

# 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. The monitoring is conducted by VoIRC RAS in the Vologda Oblast<sup>1</sup>.

The following tables and graphs show the dynamics of several parameters of social well-being and socio-political sentiment of the region's population according to the results of the latest "wave" of the monitoring (February 2022) and for the period from April 2021 to February 2022 (the last six surveys, that is, almost a year).

We compare the results of the surveys with the average annual data for 2000 (the first year of Vladimir Putin's first presidential term), 2007 (the last year of Vladimir Putin's second presidential term, when the assessment of the President's work was the highest), 2011 (the last year of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency), and 2012 (the first year of Vladimir Putin's third presidential term).

We also provide yearly dynamics of the data for 2018–2021<sup>2</sup>.

During the period from December 2021 to February 2022, there was a decline in the share of positive judgments about the work of the RF President (by 3 p.p., from 51 to 48%).

Over the last 6 surveys (from April 2021 to February 2022), the share of positive assessments regarding the work of the head of state decreased by 4 p.p. (from 52 to 48%)<sup>3</sup>.

The level of approval of the work of the Chairman of the RF Government and the Governor of the Vologda Oblast remains generally stable (35–38%).

<sup>1</sup> The surveys 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 surveys is available at <http://www.vscs.ac.ru/>.

<sup>2</sup> In 2020, four "waves" of the monitoring were conducted. Surveys in April and June 2020 were not conducted due to quarantine restrictions during the spread of COVID-19.

<sup>3</sup> Hereinafter, the results of a comparative analysis of the data from the survey conducted in February 2022, and the results of a last-year monitoring "wave", conducted in April 2021, are given in the frame.

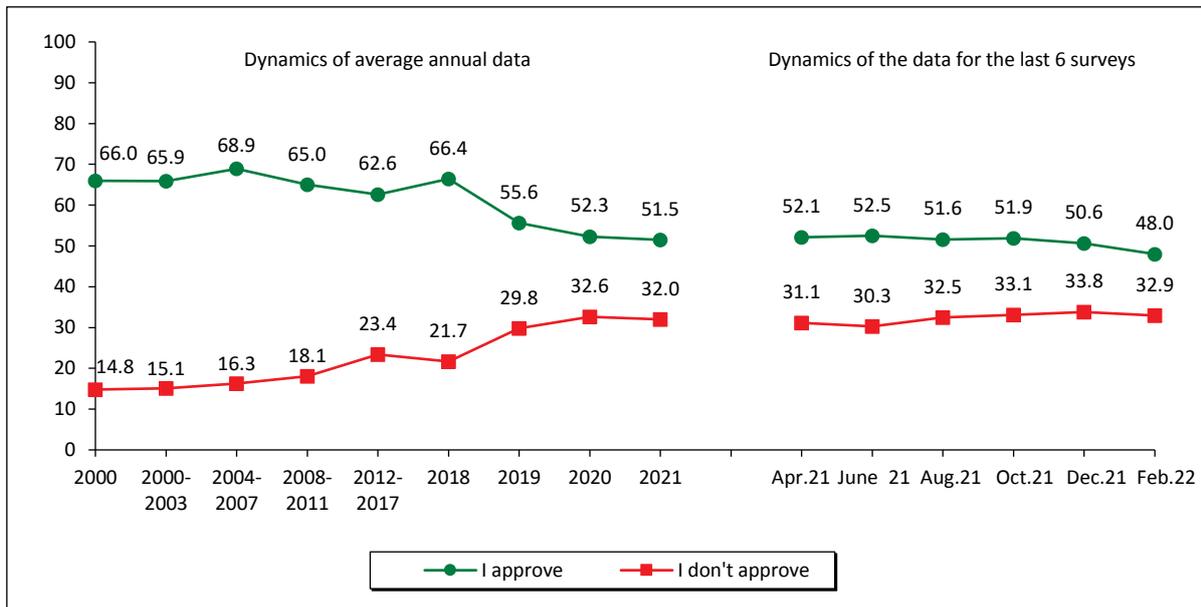
How do you assess the current performance of..? (% of respondents)

