

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 Oblast¹.

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 (April 2022) and for the period from June 2021 to April 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 2018–2021².

During the period from February to April 2022, the level of approval of the RF President's work increased by 8 p.p. (from 48 to 56%). The share of Vologda Oblast residents who positively assess the work of the Chairman of the RF Government increased by 6 p.p. (from 38 to 44%), the Vologda Oblast Governor – by 4 p.p. (from 34 to 38%).

Over the last 6 surveys (from June 2021 to April 2022), the share of positive assessments regarding the work of the head of state increased by 3 p.p. (from 53 to 56%); The level of approval of the work of the Chairman of the RF Government and the Governor of the Vologda Oblast did not see any significant changes (43 and 38% respectively)³.

¹ 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/>.

² 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.

³ Hereinafter, the results of a comparative analysis of the data from the survey conducted in April 2022 and the results of the monitoring "wave" conducted in June 2021 are given in the frame.

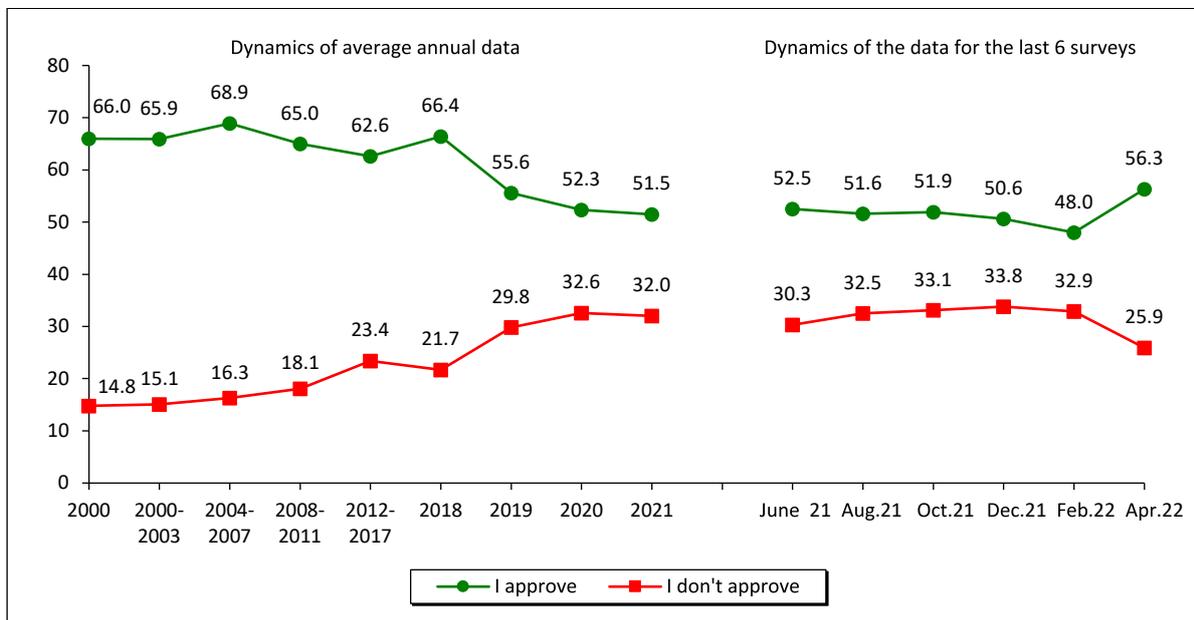
How do you assess the current performance of..? (% of respondents)

Answer option	Dynamics of average annual data								Dynamics of the data for the last 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Apr. 2022 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Feb. 2022	Apr. 2022	June 2021	Feb. 2022
RF President																
I approve	66.0	75.3	58.7	51.7	66.4	55.6	52.3	51.5	52.5	51.6	51.9	50.6	48.0	56.3	+4	+8
I don't approve	14.8	11.5	25.5	32.6	21.7	29.8	32.6	32.0	30.3	32.5	33.1	33.8	32.9	25.9	-4	-7
Chairman of the RF Government*																
I approve	-*	-*	59.3	49.6	48.0	41.1	38.7	39.9	42.2	42.7	39.7	38.3	37.6	43.6	+1	+6
I don't approve	-	-	24.7	33.3	31.6	38.4	40.4	37.6	35.1	36.0	38.3	38.9	37.7	32.5	-3	-5
Vologda Oblast Governor																
I approve	56.1	55.8	45.7	41.9	38.4	35.7	35.0	36.7	37.8	38.6	37.5	35.9	33.9	38.2	0	+4
I don't approve	19.3	22.2	30.5	33.3	37.6	40.2	42.5	40.5	38.4	38.5	40.7	41.9	41.6	37.3	-1	-4

