

PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING

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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 2023) and for the period from April 2022 to April 2023 (the last seven 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 present the annual dynamics of the data for 2018 and for 2020–2022².

In February – April 2023, the share of positive assessments of the RF President's work did not change significantly (61%). The proportion of negative judgments is 23–24%³.

Over the past 12 months (from April 2022 to April 2023), the share of positive judgments regarding the work of the head of state increased by 5 percentage points (from 56 to 61%). The share of negative assessments decreased by 2 percentage points (from 26 to 24%)⁴.

¹ The surveys are held six times a year in the cities of Vologda and Cherepovets, in Babayevsky, Velikoustyugsky, Vozhegodsky, Gryazovetsky and Tarnogsky municipal okrugs, in Kirillovsky, Nikolsky and Sheksninsky municipal districts. 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.vsc.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 Here and elsewhere, in all tables and in the text, positive changes are highlighted in green, negative changes are highlighted in red, and no changes – in blue. Due to the fact that the changes of +/- 2 p.p. fall within the limits of sampling error, they are considered insignificant and are marked in blue.

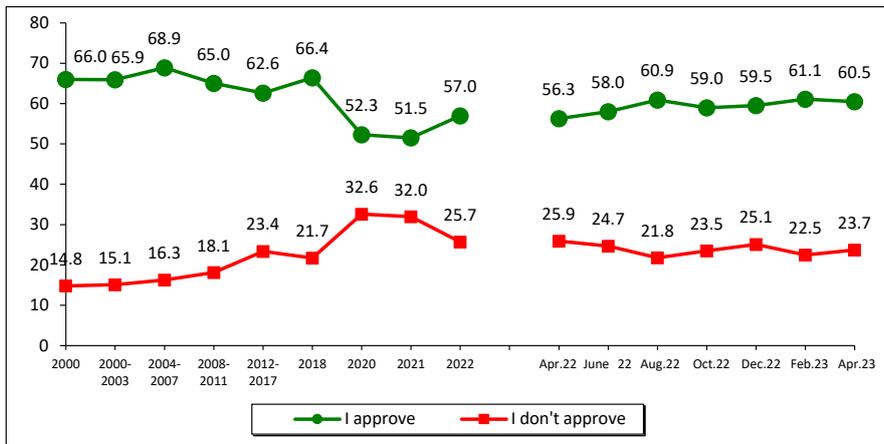
⁴ Here and elsewhere in the text, the results of a comparative analysis of the data from the survey conducted in April 2023 and the results of the monitoring "wave" conducted in April 2022 are given in the frame.

How would you assess the current work of...? (% of respondents)

Answer option	Dynamics of the average annual data									Dynamics of the data for the last 7 surveys							Dynamics (+/-), Apr. 2023 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2020	2021	2022	Apr. 2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023	
RF President																		
I approve	66.0	75.3	58.7	51.7	66.4	52.3	51.5	57.0	56.3	58.0	60.9	59.0	59.5	61.1	60.5	+5	-1	
I don't approve	14.8	11.5	25.5	32.6	21.7	32.6	32.0	25.7	25.9	24.7	21.8	23.5	25.1	22.5	23.7	-2	+1	
Chairman of the RF Government*																		
I approve	-*	-*	59.3	49.6	48.0	38.7	39.9	45.4	43.6	45.5	47.5	48.1	50.1	49.3	48.3	+5	-1	
I don't approve	-	-	24.7	33.3	31.6	40.4	37.6	32.0	32.5	31.4	29.4	31.3	29.9	27.9	28.1	-4	0	
Vologda Oblast Governor																		
I approve	56.1	55.8	45.7	41.9	38.4	35.0	36.7	40.9	38.2	41.2	43.3	43.0	45.5	47.1	48.3	+10	+1	
I don't approve	19.3	22.2	30.5	33.3	37.6	42.5	40.5	35.8	37.3	34.3	32.5	33.9	35.2	33.0	32.3	-5	-1	

Wording of the question: "How do you assess the current work of ...?"
 *Included in the survey since 2008.

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



Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
I approve	+4	-1
I don't approve	-2	+1

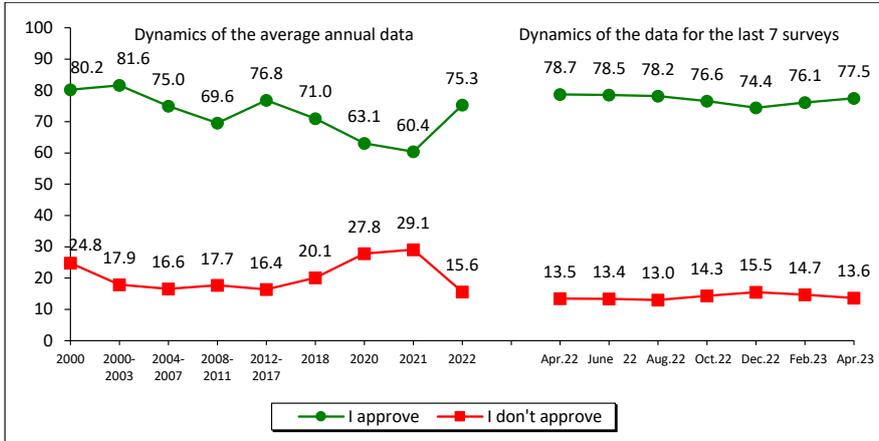
Here and elsewhere, all graphs show the average annual data for 2000, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, as well as the average annual data for the periods 2000–2003, 2004–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, corresponding to presidential terms.

