

PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING

DOI: 10.15838/esc.2023.3.87.17

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 round of the monitoring (June 2023) and for the period from June 2022 to June 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 April – June 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 June 2022 to June 2023), the share of positive judgments about the work of the head of state increased by 3 percentage points (from 58 to 61%). The share of negative assessments decreased by 2 percentage points (from 25 to 23%)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.

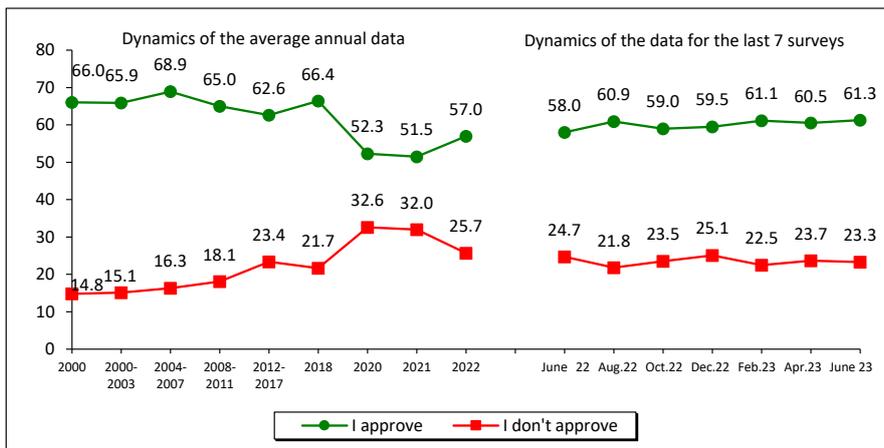
⁴ Here and elsewhere in the text, the results of a comparative analysis of the data from the survey conducted in June 2023 and the results of the monitoring "wave" conducted in June 2022 are given in the frame.

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 (+/-), June 2023 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2020	2021	2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	June 2023	June 2022	Apr. 2023	
RF President																		
I approve	66.0	75.3	58.7	51.7	66.4	52.3	51.5	57.0	58.0	60.9	59.0	59.5	61.1	60.5	61.3	+3	+1	
I don't approve	14.8	11.5	25.5	32.6	21.7	32.6	32.0	25.7	24.7	21.8	23.5	25.1	22.5	23.7	23.3	-2	0	
Chairman of the RF Government*																		
I approve	-*	-*	59.3	49.6	48.0	38.7	39.9	45.4	45.5	47.5	48.1	50.1	49.3	48.3	49.2	+4	+1	
I don't approve	-	-	24.7	33.3	31.6	40.4	37.6	32.0	31.4	29.4	31.3	29.9	27.9	28.1	27.1	-4	-1	
Vologda Oblast Governor																		
I approve	56.1	55.8	45.7	41.9	38.4	35.0	36.7	40.9	41.2	43.3	43.0	45.5	47.1	48.3	48.7	+8	0	
I don't approve	19.3	22.2	30.5	33.3	37.6	42.5	40.5	35.8	34.3	32.5	33.9	35.2	33.0	32.3	30.7	-4	-2	

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 (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
I approve	+3	+1
I don't approve	-2	0

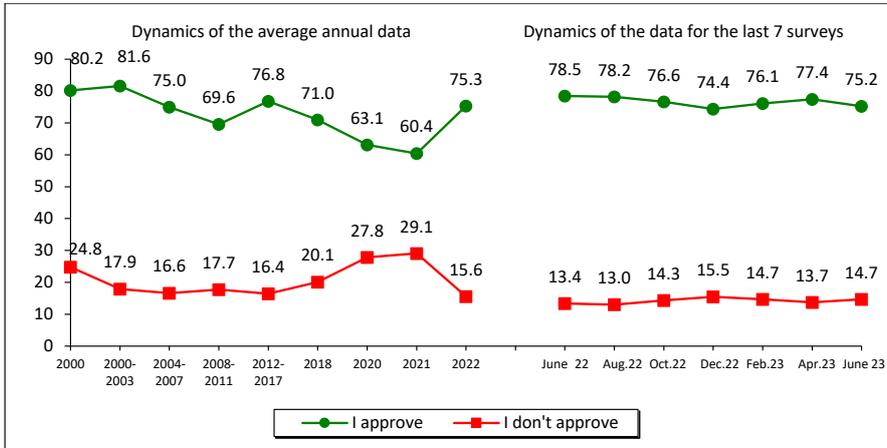
Here and elsewhere, all graphs show the average annual data for 2000, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, as well as the average annual data for the periods 2000–2003, 2004–2007, 2008–2011, 2012–2017, corresponding to presidential terms.