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)



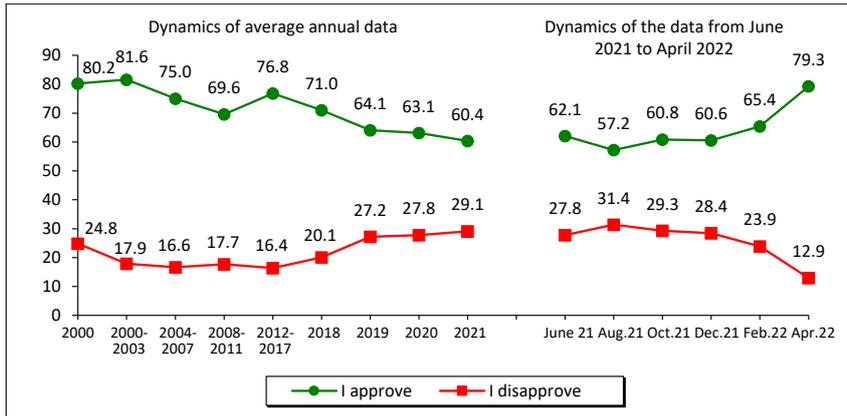
Hereinafter, all graphs show the average annual data for 2000, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, as well as the average annual data for the periods 2000–2003, 2004–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, corresponding to the presidential terms.

For reference:

According to VCIOM, the level of approval of the RF President’s work increased by 14 p.p. over the past two months (from 65 to 79%). The share of negative assessments decreased by 11 p.p. (from 24 to 13%).

Positive changes were observed in April 2022 compared to June 2021: the share of positive assessments of the work of the head of state increased by 17 p.p. (from 62 to 79%), the proportion of negative ones decreased by 15 p.p. (from 28 to 13%).

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



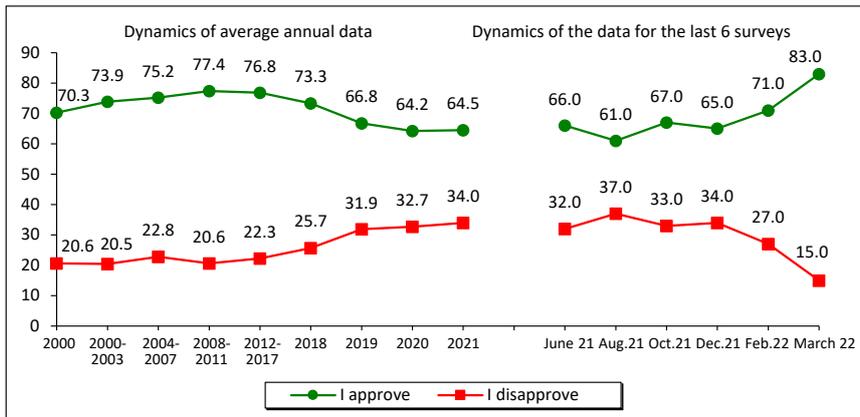
Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
I approve	+17	+14
I disapprove	-15	-11

Question: “In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of the President of the Russian Federation?”
Data for April 2022 – average for two surveys: on April 3, 2022 and April 10, 2022.
Source: VCIOM. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/>

According to Levada-Center, the share of positive assessments of the RF President’s work in the period from February to April 2022 increased by 12 p.p. (from 71 to 83%), the share of negative assessments decreased by 12 p.p. (from 27 to 15%).*

Compared to June 2021, the level of approval of the activities of the head of state increased by 17 p.p. (from 66 to 83%); the proportion of negative judgements decreased by 17 p.p. (from 32 to 15%).

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



Dynamics (+/-), March 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
I approve	+17	+12
I disapprove	-17	-12

Question: “In general, do you approve or disapprove of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?”
Source: Levada-Center*. Available at: <https://www.levada.ru>
* Included in the register of foreign agents.