For reference:

According to VCIOM, the level of approval of the President's work from February to the first half of April 2023 increased by 2 percentage points (from 76 to 78%). The share of negative judgments did not change and amounted to 14–15%.

From April 2022 to the first half of April 2023, the assessment of President's work remained stable: the share of positive judgments is 78–79%, negative – 14%.

In general, do you approve or not approve of the work of the RF President?
(% of respondents; VCIOM data)



Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
I approve	-1	+1
I don't approve	0	-1

Wording of the question: "In general, do you approve or not approve of the work of the President of the Russian Federation?"

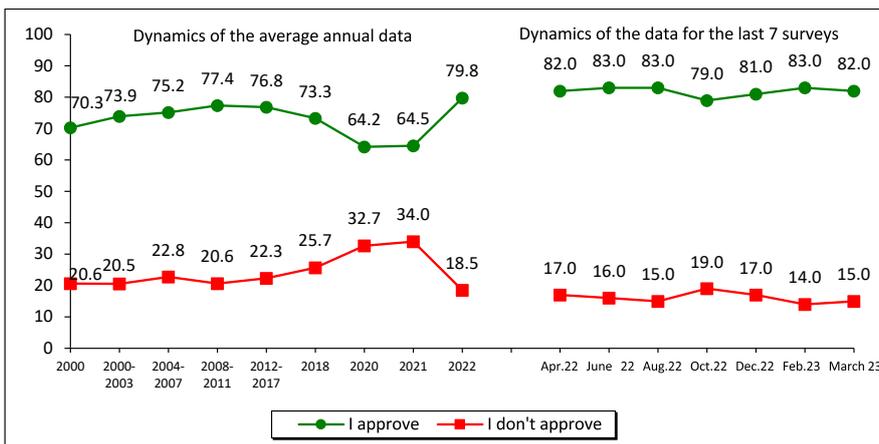
Data for April 2023 represent the average for three surveys: (April 2, 9 and 16).

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

According to Levada-Center*, the share of positive assessments of the President's work in February – March 2023 amounted to 82–83%; the proportion of negative judgments was 14–15%.

There were no significant changes over the past 12 months: the share of positive assessments is 82%, negative – 15–17%.

In general, do you approve or not approve of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?
(% of respondents; Levada-Center* data)



Dynamics (+/-), March 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
I approve	0	-1
I don't approve	-2	+1

Wording of the question: "In general, do you approve or not approve of the work of Vladimir Putin as President of Russia?"

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

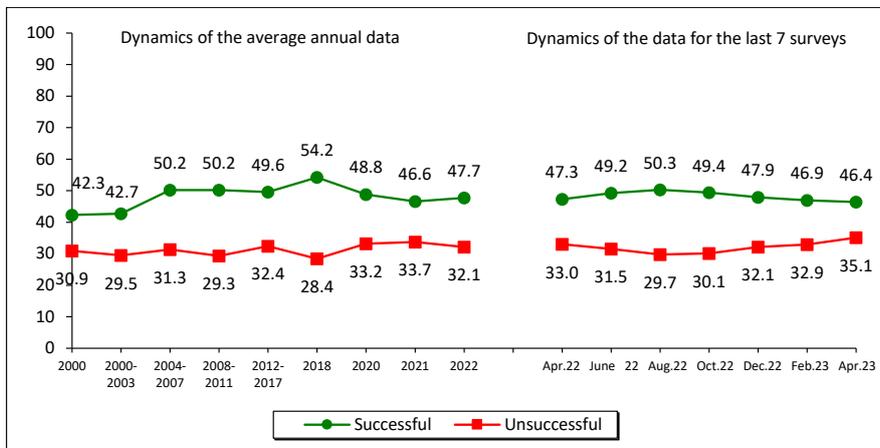
* Included in the register of foreign agents.

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

Over the past two months, the share of those who consider the RF President’s work to strengthen Russia’s international position to be successful did not change significantly (46–47%). The proportion of those who hold to the opposite point of view increased slightly (by 2 percentage points, from 33 to 35%).

From April 2022 to April 2023, the share of positive assessments of the President’s work aimed at strengthening Russia’s international position did not change and amounted to 46–47%; the share of negative judgements was 33–35%.

