assessments of the President's work increased by 4 p.p. (from 18 to 22%), of the Prime Minister – by 5 p.p. (from 27 to 32%).

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 1,500 people 18 years of age 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 information on the results of VoIRC RAS polls is available at <http://www.vscs.ac.ru/>.

For reference:

According to VTsIOM, in July – August 2018, the share of positive assessments of the President’s work did not change significantly (63 – 64%), however, we should pay attention to the fact that the percentage of positive assessments of the work of the head of state was 81% in May and 73% in June.

Negative dynamics is also observed according to the data of Levada-Center: in April 2018, 82% of Russians approved of the President’s work, in May – 79%, in July – 67%.

Thus, in general, in the first months of V. Putin’s fourth presidential term (from April to August 2018), the level of people’s support for his work decreased by 18 p. p. (from 81 to 63%), and by 15 p. p. (from 82 to 67%) according to Levada-Center.

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

Answer	2007	2011	2012	2016	2017	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	June 2018	Aug. 2018	Average for the latest 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the latest 6 surveys compared to ...		
													2017	2011	2007
RF President															
I approve	75.3	58.7	51.7	67.8	67.3	68.3	68.9	68.7	68.1	70.1	65.9	68.3	+1	+10	-7
I don't approve	11.5	25.6	32.6	18.8	20.0	19.4	19.3	20.8	18.4	17.5	22.1	19.6	0	-6	+8
Chairman of the RF Government*															
I approve	-*	59.3	49.6	52.3	49.5	51.5	49.9	48.3	49.9	52.0	47.4	49.8	0	-9	-
I don't approve	-	24.7	33.3	27.6	31.1	29.9	31.3	30.8	27.8	27.5	31.9	29.9	-1	+5	-
Governor															
I approve	55.8	45.7	41.9	37.7	39.8	40.8	39.4	39.3	39.5	40.5	37.3	39.5	0	-6	-16
I don't approve	22.2	30.5	33.3	39.3	39.3	39.2	40.1	37.9	36.1	35.3	36.9	37.6	-2	+7	+15

* Included in the survey since 2008.

In June – August, the assessments of the success of the President’s work on virtually all key problems of the country deteriorated:

- ✓ *the share of those who believe that V. Putin is successfully coping with the issues of strengthening Russia’s international positions decreased by 3 p.p. (from 56 to 53%);*
- ✓ *with restoring order in the country – by 4 p.p. (from 55 to 51%);*
- ✓ *with protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms – by 3 p.p. (from 43 to 40%);*
- ✓ *the share of those who negatively assess the President’s work on economic recovery and growth of citizens’ welfare increased by 3 p.p. (from 38 to 41%).*

During the first months of V. Putin’s fourth presidential term, the share of negative judgments on the work of the President in all the above areas increased by 2–5 p.p.

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

Answer	2007	2011	2012	2016	2017	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	June 2018	Aug. 2018	Average for the latest 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the latest 6 surveys compared to ...		
													2017	2011	2007
Strengthening Russia's international standing															
Successful	58.4	46.2	43.1	51.2	55.7	57.6	56.5	55.2	56.1	55.6	53.3	55.7	0	+10	-3
Unsuccessful	24.9	33.7	37.9	29.9	26.8	26.3	28.3	26.9	26.9	26.7	29.1	27.4	+1	-6	+2
<i>Success index</i>	133.5	112.5	105.2	121.3	129.0	131.3	128.3	128.3	129.2	128.9	124.2	128.4	-1	+16	-5
Imposing order in the country															
Successful	53.2	36.6	35.4	49.2	50.6	52.7	52.0	50.9	54.2	55.1	51.0	52.7	+2	+16	-1
Unsuccessful	34.0	50.0	50.7	36.7	36.1	35.1	34.6	32.7	30.8	32.9	36.2	33.7	-2	-16	0
<i>Success index</i>	119.2	86.6	84.7	112.6	114.5	117.6	117.4	118.2	123.4	122.2	114.8	118.9	+4	+32	0
Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens' freedoms															
Successful	44.4	32.4	28.8	36.6	40.3	42.5	43.3	42.8	42.9	43.4	39.8	42.5	+2	+10	-2
Unsuccessful	37.0	48.3	52.3	44.3	40.2	38.3	39.3	38.7	37.1	38.1	41.4	38.8	-1	-9	+2
<i>Success index</i>	107.4	84.1	76.5	92.3	100.2	104.2	103.9	104.1	105.8	105.3	98.4	103.6	+3	+20	-4
Economic recovery and increase in citizens' welfare															
Successful	47.2	30.7	28.5	27.2	29.3	32.3	31.6	31.0	31.3	32.3	30.6	31.5	+2	+1	-16
Unsuccessful	39.1	56.1	57.9	59.4	56.9	55.3	56.3	53.7	55.3	55.2	58.3	55.7	-1	0	+17
<i>Success index</i>	108.1	74.6	70.6	67.8	72.4	77.0	75.3	77.3	76.0	77.1	72.3	75.8	+3	+1	-32