Answer option	Dynamics of average annual data								Dynamics of the data for the last 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Feb. 2022 to Apr. 2021
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Feb. 2022	
<b>RF President</b>															
I approve	66.0	75.3	58.7	51.7	66.4	55.6	52.3	51.5	52.1	52.5	51.6	51.9	50.6	48.0	-4
I don't approve	14.8	11.5	25.5	32.6	21.7	29.8	32.6	32.0	31.1	30.3	32.5	33.1	33.8	32.9	+2
<b>Chairman of the RF Government*</b>															
I approve	-*	-*	59.3	49.6	48.0	41.1	38.7	39.9	38.8	42.2	42.7	39.7	38.3	37.6	-1
I don't approve	-	-	24.7	33.3	31.6	38.4	40.4	37.6	38.3	35.1	36.0	38.3	38.9	37.7	-1
<b>Governor</b>															
I approve	56.1	55.8	45.7	41.9	38.4	35.7	35.0	36.7	36.3	37.8	38.6	37.5	35.9	33.9	-2
I don't approve	19.3	22.2	30.5	33.3	37.6	40.2	42.5	40.5	41.3	38.4	38.5	40.7	41.9	41.6	0

The wording of the question: "How do you assess the current work of ...?" According to the survey technique, sampling error does not exceed 3%, so hereinafter changes with a difference of 2 p.p. are not taken into account or are considered insignificant; they are highlighted in blue in the tables. Positive changes are highlighted in green, negative changes are highlighted in red.

\*Included in the survey since 2008.

How do you assess the current work of the RF President?(% of respondents, VoIRC RAS data)

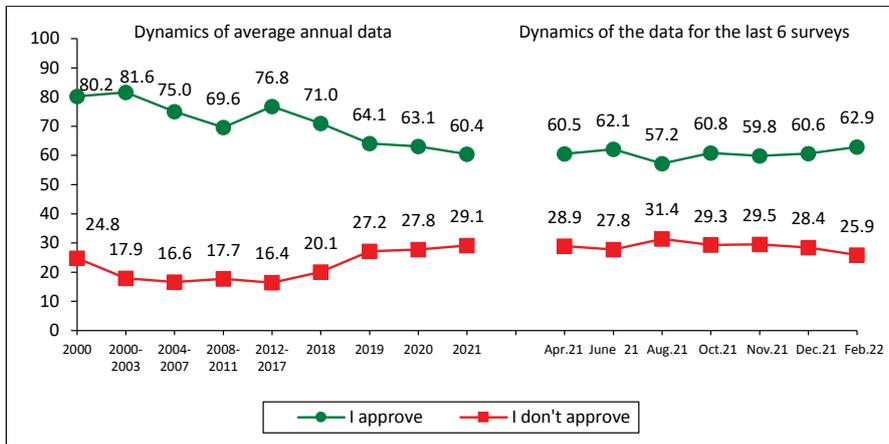


Hereinafter, all graphs show the average annual data for 2000, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, as well as the average annual data for the periods 2000–2003, 2004–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, corresponding to the presidential terms.

*For reference:*

*According to VCIOM, the level of approval of the RF President's work for the period from December 2021 to the beginning of February 2022 and in comparison with April 2021 did not change significantly (61–63%). The proportion of negative assessments over the last two months is 26–28%.*

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of the RF President? (% of respondents; VCIOM data)



Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
I approve	+2
I don't approve	-3

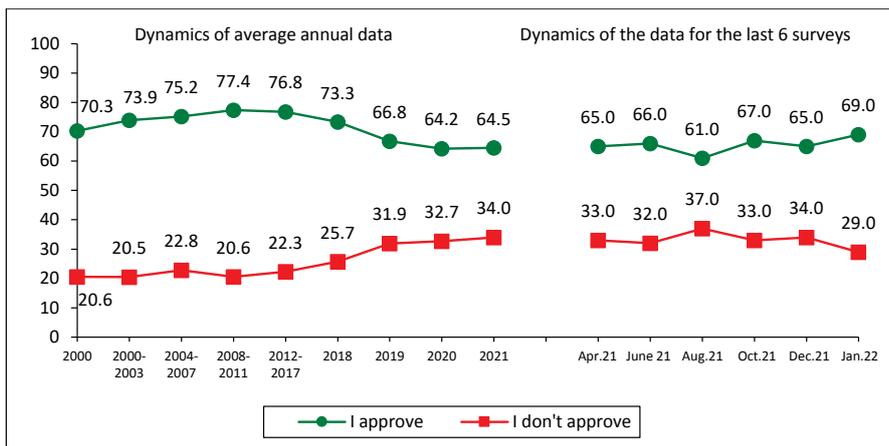
Question: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of the President of the Russian Federation?"