Strengthening Russia's international position

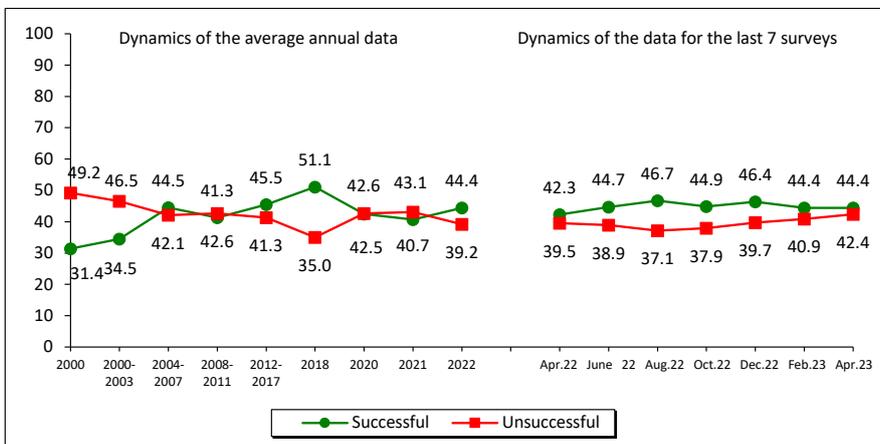


Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Successful	-1	-1
Unsuccessful	+2	+2

In February – April 2023, the share of Vologda Oblast residents who positively assess the work of the head of state aimed at restoring order in the country was 44%; the proportion of negative judgments was 41–42%.

Over the past 12 months, the share of those who positively assess the work of the head of state to restore order in the country increased slightly (by 2 percentage points, from 42 to 44%). The proportion of negative judgments did not change (42%).

Imposing order in the country

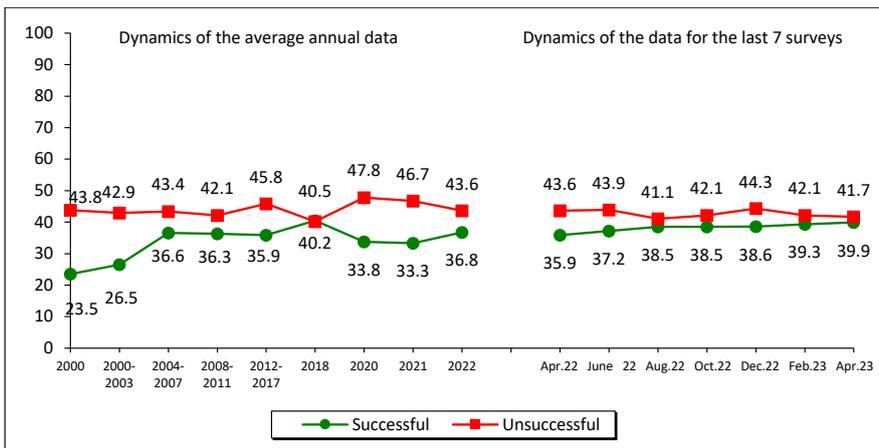


Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Successful	+2	0
Unsuccessful	0	+2

The assessment of the President’s work aimed at protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms did not change over the past two months: the share of positive judgments is 42%, negative – 39%).

From April 2022 to April 2023, the share of positive assessments increased (by 4 percentage points, from 36 to 40%) and the proportion of negative judgments decreased slightly (by 2 percentage points, from 44 to 42%).

Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms

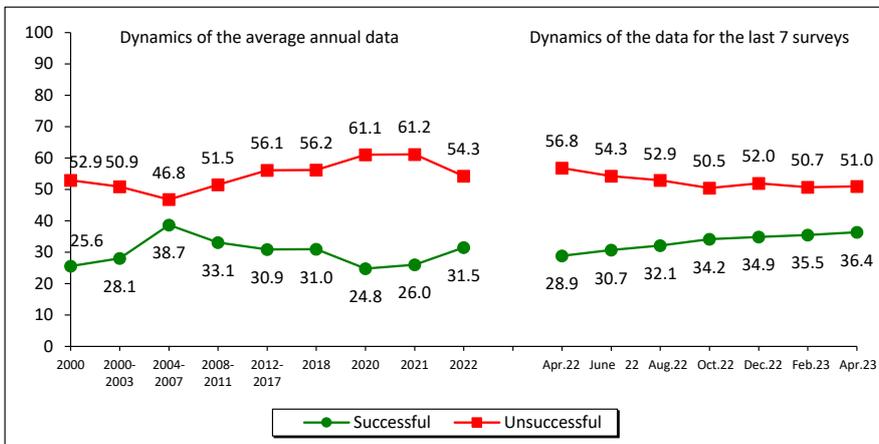


Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Successful	+4	0
Unsuccessful	+2	+1

In February – April 2023, public opinion regarding the President’s work aimed at boosting the economy and increasing the welfare of citizens did not change significantly: the share of positive assessments was 36%, negative – 51%.