* Ranked according to the average value of the index of success for 2016.

The results of Russian national and regional studies suggest that the negative dynamics of assessments of the President's work in April – August 2018 are registered not for the first time. According to VTsIOM, the decrease in support for the President was observed during the corresponding period of V. Putin's second presidential term (2012); according to Levada-Center – during all four presidential terms; according to the data of VolRC RAS – in 2000 and 2004. Thus, the deterioration of public opinion concerning the work of the head of state in the first months of the political season is a phenomenon that is quite common; we can even say it is “ordinary” for the Russian reality.

Apparently, this is due to the fact that at the beginning of the new political cycle people expect the authorities to take concrete steps to implement the election promises, but real changes in the dynamics of the level and quality of life are not observed. This, on the one hand, makes it quite likely that in 2018 (despite such a sharp opposition to the pension reform on the part of the general public²) everything will return to normal, and in the coming months of 2018,

² According to the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), 80% of Russians have a negative attitude toward the pension reform project (source: *Raising the Retirement Age: Citizens' Reaction. FOM Press Release from June 29, 2018*. Available at: <http://fom.ru/Ekonomika/14057>)

According to VolRC RAS, 73% of Vologda Oblast residents do not support the pension reform (only 7% of respondents hold the opposite point of view); 55% believe that raising the retirement age is unacceptable in principle; 27% of the region's residents believe that “sooner or later the retirement age will need to be raised, but not now and not in this way”.

the dynamics of public opinion will stabilize again. However, on the other hand, it should be noted that we are talking about a long-term, even systematic disregard for the expectations and hopes of the population, which, of course, exacerbates the stability of the political system and the overall social situation in the country.

It should also be noted that according to Russian studies (VTsIOM) the level of support for V. Putin at the beginning of his third and fourth presidential terms was 63% (in August). This is significantly less than in August 2000 and 2004 (86 and 74%, respectively).

Dynamics of assessment of the work of the head of state in the first months of V. Putin's 1st – 4th presidential terms (% of respondents)

Answer	2000				2004				2012				2018			
	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug. to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug. to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug. to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug. to Apr.
VTsIOM																
I approve	-	79.5**	85.5	-	72.6***	69.8**	74.0	+1	65.8	65.8	62.9	-3	81.3	72.5	63.0	-18
I don't approve	-	20.5**	14.5	-	18.9***	19.8**	17.8	-1	25.4	24.1	27.9	+3	11.2	18.0	26.5	+15
Levada-Center																
I approve	77	61	65	-12	79	72	68	-11	67	64*	63	-4	82	67**	н.д.	-
I don't approve	15	26	26	+11	19	25	30	+11	32	34*	35	+3	17	32**	н.д.	-
VoIRC RAS																
I approve	67.3	62.5	61.5	-6	73.5	67.2	53.1	-20	50.3	54.5	53.7	+3	68.1	70.1	65.9	-2
I don't approve	11.1	16.1	19.8	+9	13.0	19.0	27.1	+14	33.3	28.9	31.1	-2	18.4	17.5	22.1	+4
From May 2008 to June 2012, Levada-Center formulated the question as follows: "Do you generally approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as Prime Minister?"																
** VTsIOM data as of July 2000 and 2004, Levada Center data as of July 2018.																
*** VTsIOM data as of May 2004.																