Data for February are given as of February 6, 2022.

Source: VCIOM. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/>

*According to the latest data by Levada-Center<sup>As</sup>, the share of positive assessments of the RF President's activities from December 2021 to January 2022 increased by 4 p.p. (from 65 to 69%); the share of negative assessments decreased by 5 p.p. (from 34 to 29%). Population estimates are slightly better than in April 2021.*

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia? (% of respondents; Levada-Center data)\*



Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
I approve	+4
I don't approve	-4

Question: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?"

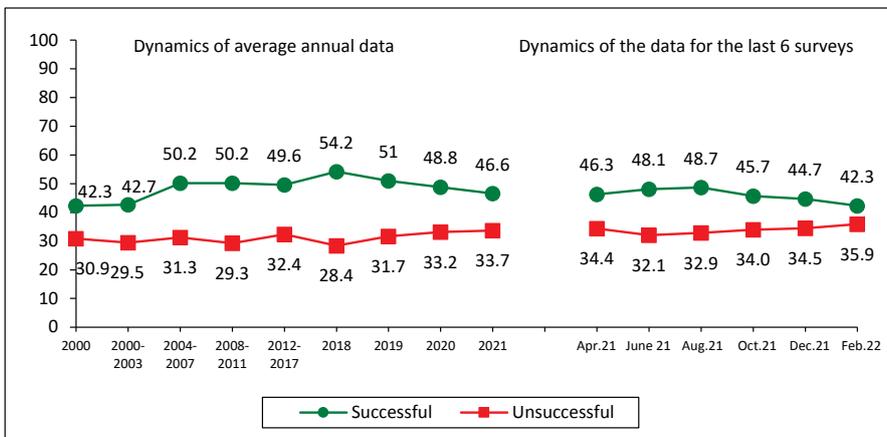
Source: Levada-Center\*. Indicators. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/indikator/>

Over the past 6 months (since August 2021), the share of people who consider the actions of the head of state aimed at strengthening Russia’s international positions to be successful continues to decline gradually. During this period, the share of positive assessments decreased by 7 p.p. (from 49 to 42%); over the past 2 months – by 3 p.p. (from 45 to 42%).

Over the past 6 surveys (since April 2021), the share of people who consider the actions of the head of state aimed to strengthen Russia’s international standing to be successful decreased by 4 p.p. (from 46 to 42%).

In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?  
(% of respondents; VolRC RAS data)

Strengthening Russia's international position

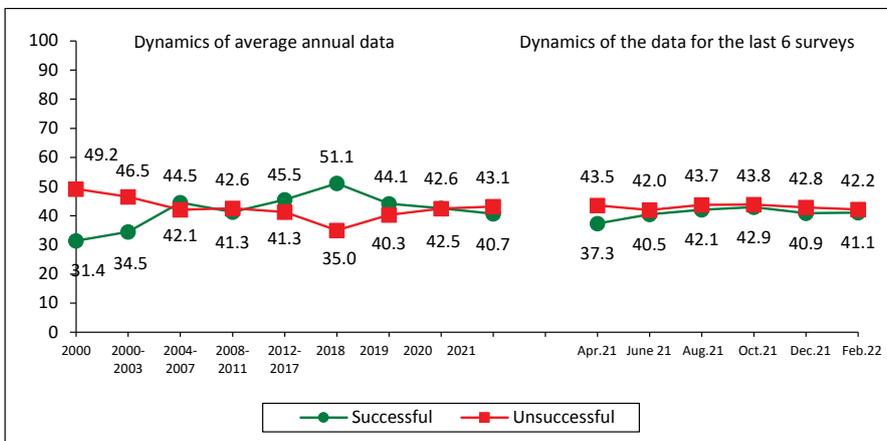


Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Successful	-4
Unsuccessful	+2

There have been no significant changes in the assessments of the success of the Russian President in dealing with the issue of imposing order in the country over the past two months: the share of positive judgments is 42%, negative – 41%.

Over the past 6 surveys, the share of positive assessments of the head of state’s work to impose order in the country has increased by 4 p.p. (from 37 to 41%).