Over the past 12 months, the share of positive judgments increased by 7 percentage points (from 29 to 36%), the proportion of negative ones decreased by 6 percentage points (from 57 to 51%).

Economic recovery, increase in citizens’ welfare



Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Successful	+7	+1
Unsuccessful	-6	0

The structure of political preferences of Vologda Oblast residents did not change over the past two months: the share of people whose interests are expressed by the United Russia party is 38–39%, the Communist Party – 9%, the Liberal Democratic Party – 6%, the Just Russia party – 5%, the New People party – 1–2%.

From April 2022 to April 2023, we note an increase in support for United Russia (by 4 percentage points, from 34 to 38%), as well as a slight decrease in the proportion of those who believe that none of the parliamentary parties expresses their interests (by 3 percentage points, from 31 to 28%).

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

Партия	Dynamics of the average annual data												Dynamics of the data for the last 7 surveys							Dynamics (+/-), Apr. 2023 to	
	2000	2007	2011	Election to the RF State Duma 2011, fact	2012	2016	Election to the RF State Duma 2016, fact	2018	2020	Election to the RF State Duma 2020, fact	2021	2022	Apr. 2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
United Russia	18.5	30.2	31.1	33.4	29.1	35.4	38.0	37.9	31.5	49.8	31.7	35.2	34.2	34.9	36.2	36.7	38.3	39.1	37.6	+4	-2
KPRF	11.5	7.0	10.3	16.8	10.6	8.3	14.2	9.2	8.4	18.9	9.3	10.1	11.2	10.2	10.4	9.9	9.3	9.5	9.3	-2	0
LDPR	4.8	7.5	7.8	15.4	7.8	10.4	21.9	9.6	9.5	7.6	9.9	7.3	7.7	7.8	6.8	6.0	6.3	5.9	6.9	-1	+1
Just Russia – Patriots for the Truth	-	7.8	5.6	27.2	6.6	4.2	10.8	2.9	4.7	7.5	4.7	4.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.7	0	0
New People*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	2.3	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.9	1.1	1.5	1.3	2.1	+1	+1
Other	0.9	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	0.3	-	0.7	0.5	-	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	0	0
None	29.6	17.8	29.4	-	31.3	29.4	-	28.5	34.2	-	33.9	30.6	30.8	30.7	29.3	30.6	29.9	28.0	28.0	-3	0
I find it difficult to answer	20.3	21.2	13.2	-	11.7	12.0	-	11.2	11.1	-	10.0	10.1	10.0	9.9	10.5	10.8	9.9	11.4	11.4	+1	0

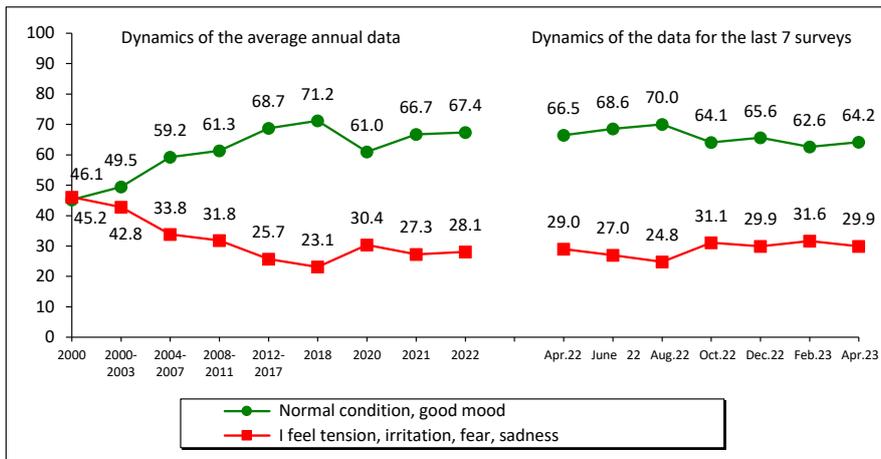
* The New People party was elected to the State Duma of the Russian Federation for the first time following the results of the election held on September 17–19, 2021.

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

From February to April 2023, the share of positive assessments of social mood remained at the level of 63–64%. The proportion of those who feel predominantly negative emotions decreased slightly (by 2 percentage points, from 32 to 30%).

The proportion of people describing their daily emotional state as “normal, fine” decreased by 3 percentage points (from 67 to 64%). The proportion of those who experience mainly “tension, irritation, fear, sadness” did not change significantly (29–30%).