Unlike the first months of V. Putin's third presidential term, in April – August 2018, there is a negative dynamics of assessments of the success of the President's work to address the key problems of the country (the share of negative judgments increased by 2–5 p.p.). A negative trend in public opinion was also noted in 2004, which was marked by broad discussions about the monetization of benefits, a rather controversial reform.

It should also be noted that in April – August 2018 (compared with the corresponding periods of 2000, 2004, and 2012), we observe a significantly higher level of support for the work of the head of state to strengthen Russia's international positions (55% vs 40–44%), restore order in the country (53% vs 35–37%), protect democracy and strengthen citizens' freedoms (42% vs 25–30%). However, this statement does not concern, perhaps, the most acute problem – the recovery of the economy and the growth of the welfare of citizens. Throughout V. Putin's

presidential terms, the assessment of the success with which the President deals with this problem does not change: the share of positive judgments is 30%, negative – 50–56%.

According to the latest data (as of August 2018), the index of assessment of the President's work to address material issues of the population is lower than for the corresponding period of all previous presidential terms (in August 2018 – 72 p., in 2012 – 83 p., in 2004 – 74 p., in 2000 – 84 p.).

Evaluation of the degree of success with which the President addresses the country's key issues in the first months of Vladimir Putin's presidential terms* (VoIRC RAS data, % of respondents)

Answer	2000				2004				2012				2018			
	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug.to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug.to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug.to Apr.	April	June	August	Dynamics (+/-), Aug.to Apr.
<i>Strengthening Russia's international standing</i>																
Successful	-	-	38.1	-	50.1	43.9	35.4	-15	42.6	43.3	47.2	+5	56.1	55.6	53.3	-3
Unsuccessful	-	-	29.4	-	28.1	33.9	42.9	+15	37	37.8	34.9	-2	26.9	26.7	29.1	+2
<i>Success index</i>	-	-	108.7	-	122.0	110.0	92.5	-30	105.6	105.5	112.3	+7	129.2	128.9	124.2	-5
<i>Imposing order in the country</i>																
Successful	-	-	33.5	-	42.6	36.1	28.9	-14	34.7	35.3	40.9	+6	54.2	55.1	51.0	-3
Unsuccessful	-	-	42.3	-	43.5	49.5	53.2	+10	51.5	51.8	45.6	-6	30.8	32.9	36.2	+5
<i>Success index</i>	-	-	91.2	-	99.1	86.6	75.7	-23	83.2	83.5	95.3	+12	123.4	122.2	114.8	-9
<i>Economic recovery and increase in citizens' welfare</i>																
Successful	-	-	25.1	-	33	30.6	28.1	-5	26.9	30.1	33	+6	42.9	43.4	39.8	-3
Unsuccessful	-	-	38.1	-	42.3	46.1	47.6	+5	55	51.4	48.1	-7	37.1	38.1	41.4	+4
<i>Success index</i>	-	-	87.0	-	90.7	84.5	80.5	-10	71.9	78.7	84.9	+13	105.8	105.3	98.4	-7
<i>Economic recovery and increase in citizens' welfare</i>																
Successful	-	-	28.7	-	35.1	30.9	27.6	-8	28.5	29.1	34.7	+6	31.3	32.3	30.6	-1
Unsuccessful	-	-	44.4	-	49.2	50.7	53.7	+5	58.7	57.1	51.4	-7	55.3	55.2	58.3	+3
<i>Success index</i>	-	-	84.3	-	85.9	80.2	73.9	-12	69.8	72.0	83.3	+14	76.0	77.1	72.3	-4

* Included in the survey since August 2000.

The structure of Vologda Oblast residents' preferences concerning political parties remains stable. In particular, people's support for the United Russia Party remains at the level of 38%. Nevertheless, we should note a slight increase in the proportion of people who believe that none of the parliamentary parties represents their interests (in April 2018, the proportion of those who share this opinion was 26%, in June – 27%, in August – 29%). This may indicate a loss of interest or even disappointment in the activities of parties represented in the State Duma.