Imposing order in the country

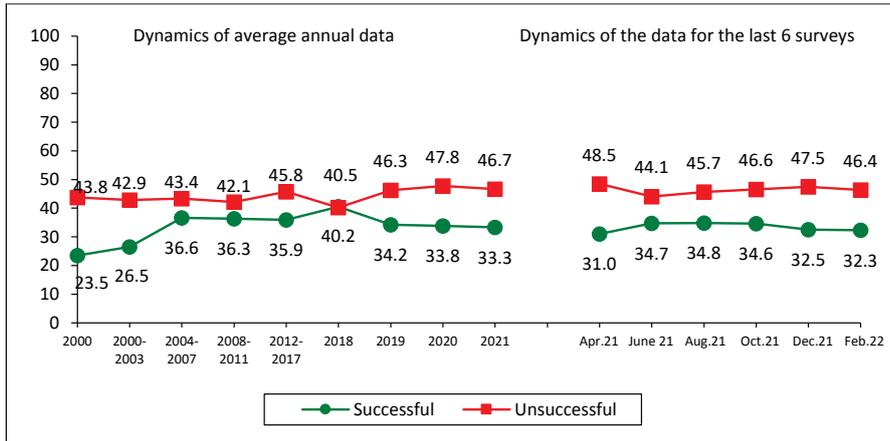


Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Successful	+4
Unsuccessful	-1

The share of Vologda Oblast inhabitants who think that the RF President successfully fulfills the task to protect democracy and strengthen the freedoms of citizens in December 2021 – February 2022 was 32% (the proportion of negative judgements was 46–47%).

Compared to April 2021, there are no significant changes in the assessments of public opinion on this issue.

**Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens' freedoms**

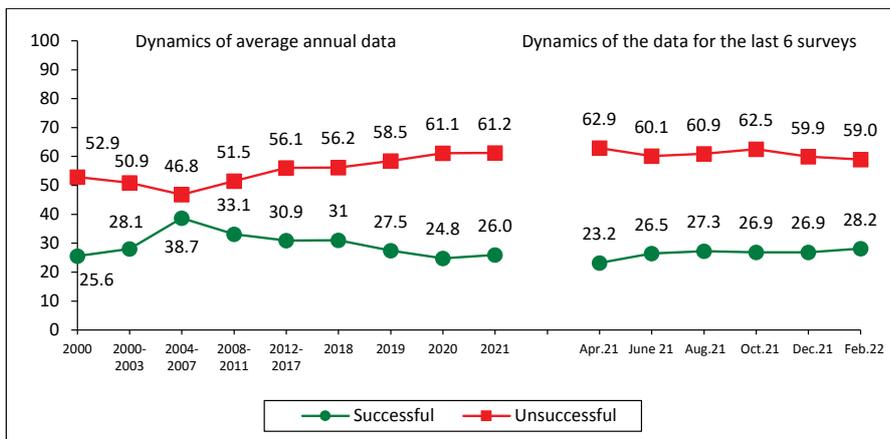


Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Successful	+1
Unsuccessful	-2

As in December 2021, 27–28% of Vologda Oblast residents positively assess the President’s work to boost the economy and increase the welfare of citizens.

At the same time, from April 2021 to February 2022, the proportion of those who share this opinion increased by 5 p.p. (from 23 to 28%).

**Economic recovery and increase in citizens' welfare**



Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Successful	+5
Unsuccessful	-4

The structure of political preferences of Vologda Oblast residents remains stable: the share of people whose interests are expressed by the United Russia party is 31–32%, the Communist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party – 9–10% each, the Just Russia party – 6%.

Compared to April 2021, there were no significant changes in the structure of political preferences in February 2022.

From December 2021 to February 2022, the share of Vologda Oblast residents who believe that none of the political parties represented in parliament expresses their interests or who found it difficult to choose their political preferences increased slightly (by 3 p.p., from 39 to 42%).

Which party expresses your interests? (% of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)