For reference:

According to VCIOM, the level of approval of the President's work from April to the first half of June 2023 decreased by 2 percentage points (from 77 to 75%). The share of negative judgments did not change and amounted to 14–15%.

From June 2022 to the first half of June 2023, the share of positive assessments of the activities of the head of state decreased by 4 percentage points (from 79 to 75%). The proportion of negative judgments was 13–15%.

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



Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
I approve	-4	-2
I don't approve	+1	+1

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

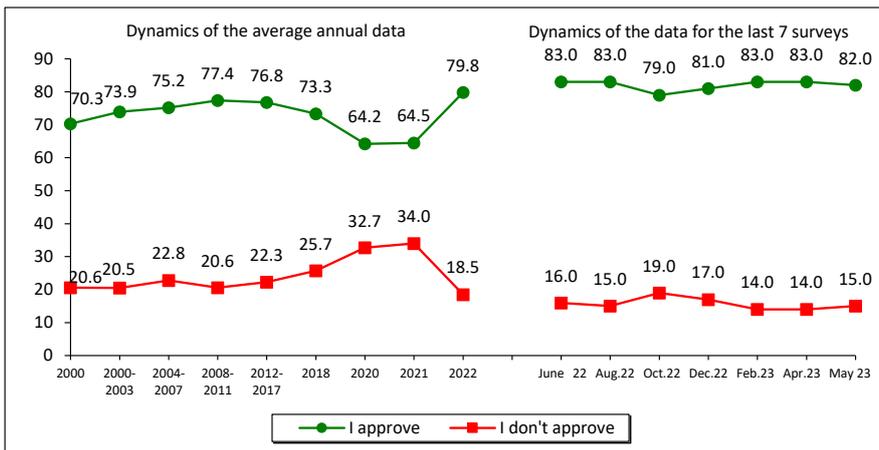
Data for June 2023 represent the average for three surveys: (June 4, 11 and 18).

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

According to Levada-Center, the share of positive assessments of the President’s work in April – May 2023 was 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 – 15–16%.

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



Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
I approve	-1	-1
I don't approve	-1	+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>

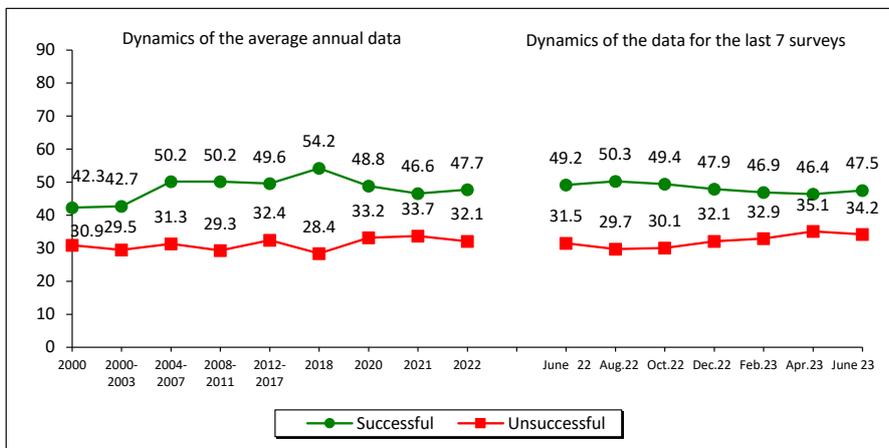
* Included in the register of foreign agents.

In your opinion, how successful is the RF President in coping with challenging issues?
(% of respondents; VolRC 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 increased by 2 percentage points (46–48%). The proportion of those who hold to the opposite point of view did not change significantly (34–35%).