Which party expresses your interests? (% of respondents)

Party	2007	Election to the RF State Duma 2007, fact		2011		2012		2016		Election to the RF State Duma 2016, fact		2017	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	June 2018	Aug. 2018	Average for the latest 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the latest 6 surveys compared to ...		
		2007, fact	2011	2011, fact	2012	2016	2016, fact	2017	2017	2011	2007											
United Russia	30.2	60.5	31.1	33.4	29.1	35.4	38.0	34.7	35.6	37.9	38.4	39.7	38.9	38.1	38.1	+3	+7	+8				
LDPR	7.5	11.0	7.8	15.4	7.8	10.4	21.9	11.0	11.5	11.6	10.1	9.6	9.7	10.4	-1	+3	+3					
KPRF	7.0	9.3	10.3	16.8	10.6	8.3	14.2	7.6	7.3	8.1	7.1	8.1	8.7	8.3	+1	-2	+1					
Just Russia	7.8	8.8	5.6	27.2	6.6	4.2	10.8	4.8	4.5	4.3	3.5	2.5	2.3	3.3	-2	-2	-5					
Other	1.8	–	1.9	–	2.1	0.3	–	0.5	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.5	0.9	0	-1	-1					
None	17.8	–	29.4	–	31.3	29.4	–	29.2	26.2	28.5	28.8	26.2	26.7	27.5	-2	-2	+10					
It's difficult to answer	21.2	–	13.2	–	11.7	12.0	–	12.2	14.1	8.6	11.1	12.7	13.3	11.6	-1	-2	-10					

Despite the deterioration of assessments of the work of the President and the Government, there have been no significant changes in the dynamics of indicators of social well-being over the past two months:

- ✓ the proportion of people who characterize their mood as “normal and good” is 73%;
- ✓ the proportion of those who believe that “everything is not so bad; it’s difficult to live, but it’s possible to stand it” is 78%.

For the first time in recent months, the consumer sentiment index decreased (by 3 p., from 92 to 89 p.), which indicates the growth of people’s pessimistic expectations regarding the dynamics of the economic situation in the country and their personal well-being.

The growth of negative forecasts for the future does not yet lead to deterioration in the estimates of the financial situation in the present. However, it is difficult to say that the situation is satisfactory: in recent years, the proportion of Oblast’s residents who subjectively classify themselves as “poor and extremely poor” exceeds the proportion of people with “average income” (45–49% vs 40–43%).

Estimation of social condition (% of respondents)

Answer	2007	2011	2012	2016	2017	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	June 2018	Aug. 2018	Average for the latest 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the latest 6 surveys compared to ...		
													2017	2011	2007
Mood															
Usual condition, good mood	63.6	63.1	67.3	68.0	70.4	71.0	70.5	68.6	71.5	72.5	72.5	71.1	+1	+8	+8
I feel stress, anger, fear, depression	27.8	28.9	27.0	26.2	24.2	22.8	24.0	23.4	23.1	22.8	22.5	23.1	-1	-6	-5
Stock of patience															
Everything is not so bad; it's difficult to live, but it's possible to stand it	74.1	74.8	76.6	78.0	77.7	74.4	77.1	76.2	79.0	76.5	78.0	76.9	-1	+2	+3
It's impossible to bear such plight	13.6	15.3	15.8	15.6	15.8	17.5	16.2	16.3	14.8	16.6	15.5	16.2	0	+1	+3
Social self-identification*															
The share of people who consider themselves to have average income	48.2	43.1	44.7	42.1	43.1	43.0	41.7	41.2	41.8	43.1	43.3	42.4	-1	-1	-6
The share of people who consider themselves to be poor and extremely poor	42.4	44.3	44.5	49.0	46.6	48.8	47.1	46.2	46.5	45.3	44.1	46.3	0	+2	+4
Consumer sentiment index															
Index value, points	105.9	89.6	91.5	77.7	84.6	86.7	87.3	89.2	90.3	92.2	89.2	89.2	+5	0	-17
* Question: "Which category do you belong to, in your opinion?"															