Party	Dynamics of average annual data											Dynamics of the data for the last 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Feb. 2022 to Apr. 2021	
	2000	2007	2011	Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact	2012	2016	Election to the RF State Duma 2016, fact	2018	2019	2020	Election to the RF State Duma 2020, fact	2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021		Feb. 2022
United Russia	18.5	30.2	31.1	33.4	29.1	35.4	38.0	37.9	33.8	31.5	49.8	31.7	31.5	32.1	31.7	32.7	31.9	31.1	0
KPRF	11.5	7.0	10.3	16.8	10.6	8.3	14.2	9.2	8.8	8.4	18.9	9.3	8.7	8.1	9.3	11.1	10.5	9.5	+1
LDPR	4.8	7.5	7.8	15.4	7.8	10.4	21.9	9.6	9.1	9.5	7.6	9.9	9.9	8.5	9.9	11.2	9.9	9.4	-1
Just Russia – Patriots for the Truth	-	7.8	5.6	27.2	6.6	4.2	10.8	2.9	3.4	4.7	7.5	4.7	2.6	4.1	5.3	6.3	6.0	5.7	+3
New People*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	2.3	-	-	-	-	2.3	1.6	-
Other	0.9	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	0.3	-	0.7	0.3	0.5	-	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.7	+1
None	29.6	17.8	29.4	-	31.3	29.4	-	28.5	33.7	34.2	-	33.9	36.4	35.4	34.1	31.7	29.6	32.4	-4
I find it difficult to answer	20.3	21.2	13.2	-	11.7	12.0	-	11.2	11.0	11.1	-	10.0	10.9	11.8	9.6	6.6	9.7	9.6	-1

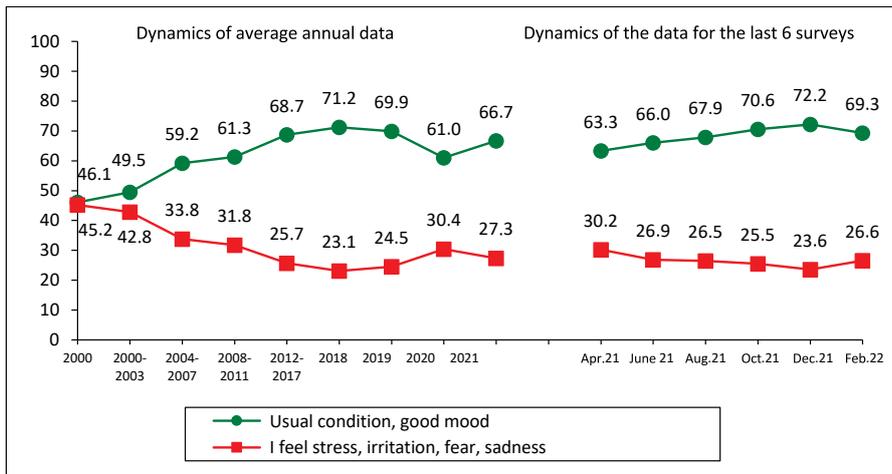
\* The New People party was elected to the State Duma of the Russian Federation for the first time following the results of the election held on September 17–19, 2021.

In December 2021 – February 2022, the assessments of social well-being became worse. The proportion of those who positively characterize their daily emotional state decreased by 3 p.p. (from 72 to 69%).

Nevertheless, at the beginning of 2022, social mood assessments are better than in April 2021 (over the past 6 surveys, the share of positive judgments increased by 6 p.p., from 63 to 69%).

**Estimation of social condition (% of respondents; VoIRC RAS data)**

**Social mood**

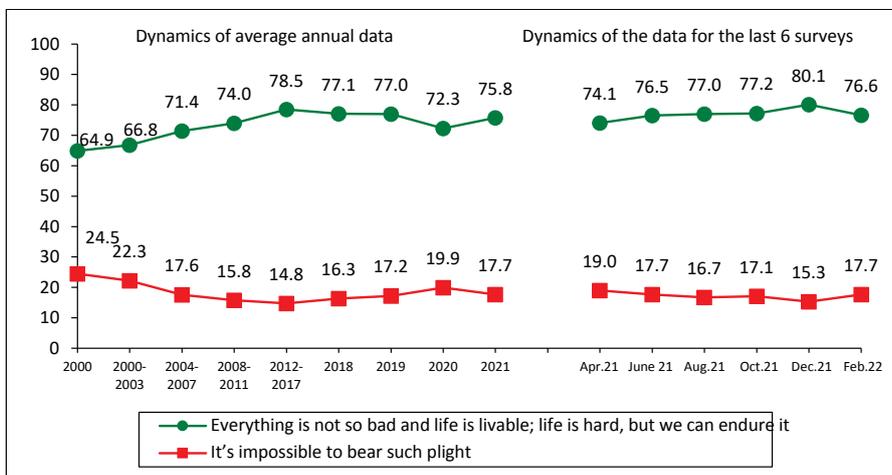


Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Usual condition, good mood	+6
I feel stress, irritation, fear, sadness	-4

During the period from December 2021 to February 2022, no positive changes in social mood assessments were observed in any of the main socio-demographic groups.