Social mood

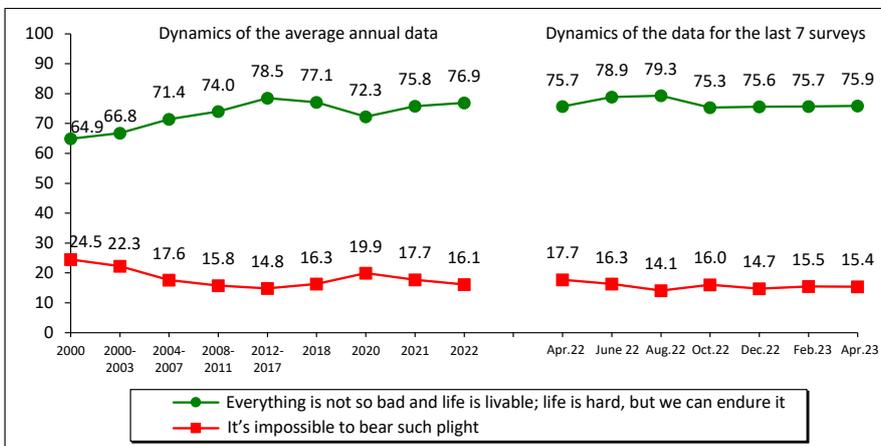


Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Usual condition good mood	-3	+2
I feel tension, irritation, fear, sadness	+1	-2

In February – April 2023, the share of those who believe that “everything is not so bad and life is livable” (76%) and the proportion of those who note that “it’s impossible to bear such plight” (15%) remained stable.

Over the past 12 months, the proportion of positive assessments of the stock of patience did not change (76%), while the share of negative judgments decreased slightly (by 3 percentage points, from 18 to 15%).

Stock of patience

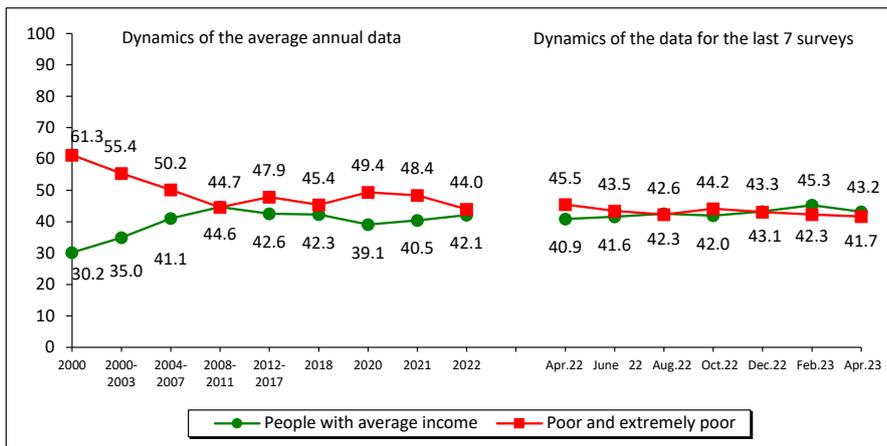


Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it	0	0
It's impossible to bear such plight	-3	0

The proportion of Vologda Oblast residents subjectively classifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” in February – April 2023 was 42%. The share of those who classify themselves as “middle-income” people increased slightly (by 2 percentage points, from 45 to 43%).

Compared to April 2022, mainly positive changes are noted: the share of the “poor and extremely poor” decreased by 4 percentage points (from 46 to 42%); the proportion of “middle-income” people increased by 2 percentage points (from 41 to 43%).

Social self-identification



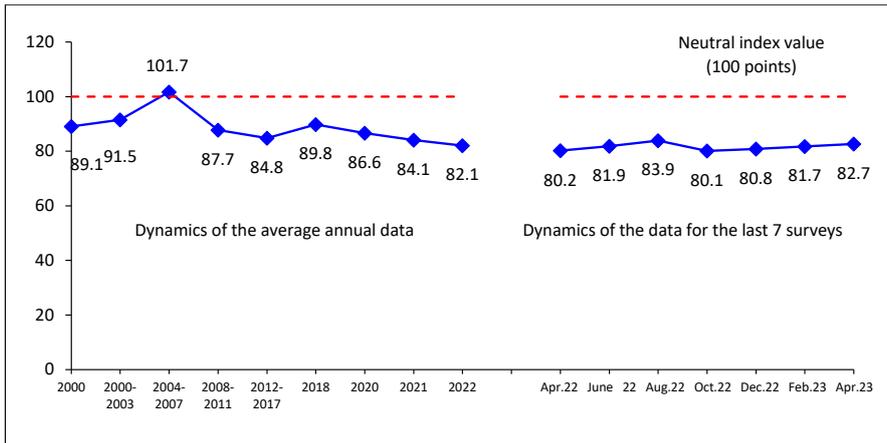
Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
Answer option	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
People with average income	+2	-2
Poor and extremely poor	-4	-1

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

Over the past two months, the Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI) did not change; it amounted to 82–83 points.

Compared to April 2022, we note a positive trend: the CSI increased by 3 percentage points (from 80 to 83 points), which indicates an increase in people’s optimistic expectations about the future of the Russian economy and their personal financial situation.