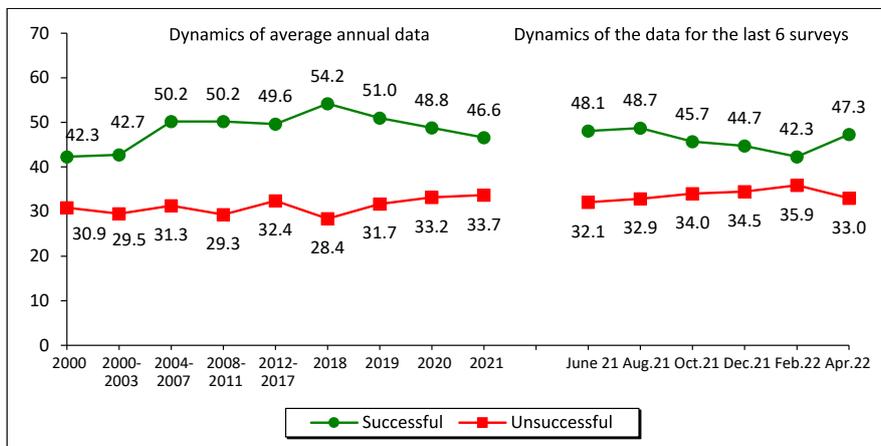
* Included in the register of foreign agents.

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

Over the past two months, the share of those who consider the RF President’s work to strengthen Russia’s international positions to be successful increased significantly (by 5 p.p., from 42 to 47%). The proportion of those who hold the opposite point of view decreased by 3 p.p. (from 36 to 33%).

Compared to June 2021, there were no significant changes in the assessments of the RF President’s success in addressing the problem of strengthening Russia’s international position.

Strengthening Russia’s international position

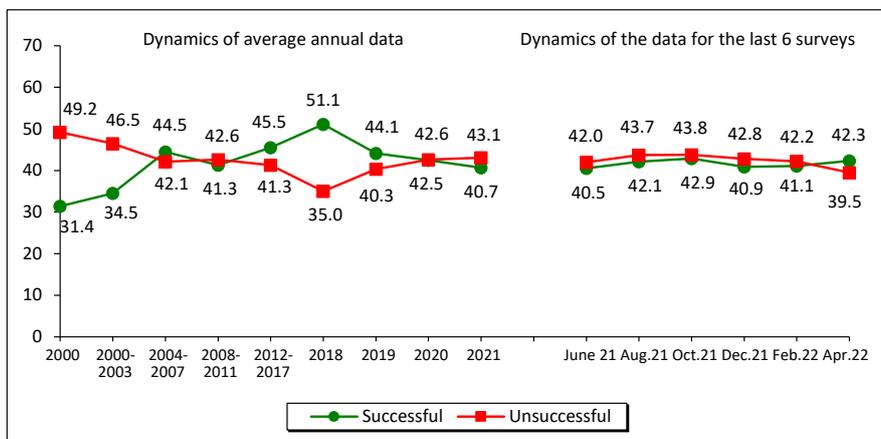


Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Successful	-1	+5
Unsuccessful	+1	-3

In February – April 2022, the share of Vologda Oblast residents who positively assess the work of the head of state to impose order in the country did not change significantly and amounted to 41–42%.

The same can be said about the comparison of the results of the survey conducted in April 2022 with the results of the “wave” of the monitoring conducted in June 2021.

Imposing order in the country

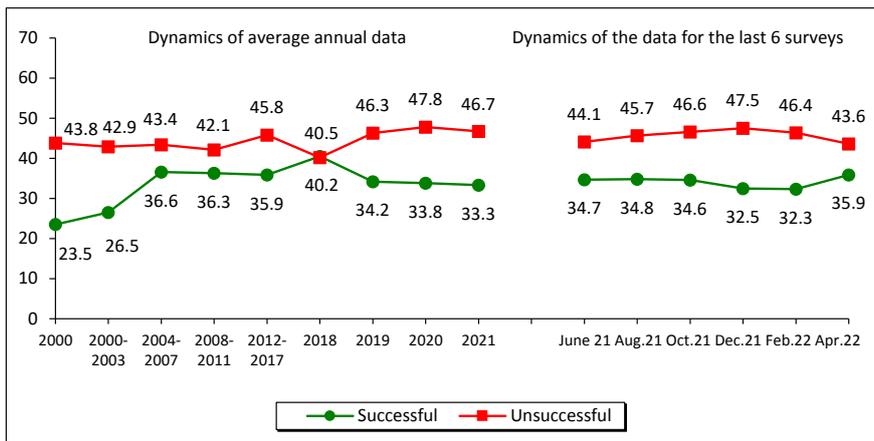


Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Successful	+2	+1
Unsuccessful	-3	-3

Positive changes over the past two months were noted in the dynamics of people’s assessments of the RF President’s success in protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms. During this period, the share of positive judgments increased by 4 p.p. (from 32 to 36%), and the proportion of negative assessments decreased by 2 p.p. (from 46 to 44%).