At the same time, in 7 out of 14 groups, the proportion of people describing their mood as “good, normal” has decreased over the past 2 months, especially among men (by 6 p.p., from 72 to 66%); persons under the age of 30 (by 7 p.p., from 82 to 75%), and people with higher and incomplete higher education (by 6 p.p., from 78 to 72%).

**Stock of patience**

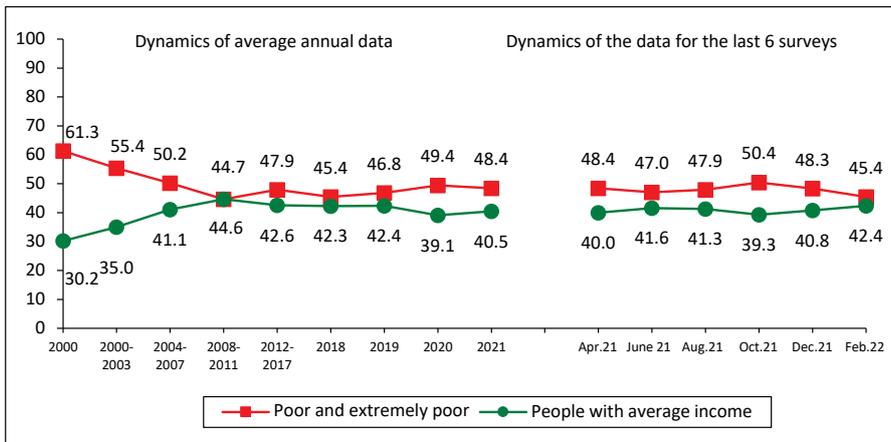


Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
Everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it	+3
It's impossible to bear such plight	-1

Since October 2021, the proportion of Vologda Oblast residents identifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” has been gradually decreasing. From April 2021 to February 2022, as well as over the past two months, their share decreased by 3 p.p. (from 48 to 45%).

The proportion of the “poor and extremely poor” at the beginning of 2022 is slightly less than in April 2021 (by 3 p.p.), although their share still exceeds the proportion of those who subjectively consider themselves to have average income (42%).

Social self-identification



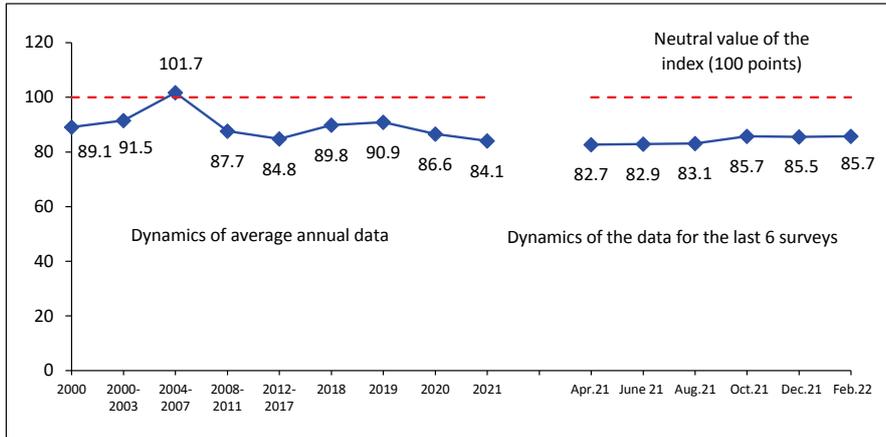
Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
Answer option	Dynamics (+ /-)
People with average income	+2
Poor and extremely poor	-3

Question: “Which category do you belong to, in your opinion?”

The consumer sentiment index has remained stable (86 p.) since October 2021.

This is slightly higher than in April 2021 (83%), but it is still significantly below the neutral level (100 p.), which indicates the predominance of pessimistic expectations about the future of the Russian economy and one’s own financial situation in people’s estimates.