Consumer Sentiment Index
(CSI, points; data of VoIRC RAS for the Vologda Oblast)



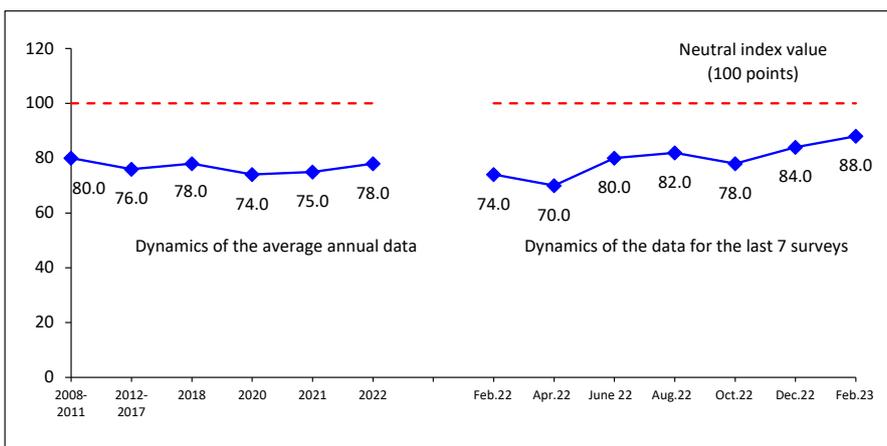
Dynamics (+/-), April 2023 to		
CSI	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Index value, points	+3	+1

For reference:

According to the latest data from the all-Russian polls conducted by Levada-Center*, positive changes are noted in the dynamics of the CSI for the period from December 2022 to February 2023 (the CSI increased by 4 points, from 84 to 88 points).

For the period from February 2022 to February 2023, the CSI increased by 14 points (from 74 to 88 points).

Consumer Sentiment Index (CSI; Levada-Center* data for Russia)



Dynamics (+/-), February 2023 to		
CSI	Feb. 2022	Dec. 2022
Index value, points	+14	+4

The index is calculated since 2008.

Latest data are as of February 2023.

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

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

Over the past two months, in 5 of 14 main socio-demographic groups, the share of positive assessments of social mood increased slightly (by 3–4 percentage points): among men, people aged 30–55, people with secondary and incomplete secondary education, people with the highest income (according to self-assessments), and residents of Cherepovets. We should also note that there are no negative changes in any of the groups.

From April 2022 to April 2023, mainly negative changes are noted in the trends of social mood. In 8 out of 14 socio-demographic groups, the share of positive assessments decreased, especially among people under the age of 30 (by 9 percentage points, from 82 to 73%) and people who, according to self-estimates of income, belong to the category of 20% of the least affluent residents of the Vologda Oblast (by 14 percentage points, from 62 to 48%).

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

Population group	Dynamics of the average annual data								Dynamics of the data for the last 7 surveys							Dynamics (+/-), Apr. 2023 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2020	2021	2022	Apr. 2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Sex																	
Men	50.1	65.9	64.5	69.1	72.8	60.8	65.7	66.8	68.3	67.4	69.9	65.0	64.7	62.5	65.4	-3	+3
Women	43.3	61.7	62.0	65.8	69.8	61.2	67.4	67.9	65.1	69.7	70.2	63.3	66.5	62.7	63.4	-2	+1
Age																	
Under 30	59.1	71.3	70.0	72.3	80.0	67.6	73.5	77.6	81.8	77.3	77.8	74.5	78.7	70.6	72.9	-9	+2
30–55	44.2	64.8	62.5	67.9	72.6	61.8	69.5	69.4	71.1	68.8	72.0	65.2	68.5	63.9	67.7	-3	+4
Over 55	37.4	54.8	58.3	62.1	65.2	57.4	60.5	61.1	55.2	65.3	64.6	58.7	57.2	58.1	56.9	+2	-1
Education																	
Secondary and incomplete secondary	41.7	58.4	57.4	57.2	64.8	56.1	62.1	64.6	63.0	65.8	68.5	58.9	62.7	57.2	60.2	-3	+3
Secondary vocational	46.4	64.6	63.6	66.7	72.2	63.5	66.7	68.3	69.8	70.5	71.0	65.8	64.3	63.7	65.1	-5	+1
Higher and incomplete higher	53.3	68.6	68.3	77.0	76.8	63.3	71.5	69.5	66.9	69.7	70.8	67.5	70.6	67.3	67.3	0	0
Income group																	
Bottom 20%	28.4	51.6	45.3	51.5	57.3	43.4	54.6	57.0	61.5	58.4	55.4	50.7	55.4	46.2	47.8	-14	+2
Middle 60%	45.5	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	62.6	67.3	68.1	64.2	70.3	73.2	65.9	66.1	62.2	64.4	0	+2
Top 20%	64.6	74.9	75.3	81.1	82.9	75.6	79.9	78.3	81.9	75.7	77.0	78.7	74.9	73.8	78.2	-4	+4
Territory																	
Vologda	49.2	63.1	67.1	73.6	71.0	60.9	60.3	59.8	60.2	61.0	61.5	55.7	57.2	54.5	56.0	-4	+2
Cherepovets	50.8	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.8	60.4	71.0	71.2	70.1	72.8	74.6	67.9	69.1	65.9	68.4	-2	+3
Districts	42.2	61.6	57.1	59.8	68.7	61.4	67.8	69.5	68.1	70.6	72.3	66.6	68.5	65.3	66.6	-2	+1
Oblast	46.2	63.6	63.1	67.3	71.2	61.0	66.6	67.4	66.5	68.7	70.1	64.1	65.7	62.6	64.3	-2	+2
Total number of positive and negative changes																0 / 8	5 / 0