Over the last 6 surveys (from June 2021 to April 2022), there were no significant changes in the estimates of the population.

Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms

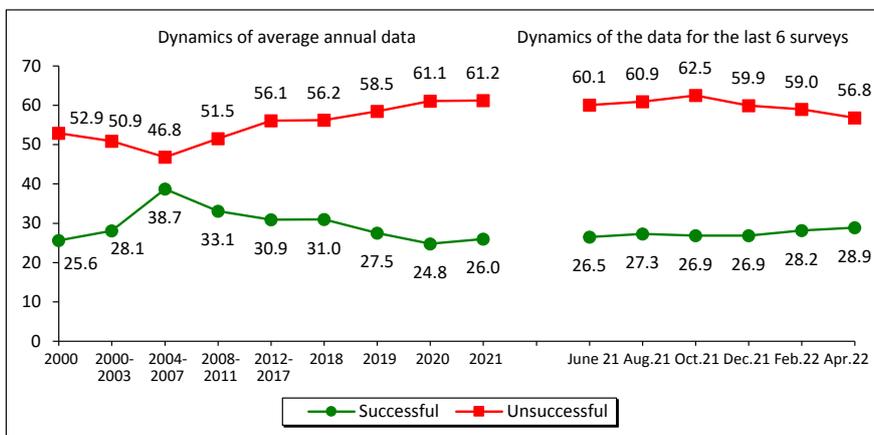


Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Successful	+1	+4
Unsuccessful	-1	-3

The assessment of the success of the President’s work to boost the economy and increase the welfare of citizens in February – April 2022 did not change significantly. The share of positive judgments was 28–29%, negative – 57–59%.

The dynamics of population estimates over the past 6 surveys looks a little more positive. From June 2021 to April 2022, the proportion of positive assessments was 27–29%, negative – decreased by 3 p.p. (from 60 to 57%).

Economic recovery and increase in citizens’ welfare



Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Successful	+2	+1
Unsuccessful	-3	-2

The dynamics of political preferences of the region’s residents over the past two months show a slight increase in support for the United Russia party (by 3 p.p., from 31 to 34%).

Other than that, the structure of political preferences has not changed. In particular, there still remains a high proportion of people who believe that none of the political parties represented in parliament expresses their interests, or who find it difficult to choose their political preferences (41%).

Compared to June 2021, the share of supporters of parliamentary parties has not changed. However, we should note that during this period the proportion of those who are not satisfied with any of the political forces represented in the State Duma has significantly decreased (by 4 p.p., from 35 to 31%).

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

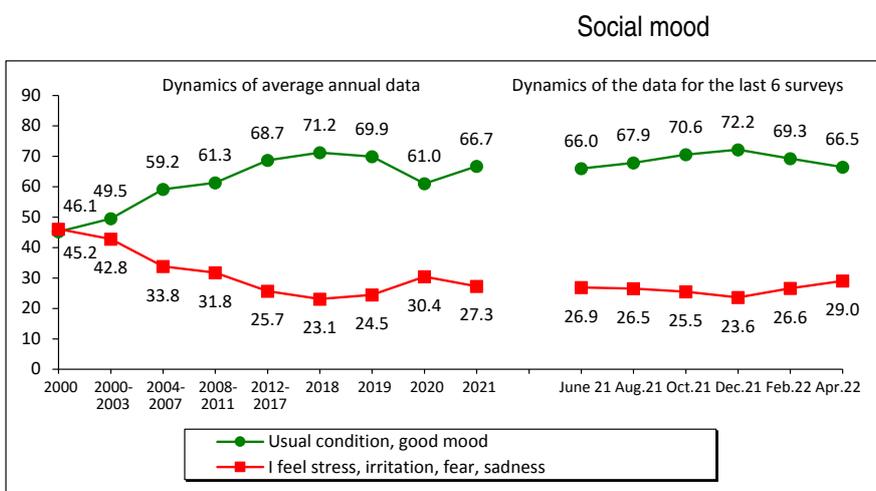
Party	Dynamics of average annual data												Dynamics of the data for the last 6 surveys						Dynamics (+/-), Apr. 2022 to	
	2000	2007	2011	Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact	2012	2016	Election to the RF State Duma 2016, fact	2018	2019	2020	Election to the RF State Duma 2020, fact	2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Feb. 2022	Apr. 2022	June 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	32.1	31.7	32.7	31.9	31.1	34.2	+2	+3
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	8.1	9.3	11.1	10.5	9.5	11.2	+3	+2
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	8.5	9.9	11.2	9.9	9.4	7.7	-1	-2
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	4.1	5.3	6.3	6.0	5.7	4.5	0	-1
New People*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	2.3	-	-	-	2.3	1.6	1.3	-	0
Other	0.9	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	0.3	-	0.7	0.3	0.5	-	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.3	0	0
None	29.6	17.8	29.4	-	31.3	29.4	-	28.5	33.7	34.2	-	33.9	35.4	34.1	31.7	29.6	32.4	30.8	-5	-2
I find it difficult to answer	20.3	21.2	13.2	-	11.7	12.0	-	11.2	11.0	11.1	-	10.0	11.8	9.6	6.6	9.7	9.6	10.0	-2	0