From June 2022 to June 2023, the share of positive assessments of the President’s work aimed at strengthening Russia’s international position did not change and amounted to 48–49%; the share of negative judgments was 32–34%.

Strengthening Russia's international position

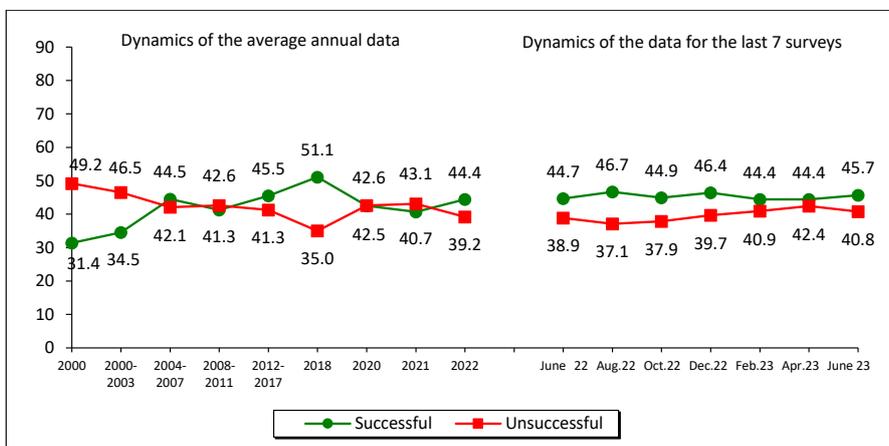


Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Successful	-2	+2
Unsuccessful	+2	-1

In April – June 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 45–46%; 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 did not change (45–46%). The proportion of negative judgments was 39–40%.

Imposing order in the country

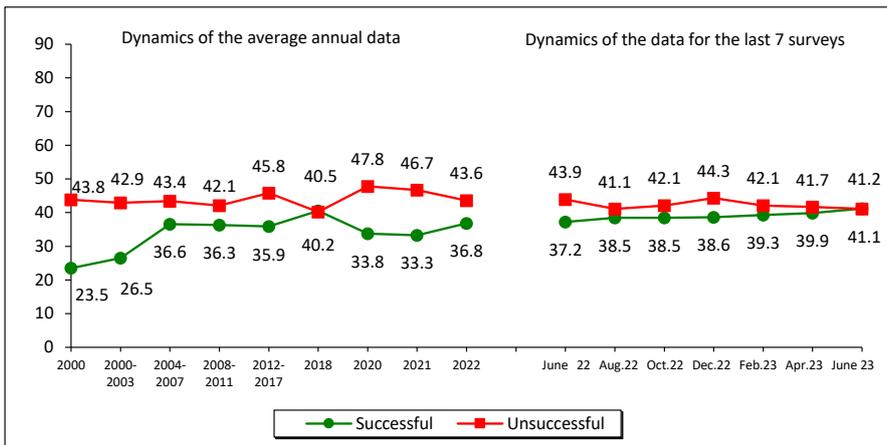


Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Successful	+1	+1
Unsuccessful	+2	-1

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 40–41%, negative – 41–42%.

From June 2022 to June 2023, the share of positive assessments increased (by 4 percentage points, from 37 to 41%) and the proportion of negative judgments decreased (by 3 percentage points, from 44 to 41%).

Protecting democracy and strengthening citizens’ freedoms

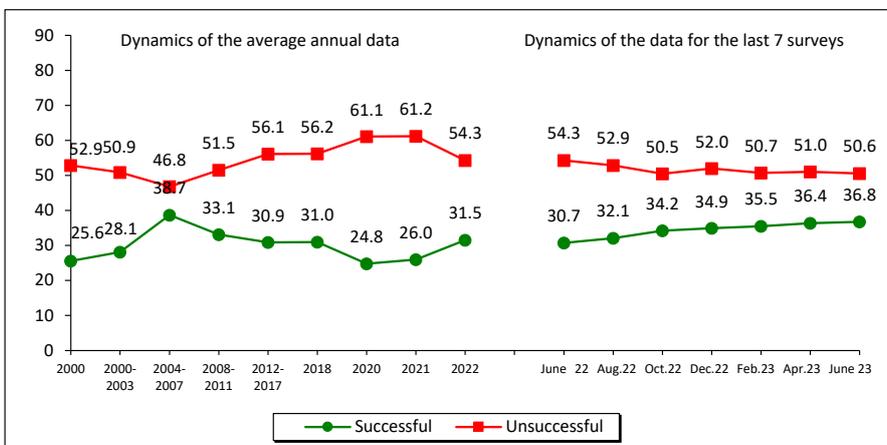


Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Successful	+4	+1
Unsuccessful	-3	-1

In April – June 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 36–37%, negative – 51%.