TAKEAWAYS

According to the results of the next monitoring “wave”, there were no significant changes in the dynamics of public opinion assessments over the past two months:

- ✓ the level of support for the head of state (61%) and other federal and regional authorities remains stable (48% of Vologda Oblast residents positively assess the work of the Chairman of the RF Government and the Vologda Oblast Governor);
- ✓ there are no significant changes in the dynamics of self-assessments of the financial situation (the proportion of people subjectively classifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” is 42%; the Consumer Sentiment Index is 82–83 points);
- ✓ there are no changes in the proportion of people who positively characterize their daily emotional state (63–64%) and have a high stock of patience (76%).

More pronounced changes are observed in the annual dynamics (for the period from April 2022 to April 2023); we should emphasize that they are mainly positive:

- ✓ there was an increase in the level of approval regarding the work of all major federal and regional authorities: the RF President – by 5 percentage points (from 56 to 61%); the Chairman of the RF Government – by 5 percentage points (from 43 to 48%); the Vologda Oblast Governor – by 10 percentage points (from 38 to 48%);
- ✓ the share of “poor and extremely poor” residents of the Vologda Oblast during the same period decreased by 4 percentage points (from 46 to 42%), the Consumer Sentiment Index, reflecting people’s forecasts about the future of the Russian economy and their own financial situation, increased by 3 points (from 80 to 83 points).

However, unfortunately, positive trends over the past 12 months have not yet been observed in the dynamics of social well-being: the share of positive assessments of social mood decreased slightly (by 3 percentage points, from 67 to 64%).

Thus, the most important changes that we see, according to the results of the monitoring, relate to two aspects, and both manifest themselves in long-term dynamics (over the past 12 months).

First, there is a gradual improvement in respondents’ subjective assessments regarding the economic situation in the country and their own financial situation.

Second, it is necessary to pay attention to the positive trend in public opinion regarding the RF President addressing Russia’s key domestic tasks. During the period from April 2022 to April 2023, there was an increase in the proportion of Vologda Oblast residents who note that the President is successful in boosting the economy and enhancing people’s welfare (by 7 percentage points, from 29 to 36%); the share of positive judgments about the work of the head of state to protect democracy and strengthen citizens’ freedoms increased (by 4 percentage points p., from 36 to 40%), as well as about his work to restore order in the country (by 2 percentage points, from 42 to 44%).

The analysis of the relevant monitoring indicators in the context of major socio-demographic groups allows us to draw the following conclusions.

1. Over the past 12 months, the number of groups in which positive changes are noted is greater than the number of groups in which negative dynamics are observed. This also applies to the assessment of the financial situation, economic situation in the country, and people’s opinions about the success of the Russian President’s solution of key tasks.

Dynamics of monitoring indicators reflecting self-assessment of the financial situation and assessment of the RF President's success in addressing the key tasks of the country for the period from April 2022 to April 2023 (% of respondents)