* 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 April 2022, the proportion of people who characterize their emotional state as being positive continued to decrease. In December 2021, it was 72%, in February 2022 – 69%, in April – 67%. The proportion of residents who “feel stress, irritation, fear, sadness” increased by 5 p.p. over the same period (from 24 to 29%).

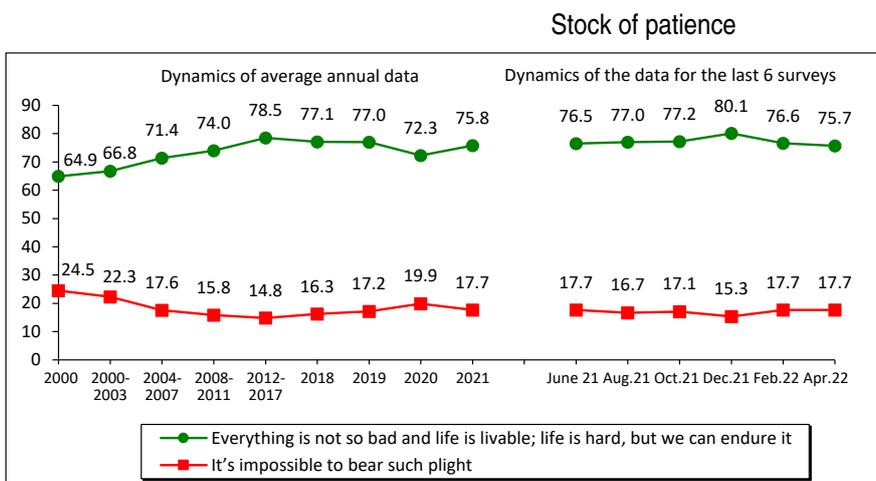
At the same time, estimates of social mood still correspond to the level of June 2021. Over the past 6 surveys, the share of positive characteristics has not changed and amounts to 66–67%; the proportion of negative ones is 27–29%.

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



Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Usual condition, good mood	+1	-3
I feel stress, irritation, fear, sadness	+2	+2

The indicators of the stock of patience in April 2022 remain stable compared to February 2022 and to June 2021: the proportion of people who believe that “everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it” is 76%, the proportion of those who believe that “it’s impossible to bear such plight” is 18%.

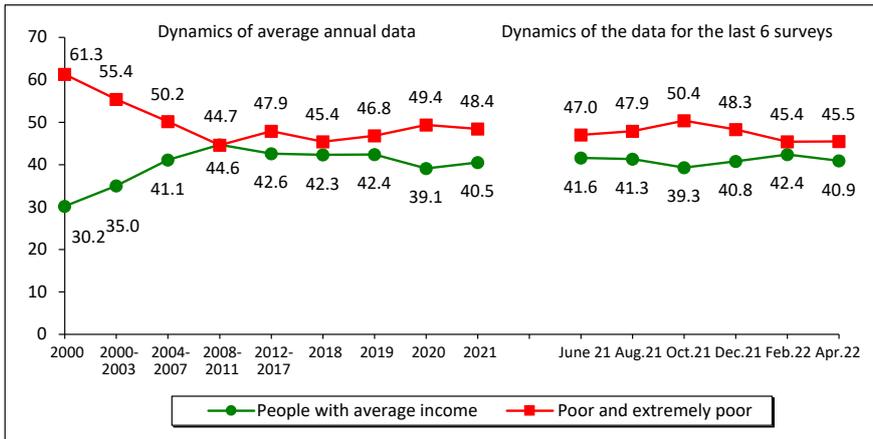


Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
Everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it	-1	-1
It's impossible to bear such plight	0	0

In February – April 2022, the proportion of people subjectively classifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” did not change and amounted to 45%; this is slightly more than the proportion of those who classify themselves as “people with middle income” (41–42%).