Over the past 12 months, the share of positive judgments increased by 6 percentage points (from 31 to 37%), the proportion of negative ones decreased by 3 percentage points (from 54 to 51%).

Economic recovery, increase in citizens’ welfare



Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Successful	+6	0
Unsuccessful	-3	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 – 7%, the Just Russia party – 5%, the New People party – 2%.

From June 2022 to June 2023, we note an increase in support for United Russia (by 4 percentage points, from 35 to 39%), as well as a slight decrease in the proportion of those who believe that none of the parliamentary parties expresses their interests (by 4 percentage points, from 31 to 27%).

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

Party	Dynamics of the average annual data												Dynamics of the data for the last 7 surveys							Dynamics (+/-), June 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	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	June 2023	June 2022	June 2022
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	34.9	36.2	36.7	38.3	39.1	37.6	39.3	+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	10.2	10.4	9.9	9.3	9.5	9.3	9.5	-1	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	7.8	6.8	6.0	6.3	5.9	6.9	6.7	-1	0
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	4.8	4.9	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	0	0
New People*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.3	2.3	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.1	1.5	1.3	2.1	2.1	+1	0
Other	0.9	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	0.3	-	0.7	0.5	-	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0	0
None	29.6	17.8	29.4	-	31.3	29.4	-	28.5	34.2	-	33.9	30.6	30.7	29.3	30.6	29.9	28.0	28.0	26.5	-4	-2
I find it difficult to answer	20.3	21.2	13.2	-	11.7	12.0	-	11.2	11.1	-	10.0	10.1	9.9	10.5	10.8	9.9	11.4	11.4	11.4	+2	0

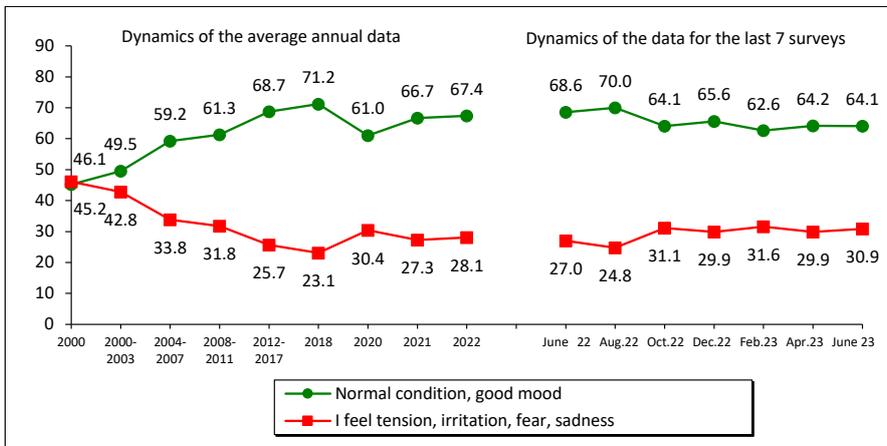
*The New People party was elected to the State Duma of the Russian Federation for the first time following the results of the election held on September 17–19, 2021.

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

From April to June 2023, the share of positive assessments of social mood remained at the level of 64%. The proportion of those who feel predominantly negative emotions did not change as well and was equal to 30–31%.

Over the past 12 months, the proportion of people describing their daily emotional state as “normal, fine” decreased by percentage points (from 69 to 64%). The proportion of those who experience mainly “tension, irritation, fear, sadness” increased by 4 percentage points (from 27 to 31%).