Population group	Indicators of self-assessment of financial situation						Proportion of positive assessments of the President's success in addressing Russia's key tasks											
	Proportion of the "poor and extremely poor"			CSI			Strengthening Russia's international position			Imposing order in the country			Protecting democracy, strengthening citizens' freedoms			Boosting the economy; enhancing welfare		
	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-	Apr. 2022	Apr. 2023	+/-
Sex																		
Men	47.4	38.1	-9	79.1	82.2	+3	46.8	46.4	0	39.5	41.6	+2	33.7	38.8	+5	28.2	34.9	+7
Women	43.9	44.7	+1	81.1	83.1	+2	47.8	46.4	-1	44.6	46.6	+2	37.8	40.7	+3	29.4	37.6	+8
Age																		
Under 30	41.4	38.8	-3	85.5	89.7	+4	45.5	43.0	-3	41.4	40.7	-1	35.0	36.9	+2	27.7	31.3	+4
30–55	43.5	38.6	-5	82.5	84.8	+2	47.9	45.8	-2	40.9	44.4	+4	35.9	39.5	+4	28.0	36.3	+8
Over 55	49.4	46.7	-3	75.5	77.6	+2	47.3	48.4	+1	44.4	45.8	+1	36.3	41.3	+5	30.3	38.4	+8
Education																		
Secondary and incomplete secondary	53.5	48.6	-5	78.7	80.3	+2	45.8	45.9	0	37.7	44.5	+7	33.0	35.6	+3	25.5	32.7	+7
Secondary vocational	43.1	39.2	-4	80.0	84.5	+5	47.6	49.0	+1	42.4	45.1	+3	37.6	41.9	+4	31.3	38.2	+7
Higher and incomplete higher	37.3	38.4	+1	82.6	82.7	0	49.2	43.2	-6	49.0	43.2	-6	37.8	41.4	+4	30.2	37.6	+7
Income group																		
Bottom 20%	54.0	57.3	+3	72.2	72.6	0	35.8	26.6	-9	24.2	29.6	+5	22.6	20.1	-3	20.0	21.9	+2
Middle 60%	52.4	47.2	-5	81.0	83.9	+3	46.9	50.5	+4	44.4	43.6	-1	38.0	43.7	+6	29.6	38.1	+9
Top 20%	23.4	20.4	-3	92.5	93.3	+1	54.7	54.9	0	49.4	54.2	+5	46.0	48.0	+2	38.1	50.2	+12
Territory																		
Vologda	49.9	42.7	-7	69.5	69.3	0	42.3	35.4	-7	35.5	40.5	+5	25.2	28.6	+3	20.4	29.4	+9
Cherepovets	47.7	47.7	0	85.1	85.0	0	53.6	60.0	+6	44.2	54.1	+10	44.9	53.1	+8	34.1	47.7	+14
Districts	41.6	37.7	-4	83.4	89.1	+6	46.6	44.8	-2	45.1	41.0	-4	36.8	38.6	+2	30.7	33.9	+3
Oblast	45.5	41.7	-4	80.2	82.7	+3	47.3	46.4	-1	42.3	44.4	+2	35.9	39.9	+4	28.9	36.4	+8
Total number of positive and negative changes	10 / 1			5 / 0			2 / 4			7 / 2			10 / 1			13 / 0		

The exception is people's opinion about strengthening Russia's international position, which quite objectively reflects the real alarming situation that has developed since the beginning of the SMO.

2. Over the past year, none of the socio-demographic groups showed a deterioration in public opinion assessments concerning the dynamics of the financial situation, forecasts for the future of the Russian economy (CSI) and the work of the RF President to boost the economy and increase citizens' welfare. The only exceptions are the lowest-income (according to self-assessments) population groups, whose representatives are now more likely to classify themselves as "poor and extremely poor" (by 3 percentage points, from 54 to 57%).

In general, we think that the positive nature of public opinion trends is mostly due to the real, but largely unfounded, threats to the Russian economy that have arisen as a result of anti-Russian sanctions imposed by NATO countries. As the President noted many times⁵, “the Russian economy proved to be much more resilient than the West thought”, and it “has prevailed over the risks it faced”, including those that “were impossible to anticipate”⁶.

This, in particular, is reflected in official statistics. Thus, according to Vologdastat data, the real wages in the Vologda Oblast by the end of 2022 amounted to 100.6% of those in 2021 (for comparison, in 2021 – 98% of those in 2020⁷).

Thus, it is necessary to take into account the fact that current trends of public opinion are significantly influenced by events taking place in the international political arena. However, despite the significant complex of economic, political, and military threats that Russia has faced since the start of the SMO, there are no significant negative changes in the dynamics of population assessments on key monitoring indicators (such as assessment of the work of authorities, dynamics of living standards, and psychological well-being), both in the short and long-term dynamics.

At the same time, we cannot but note a number of population groups in which positive trends are insignificant, and negative changes are noted in the annual dynamics (first of all, people who, according to self-estimates of income, belong to the category of 20% of the least affluent residents of the Vologda Oblast, and persons with higher/incomplete higher education).

This is important information in connection with the need to further strengthen the course of internal socio-economic policy implemented by authorities at all levels (federal, regional, municipal) and aimed at maintaining the standard of living and quality of life of the general population, achieving social justice in society, ensuring social stability in difficult foreign policy conditions. We also note that the implementation of such a domestic policy by the state has become relevant due to the adoption of a new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation on March 31, 2023, which officially enshrines the status of Russia as a “unique country-civilization”, which is “the core of the civilizational community of the Russian world”⁸.

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⁵ See, for example:

1. Vladimir Putin’s joint press conference with President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko, April 12, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/68182>

2. Vladimir Putin’s speech at the plenary session of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, June 17, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/68669>

3. Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, October 27, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69695>

4. Vladimir Putin’s speech at the meeting of the Council for Strategic Development and National Projects, December 15, 2022. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70086>

5. Vladimir Putin’s speech at a meeting with representatives of the aviation industry, February 2, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70484>

6 Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, February 21, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70565>

⁷ Sources: Socio-economic situation of the Vologda Oblast in January – February 2023: Report. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2023. P. 69. Socio-economic situation of the Vologda Oblast in January – February 2022: Report. Vologdastat. Vologda, 2022. P. 69.

⁸ Decree “On approving the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation”, March 31, 2023. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70811>