Over the last 6 surveys (from June 2021 to April 2022), residents’ estimates have not changed significantly.

Social self-identification



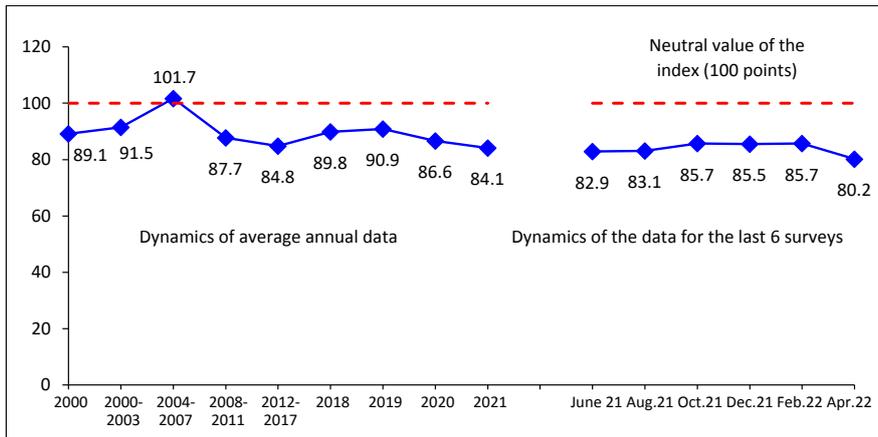
Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
Answer option	June 2021	February 2022
People with average income	-1	-2
Poor and extremely poor	-2	0

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

Over the past two months, the consumer sentiment index has significantly decreased (by 6 p.p., from 86 to 80 points), which indicates a deterioration in people’s forecasts regarding the future economic situation in the country and their personal financial situation.

Compared to June 2021, the situation has deteriorated: the consumer sentiment index decreased by 3 points (from 83 to 80 p.).

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

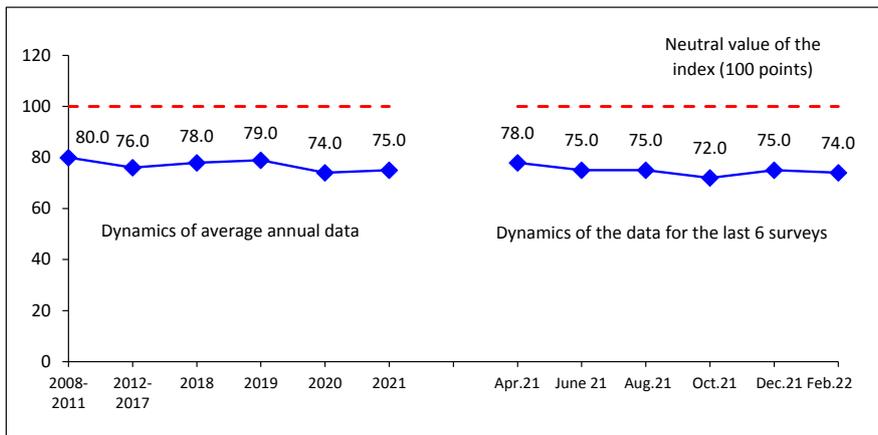


Dynamics (+/-), April 2022 to		
CSI	June 2021	February 2022
Index value, points	-3	-6

For reference:

According to the latest data from Levada-Center* (as of February 2022), the consumer sentiment index nationwide amounted to 74 points, which approximately corresponds to the level of December 2021 and also to the data for June 2021.

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



Изменение (+/-), февраль 2022 г. к		
CSI	June 2021	December 2021
Index value, points	-1	-1

The index is calculated since 2008.

Latest data are as of February 2022. There are no data for the period from April to August 2020.

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

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

In the period from February to April 2022, the share of positive assessments of social mood decreased in 8 of the 14 main socio-demographic groups. The most negative changes are observed among women (by 7 p.p., from 72 to 65%), as well as among people over the age of 55 (by 10 p.p., from 65 to 55%).