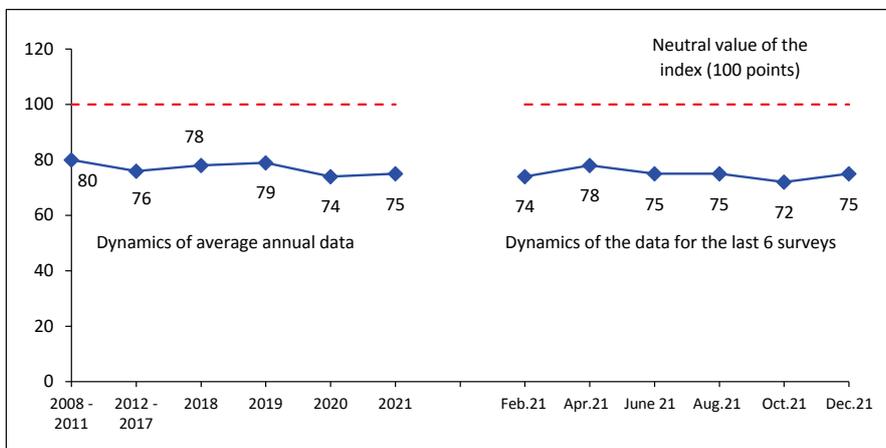
Consumer sentiment index (CSI, points; data of VoIRC RAS for the Vologda Oblast)



Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
CSI	Dynamics (+ /-)
Index value, points	+3

For reference: according to the latest data by Levada-Center\*, the nationwide consumer sentiment index from October to December 2021 increased by 3 points (from 72 to 75 p.); compared to April 2021, it decreased by 3 p. (from 78 to 75 p.).

Consumer sentiment index (CSI; Levada-Center data\* for Russia)



Dynamics for the last 6 surveys (February 2022 to April 2021)	
CSI	Dynamics (+ /-)
Index value, points	-3

The index is calculated since 2008.

Latest data are as of December 2021. There are no data for the period from April to August 2020.

Source: Levada-Center\*. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru/indikator/sotsialno-ekonomicheskie-indikator/>

\* Listed on the register of foreign agents.

During the period from December 2021 to February 2022, no positive changes in social mood assessments were observed in any of the main socio-demographic groups.

At the same time, in 7 out of 14 groups, the proportion of people describing their mood as “good, normal” has decreased over the past 2 months, especially among men (by 6 p.p., from 72 to 66%); persons under the age of 30 (by 7 p.p., from 82 to 75%), and people with higher and incomplete higher education (by 6 p.p., from 78 to 72%).

Over the past 6 surveys (from April 2021 to February 2022), social mood assessments have improved by 5–10 p.p. in all socio-demographic groups.

Social mood in different social groups (answer option “Wonderful mood, normal, stable condition”, % of respondents; VolRC RAS data)

Population group	Dynamics of average annual data								Dynamics of the data for the last 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Feb. 2022 to Apr. 2021
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	Apr. 2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Feb. 2022	
<b>Sex</b>															
Men	50.1	65.9	64.5	69.1	72.8	70.1	60.8	65.7	61.3	65.1	65.6	70.0	71.5	65.5	+4
Women	43.3	61.7	62.0	65.8	69.8	69.6	61.2	67.4	64.9	66.7	69.8	70.9	72.8	72.3	+7
<b>Age</b>															
Under 30	59.1	71.3	70.0	72.3	80.0	81.1	67.6	73.5	67.4	73.0	82.3	75.3	81.9	75.3	+8
30–55	44.2	64.8	62.5	67.9	72.6	71.2	61.8	69.5	65.5	70.0	71.4	70.8	75.1	70.7	+5
Over 55	37.4	54.8	58.3	62.1	65.2	63.3	57.4	60.5	59.1	58.3	58.1	68.3	65.2	65.3	+6
<b>Education</b>															
Secondary and incomplete secondary	41.7	58.4	57.4	57.2	64.8	63.2	56.1	62.1	56.9	62.5	63.2	64.1	69.7	68.7	+12
Secondary vocational	46.4	64.6	63.6	66.7	72.2	72.7	63.5	66.7	64.3	66.1	68.5	70.4	70.1	68.3	+4
Higher and incomplete higher	53.3	68.6	68.3	77.0	76.8	73.4	63.3	71.5	68.7	69.7	73.0	77.1	77.6	71.5	+3
<b>Income groups</b>															
Bottom 20%	28.4	51.6	45.3	51.5	57.3	53.2	43.4	54.6	49.8	54.2	55.0	60.4	64.0	60.5	+11
Middle 60%	45.5	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	71.4	62.6	67.3	65.8	67.0	68.9	70.9	71.1	68.8	+3
Top 20%	64.6	74.9	75.3	81.1	82.9	81.8	75.6	79.9	70.8	76.5	86.7	84.2	85.3	81.5	+11
<b>Territories</b>															
Vologda	49.2	63.1	67.1	73.6	71.0	68.6	60.9	60.3	57.0	59.4	59.7	64.0	65.7	63.2	+6
Cherepovets	50.8	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.8	71.2	60.4	71.0	68.1	70.8	72.3	75.2	75.1	72.6	+5
Districts	42.2	61.6	57.1	59.8	68.7	69.8	61.4	67.8	64.0	67.1	70.1	71.5	74.2	70.8	+7
Oblast	46.2	63.6	63.1	67.3	71.2	69.9	61.0	66.6	63.3	66.0	67.9	70.5	72.2	69.3	+6