Social mood

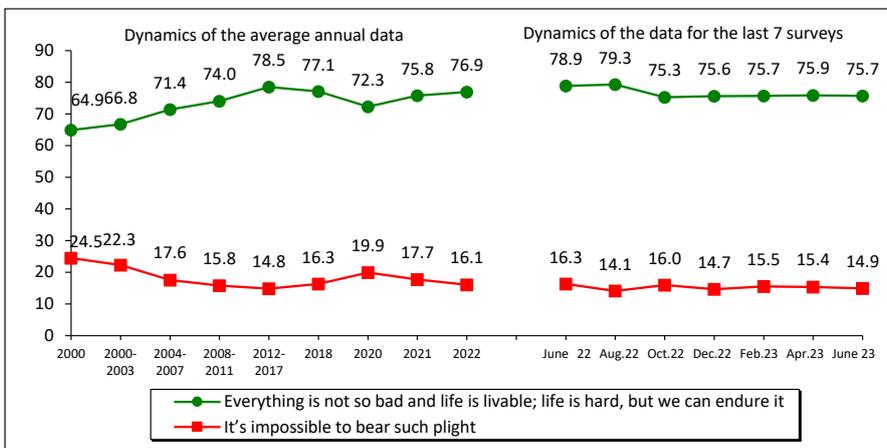


Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Usual condition good mood	-5	0
I feel tension, irritation, fear, sadness	+4	+1

In April – June 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 decreased by 3 percentage points (from 79 to 76%), while the share of negative judgments did not change significantly (15–16%).

Stock of patience

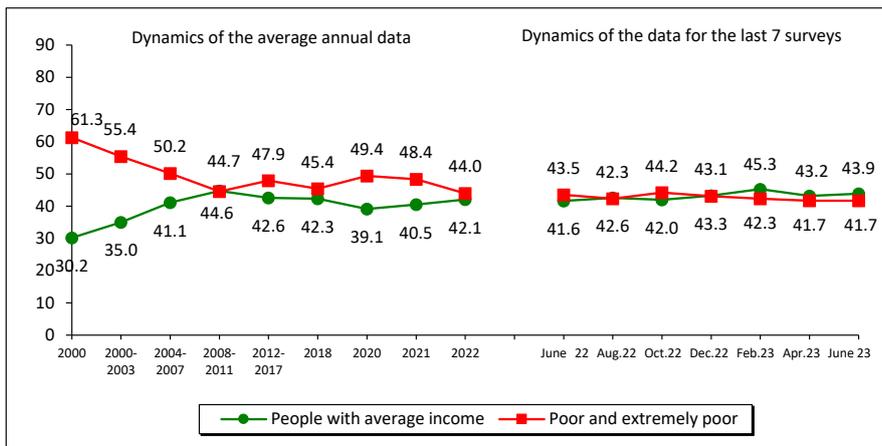


Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Everything is not so bad and life is livable; life is hard, but we can endure it	-3	0
It's impossible to bear such plight	-1	-1

The proportion of Vologda Oblast residents subjectively classifying themselves as “poor and extremely poor” in April – June 2023 was 42%. The share of those who classify themselves as “middle-income” people was 43–44%.

Compared to June 2022, mainly positive changes are noted: the share of the “poor and extremely poor” decreased by 2 percentage points (from 44 to 42%); the proportion of “middle-income” people increased by 2 percentage points (from 42 to 44%).

Social self-identification



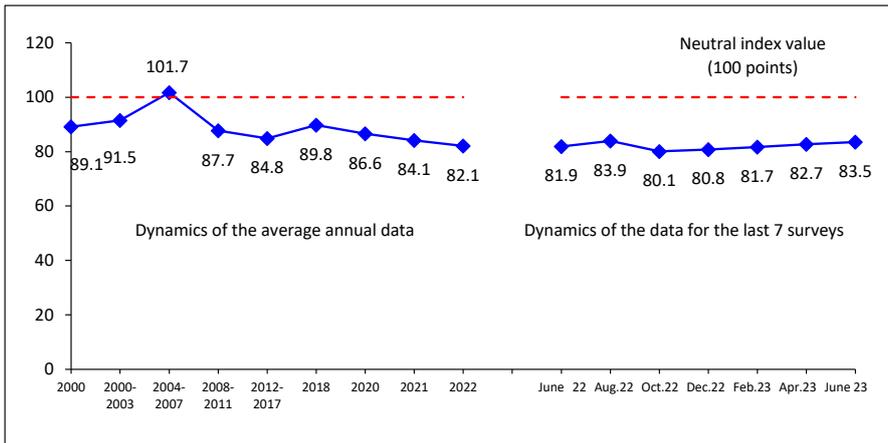
Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
Answer option	June 2022	Apr. 2023
People with average income	+2	+1
Poor and extremely poor	-2	0

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 83–84 points.