The only group in which the assessments social mood have improved over the past two months are people under the age of 30, among whom the share of positive social mood assessments has increased by 7 p.p. (from 75 to 82%).

Over the past 6 surveys (from June 2021 to April 2022), positive dynamics of social mood have been observed in five socio-demographic groups (especially among people under the age of 30, as well as among the least affluent 20%). In three groups, the proportion of those who characterize their mood as “fine, normal, good” decreased (persons over 55 years old; people with higher and incomplete higher education; 60% with the middle income).

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 (+/-), Apr. 2022 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	June 2021	Aug. 2021	Oct. 2021	Dec. 2021	Feb. 2022	Apr. 2022	June 2021	Feb. 2022
Sex																
Men	50.1	65.9	64.5	69.1	72.8	70.1	60.8	65.7	65.1	65.6	70.0	71.5	65.5	68.3	+3	+3
Women	43.3	61.7	62.0	65.8	69.8	69.6	61.2	67.4	66.7	69.8	70.9	72.8	72.3	65.1	-2	-7
Age																
Under 30	59.1	71.3	70.0	72.3	80.0	81.1	67.6	73.5	73.0	82.3	75.3	81.9	75.3	81.8	+9	+7
30–55	44.2	64.8	62.5	67.9	72.6	71.2	61.8	69.5	70.0	71.4	70.8	75.1	70.7	71.1	+1	0
Over 55	37.4	54.8	58.3	62.1	65.2	63.3	57.4	60.5	58.3	58.1	68.3	65.2	65.3	55.2	-3	-10
Education																
Secondary and incomplete secondary	41.7	58.4	57.4	57.2	64.8	63.2	56.1	62.1	62.5	63.2	64.1	69.7	68.7	63.0	+1	-6
Secondary vocational	46.4	64.6	63.6	66.7	72.2	72.7	63.5	66.7	66.1	68.5	70.4	70.1	68.3	69.8	+4	+2
Higher and incomplete higher	53.3	68.6	68.3	77.0	76.8	73.4	63.3	71.5	69.7	73.0	77.1	77.6	71.5	66.9	-3	-5
Income groups																
Bottom 20%	28.4	51.6	45.3	51.5	57.3	53.2	43.4	54.6	54.2	55.0	60.4	64.0	60.5	61.5	+7	+1
Middle 60%	45.5	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	71.4	62.6	67.3	67.0	68.9	70.9	71.1	68.8	64.2	-3	-5
Top 20%	64.6	74.9	75.3	81.1	82.9	81.8	75.6	79.9	76.5	86.7	84.2	85.3	81.5	81.9	+5	0
Territories																
Vologda	49.2	63.1	67.1	73.6	71.0	68.6	60.9	60.3	59.4	59.7	64.0	65.7	63.2	60.2	+1	-3
Cherepovets	50.8	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.8	71.2	60.4	71.0	70.8	72.3	75.2	75.1	72.6	70.1	-1	-3
Districts	42.2	61.6	57.1	59.8	68.7	69.8	61.4	67.8	67.1	70.1	71.5	74.2	70.8	68.1	+1	-3
Oblast	46.2	63.6	63.1	67.3	71.2	69.9	61.0	66.6	66.0	67.9	70.5	72.2	69.3	66.5	+1	-3

RESUME

The main events of February 2022 were Russia's recognition of the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic (February 21, 2022)⁴ and also the beginning of a special military operation on the territory of Ukraine (February 24, 2022). As the RF President noted, its purpose is "to protect people who, for eight years now, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime... to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation"⁵.

This event has had a significant impact on the nature of geopolitical processes, the international situation and the internal situation in Russia. The level of international political tension has sharply increased (primarily between Russia and NATO countries), new economic sanctions are being imposed against our country on a daily basis, and there is an objective need for a comprehensive change in the vector of economic and cultural policy.

The events taking place on the world political arena and their implications for the Russian Federation have had a significant impact on the dynamics of public opinion.

First, against the background of the tense political and economic situation, the level of support for the RF President and for the public administration system as a whole has significantly increased (as evidenced by the increase in the level of approval of the work of the President's (by 8 p. p., from 48 to 56%), the Chairman of the RF Government (by 6 p. p., from 38 to 44%), the Vologda Oblast Governor (by 4 p. p., from 34 to 38%), the share of people whose interests are expressed by the United Russia party (by 3 p.p., from 31 to 34%), as well as by a noticeable increase in positive assessments regarding the success of the President's efforts to strengthen Russia's international position (by 5 p.p., from 42 to 47%)).