## RESUME

The results of the regular “wave” of public opinion monitoring conducted in early 2022 indicate a slight decrease in the level of people’s approval of the RF President’s work (by 3 p.p., from 51 to 48%), as well as a deterioration in social well-being assessments (the proportion of people experiencing positive emotions has decreased by 3 p.p. over the past 2 months, from 72 to 69%; the proportion of those who believe that “everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it” has also decreased by 3 p.p., from 80 to 77%).

These negative changes could be influenced by several factors: the absence of tangible positive changes in the dynamics of living standards<sup>4</sup>, deterioration of the epidemiological situation due to the spread of the Omicron variant of coronavirus; the growing international political tension accompanied by events such as the political crisis in Kazakhstan, escalation of anti-Russian sentiment in connection with the alleged impending military invasion of Russia on the territory of Ukraine, etc.

It is possible that the widespread media coverage of the events taking place in the international political arena has contributed to the fact that over the past two months there has been a decline in positive assessments regarding the success of the Russian President’s efforts aimed to strengthen Russia’s international standing (by 3 p.p., from 45 to 42%); social mood deteriorated especially among men (by 6 p.p., from 72 to 66%), persons under the age of 30 (by 7 p.p., from 82 to 75%), and people with higher and incomplete higher education (by 6 p.p., from 78 to 72%).

However, we observe positive changes in the dynamics of assessing the standard of living and quality of life, which is most likely due to specific measures taken by the authorities to support the population during the pandemic.

The share of “the poor and extremely poor” from December 2021 to February 2022, as well as over the last 6 surveys (since April 2021) decreased by 3 p.p. (from 48 to 45%).

The consumer sentiment index has not changed over the past two months and amounted to 86 points, but it has increased compared to April 2021 (by 3 points, from 83 to 86 points) and the average annual data for 2021 (by 2 points, from 84 to 86 points).

The share of people who consider that the efforts undertaken by the head of state to boost the economy and increase the welfare of citizens are successful has increased slightly. In April 2021, 23% of Vologda Oblast inhabitants shared this point of view, while in February 2022 their proportion increased by 5 p.p. (from 23 to 28%). For comparison, their share was 25–26% in 2020–2021.

Thus, the results of the latest stage of the monitoring suggest that at the beginning of 2022, the deterioration of public opinion assessments on certain key indicators (attitude toward the work of the RF President, social well-being) is primarily due to the tense geopolitical situation that is directly related to the Russian Federation. There are no negative changes in the estimates of the dynamics of the standard of living and quality of life; and this, of course, is an important positive moment in the general characteristics of social attitudes that have developed at the beginning of the year.

Nevertheless, we should note that the share of people identifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” inhabitants of the Vologda Oblast is still higher than the proportion of middle-income people (45 and 42%, respectively), and the consumer sentiment index continues to remain below 100 points, indicating

<sup>4</sup> In November 2021, the real wage in the Vologda Oblast amounted to 99.5% compared to October; the consumer price index was 100.6% (Source: *Socio-Economic Situation in the Vologda Oblast in 2021 (2022): Report*. Vologdastat. Vologda. P. 69.

**the predominance of negative forecasts regarding the prospects for development of the economic situation in the country and one's own financial situation.**

**This suggests that the stability achieved in the assessments of public opinion about the dynamics of the financial situation is still insufficient; thus, it is necessary to continue implementing active measures to maintain the standard of living not only for socially vulnerable groups, but also for the wider population.**

Materials were prepared by M.V. Morev, I.M. Bakhvalova