In nine out of fourteen socio-demographic groups there were no significant changes in social mood (more than by 2 p.p.). At the same time, it should be noted that in none of the categories in June – August 2018, there was any improvement in the emotional state (except for a slight increase (by 3 p.p.) in positive judgments about their mood among people who, according to their own assessments of their income belong to 60% of the middle-income residents of the region).

We should point out the deterioration of the social mood among those who by self-assessment of their income belong to the group of 20% of the poorest residents of the region. Over the past two months, the share of positive ratings in this category has decreased by 7 p.p. (from 60 to 53%). In general, the negative dynamics of the deterioration of the social mood in the poorest segments of the population has been observed since April 2018, that is, throughout the first months of V. Putin's fourth presidential term.

Social mood in different social groups (answer: "Good mood, normal condition", % of respondents)

Population group	2007	2011	2012	2016	2017	Oct. 2017	Dec. 2017	Feb. 2018	Apr. 2018	June 2018	Aug. 2018	Average for the latest 6 surveys	Dynamics (+/-), the latest 6 surveys compared to ...		
													2017	2011	2007
Sex															
Men	65.9	64.5	69.1	68.8	70.6	71.3	70.8	71.0	73.4	74.5	73.9	72.5	+2	+8	+7
Women	61.7	62.0	65.8	67.4	70.2	70.8	70.3	66.6	70.0	70.9	71.3	70.0	0	+8	+8
Age															
Under 30	71.3	70.0	72.3	76.4	78.1	79.4	82.2	74.2	79.6	81.3	77.9	79.1	+1	+9	+8
30-55	64.8	62.5	67.9	67.4	71.5	71.4	73.1	68.8	74.0	75.1	74.9	72.9	+1	+10	+8
Over 55	54.8	58.3	62.1	64.0	64.9	66.4	61.4	65.6	64.2	64.7	66.5	64.8	0	+7	+10
Education															
Secondary and incomplete secondary	58.4	57.4	57.2	62.1	63.6	63.3	61.2	60.5	65.5	64.8	66.5	63.6	0	+6	+5
Secondary vocational	64.6	63.6	66.7	68.4	72.0	73.3	75.0	68.9	72.7	74.9	72.6	72.9	+1	+9	+8
Higher and incomplete higher	68.6	68.3	77.0	74.3	75.8	77.1	75.6	77.9	76.2	77.4	78.4	77.1	+1	+9	+9
Income groups															
Bottom 20%	51.6	45.3	51.5	52.5	52.9	57.9	50.7	47.7	61.8	60.0	53.1	55.2	+2	+10	+4
Middle 60%	62.9	65.3	68.7	69.4	72.0	71.7	72.0	70.3	71.7	72.3	74.5	72.1	0	+7	+9
Top 20%	74.9	75.3	81.1	80.9	83.7	82.1	86.2	82.2	81.5	85.5	83.4	83.5	0	+8	+9
Territories															
Vologda	63.1	67.1	73.6	69.9	72.6	74.0	72.2	71.0	73.5	75.4	70.4	72.8	0	+6	+10
Cherepovets	68.1	71.2	76.2	71.7	75.7	76.9	75.2	71.5	75.0	76.7	79.1	75.7	0	+5	+8
Districts	61.6	57.1	59.8	64.8	66.1	66.1	66.9	65.6	68.3	68.6	69.8	67.6	+1	+10	+6
Oblast	63.6	63.1	67.3	68.0	70.4	71.1	70.5	68.6	71.5	72.5	72.5	71.1	+1	+8	+8

Conclusion

the results of sociological research conducted both at the territorial level and on a national scale make it possible to state unequivocally that the government's draft laws that were adopted or discussed in the first months of V. Putin's fourth presidential term do not find support among the general population or, in other words, do not comply with national interests. As a result, there is a decrease in the level of approval of the President's work; the assessment of his actions to solve the key problems of the country is deteriorating; people's dissatisfaction with the parties represented in Parliament is increasing; pessimistic sentiments about the prospects of the Russian economy and personal financial situation are growing; the most vulnerable categories of the population are less likely to experience positive emotions.