Moreover, we should note that the consolidation of society around the President is comprehensive: a noticeable (by 4 p.p. or more) increase in the level of approval of the head of state's work is observed in almost all major socio-demographic groups.

Dynamics of the level of approval of the RF President's work in February – April 2022 (% of respondents)

Population group	Feb. 2022	Apr. 2022	Dynamics (+/-) Apr. 2022 to Feb.2022
Sex			
Men	45.9	51.7	+6
Women	49.7	60.1	+10
Age			
Under 30	51.6	50.9	0
30–55	44.4	55.5	+11
Over 55	51.0	59.4	+8
Education			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	44.0	48.3	+4
Secondary vocational	48.5	59.2	+11
Higher and incomplete higher	54.2	63.8	+10
Income groups			
Bottom 20%	37.0	41.1	+4
Middle 60%	50.4	57.6	+7
Top 20%	56.5	63.4	+7
Territories			
Vologda	38.8	48.1	+9
Cherepovets	53.3	62.0	+9
Districts	50.1	57.7	+8
Oblast	48.0	56.3	+8

⁴ Presidential Decree on recognizing the Donetsk People's Republic. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202202220002>; Presidential Decree on recognizing the Lugansk People's Republic. Available at: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202202220001>

⁵ Address of the President of the Russian Federation to the citizens of Russia on February 24, 2022. Official website of the RF President. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

Second, despite the fact that in the whole region over the past two months the share of positive assessments of social mood decreased slightly (by 2 p.p.), in general, psychological well-being of the population remains stable:

✓ just like at beginning of the year, 77% of the region's residents believe that "everything is not so bad and life is livable";

✓ the decrease in the share of positive assessments of social mood in February – April 2022 in the region as a whole cannot be called significant. For example, in the previous period (from December 2021 to February 2022, that is, before the start of the special operation in Ukraine), the proportion of people describing their mood as "normal, fine, good" decreased by 3 p.p. (from 72 to 69%).

We should note that the current situation could not but have a negative impact on the dynamics of people's social mood. According to experts, the very beginning, as well as the economic and social consequences of the special operation "seemed to paralyze society"⁶; "today, many people in Russia are confused"⁷, and this is quite natural. Perhaps it is the emotional reaction to the events that is connected with the fact that the deterioration of social mood assessments is noted primarily among women (by 7 p.p., from 72 to 65%) and people over 55 years of age (by 10 p.p., from 65 to 55%). However, the greater value, in our opinion, is the ability of the state to consolidate society around the goals of its foreign policy in this difficult and tense period.

Third, against the background of economic restrictions that have now affected virtually all citizens of the country, the dynamics of the population's assessments of their current financial situation and prospects for its development are of particular concern.

According to the results of the monitoring, over the past two months, the proportion of people subjectively classifying themselves as "poor and extremely poor" has not actually changed (45–46%). The share of the region's residents who believe that the RF President is successfully coping with the task of recovering the economy and increasing the welfare of citizens also remained at the level of February 2022 (28–29%), and the share of those who share the opposite point of view has even slightly decreased (by 2 p.p., from 59 to 57%).

At the same time, in April 2022, the consumer sentiment index significantly decreased (by 6 points, from 86 to 80 p). Consequently, the already high level of pessimism about the forecasts of the dynamics of people's financial situation and the economy of the country as a whole is increasing further.

This imposes special requirements on all levels of the public administration system (federal, regional, municipal), because, according to experts, today's high level of support for the President and the state can have a "short-term effect (up to three months)", and then it "will directly depend on the rapid success in the military campaign and effective economic policy of the Government"⁸.

The consequences of the global crisis that our country is already facing today are complex and inevitable, and in these conditions everything depends on the ability of the public administration system built by the President to "convert" negative factors and risks into new opportunities for economic growth, positive dynamics of the standard of living and quality of life, achievement and protection of full-fledged national sovereignty.

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

⁶ A divided society has lost the ability to protest. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. April 3, 2022. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2022-04-03/2_8407_editorial.html

⁷ Mozhegov V. Russia's special operation put an end to the end of history. *Vzglyad*. April 15, 2022. Available at: <https://vz.ru/opinions/2022/4/15/1153019.html>

⁸ A divided society has lost the ability to protest. *Nezavisimaya gazeta*. April 3, 2022. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2022-04-03/2_8407_editorial.html