In principle, we can agree with the conclusions of experts from VTsIOM, who say that "the fluctuations in indicators are undulating and weak ... This situation is likely to continue until the end of the summer"³. However, in our opinion, it is difficult to conclude from such dynamics that "the situation has stabilized" and that the country has a "generally calm political situation"⁴.

The comparative analysis of the dynamics of public opinion in the first months of V. Putin's presidential terms shows that the current situation can be compared with the situation in 2004, one of the significant

³ Ratings of trust to politicians, approval of the work of state institutions, ratings of parties: VTsIOM press release, 2018, no. 3739, August 20. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=9257> (comment by M. Mamonov, head of the practice of political analysis and consulting of the Research Department).

⁴ Ibidem.

events of which was the discussion of the reform of monetization of benefits (we recall that the law itself, which provided for the replacement of benefits with monetary compensation, was signed by the President in August 2004⁵, although rallies against this reform began to take place already in July⁶). However, it should be noted that the internal socio-political situation in 2018 and 2004 has fundamental differences: 14 years ago, the country still faced the task of stabilizing the situation after the events of the 1990s, today the agenda declared by the authorities and supported by society is completely different.

In his Address to the Federal Assembly on March 1, 2018 and later in the May Decrees, the President set goals and objectives for the breakthrough development of the domestic political and economic situation in the country. Moreover, V. Putin has repeatedly stressed that for their implementation “there is no time to ramp-up”⁷. However, the achievement of these rather ambitious plans supported by the general public is impossible in the conditions of actual confrontation between the decisions taken by public authorities and public opinion.

In that situation which developed today, it is possible to speak only about more or less successful preservation of social stability in the country. Accordingly, in order for the dynamics of public sentiment to change its vector, we need radical changes in the ideology and direction of domestic public policy, although so far many experts⁸ find this highly unlikely.

We should also note that the negative dynamics of public opinion on many key issues are observed in the summer months of the year, that is, in the season of vacation and the works on one’s private subsidiary plots. However, if in the coming months the authorities do not draw the appropriate conclusions and make decisions that will find support of the population, we can only speculate about the assessments of public sentiment in the upcoming autumn-winter period, traditionally complicated by the deterioration of climatic conditions, the beginning of a new working cycle and seasonal increase in utility tariffs.

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⁵ Federal Law 122-FZ of August 22, 2004 “On amendments to legislative acts of the Russian Federation and the annulment of certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation in connection with the adoption of federal laws “On amendments and additions to Federal Law “On general principles of the organization of legislative (representative) and executive bodies of state power of the subjects of the Russian Federation” and “On general principles of the organization of local self-government in the Russian Federation”.

⁶ In particular, on July 29, a protest rally was held in Moscow against the draft law on the replacement of benefits with monetary compensation; the rally gathered about three thousand people.

The organizer of the meeting was the Union “Chernobyl” of Russia, but it was attended by representatives of other organizations and parties (Communist Party, LDPR, “Yabloko”, the Union of Right Forces, etc.). In general, the meeting in Moscow was attended by those who participated in the recovery from the Chernobyl disaster and came from many regions of Russia, including the Rostov, Tula, Belgorod, Tambov, Leningrad, Ivanovo, and Kaluga oblasts, Stavropol Krai, Bashkiria, and other regions. (Source: News.ru with reference to the Agency “Interfax”. Available at: <https://www.newsru.com/russia/29jul2004/miting.html>)

⁷ See, for example:

V.V. Putin’s inauguration speech, May 7, 2018. *Official website of the President of the Russian Federation*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57416>

Transcript of the Direct Line with Vladimir Putin, June 7, 2018. *Official website of the President of the Russian Federation*. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/57692>

⁸ See, for example:

Delyagin M. Russia is being lead to the same abyss as Ukraine. *Official website of the political news agency “Severo-Zapad”*. Available at: <http://www.apn-spb.ru/opinions/article27881.htm>

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Gorshkov M.K., Petukhov V. V. (Eds.). *Russian Society and the Challenges of the Time*. Book Four. Moscow: Ves’ mir, 2016. 400 p.