Compared to June 2022, we note a positive trend: the CSI increased by 2 percentage points (from 82 to 84 points), which indicates a slight 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)



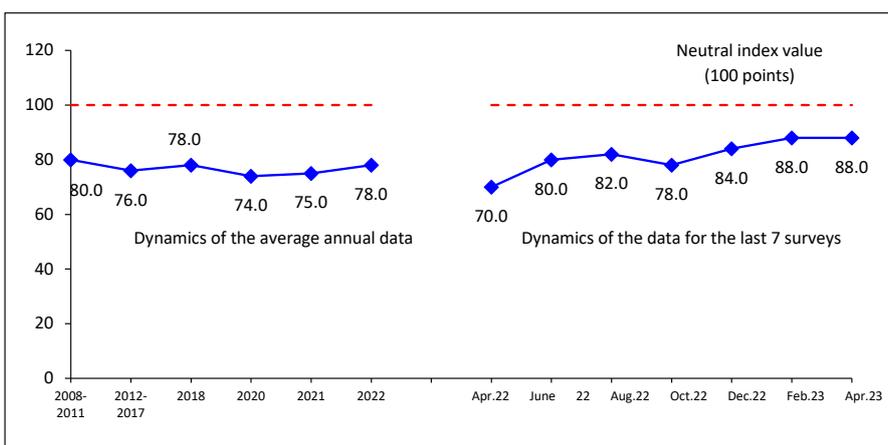
Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
CSI	June 2022	Apr. 2023
Index value, points	+2	+1

For reference:

According to the latest data from the all-Russian polls conducted by Levada-Center*, the Consumer Sentiment Index for the period from February to April 2023 did not change and amounted to 88 points.

During the period from April 2022 to April 2023, positive changes are observed in the dynamics of the CSI (the index increased by 18 points, from 70 to 88 p.).

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



Dynamics (+/-), June 2023 to		
CSI	Apr. 2022	Feb. 2023
Index value, points	+18	0

The index is calculated since 2008.

Latest data are as of April 2023.

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

* Included in the register of foreign agents.

From April to June 2023, the estimates of social mood did not change significantly in most of the main socio-demographic groups (in 12 out of 14). Exceptions are those who, according to self-estimates of income, belong to the category of 20% of the least well-off (in this group, the share of positive characteristics of social mood increased by 3 percentage points, from 47 to 50%) and 20% of the most affluent (we note a decrease in the share of positive judgments by 6 percentage points, from 78 to 72%).

Over the past 12 months (from June 2022 to June 2023), negative changes were observed in almost all segments of the population, especially among people over 55 years of age (the share of positive assessments decreased by 10 percentage points, from 65 to 55%).

The share of positive assessments of social mood did not change only in two groups: people with higher and incomplete higher education (68–70%), and people aged 30–55 (69%).

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 (+/-), June 2023 to	
	2000	2007	2011	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	June 2022	Aug. 2022	Oct. 2022	Dec. 2022	Feb. 2023	Apr. 2023	June 2023	June 2022	Apr. 2023	
Sex																			
Men	50.1	65.9	64.5	69.1	72.8	70.1	60.8	65.7	66.8	67.4	69.9	65.0	64.7	62.5	65.4	63.4	-4	-2	
Women	43.3	61.7	62.0	65.8	69.8	69.6	61.2	67.4	67.9	69.7	70.2	63.3	66.5	62.7	63.4	64.7	-5	+1	
Age																			
Under 30	59.1	71.3	70.0	72.3	80.0	81.1	67.6	73.5	77.6	77.3	77.8	74.5	78.7	70.6	72.9	72.9	-4	0	
30–55	44.2	64.8	62.5	67.9	72.6	71.2	61.8	69.5	69.4	68.8	72.0	65.2	68.5	63.9	67.7	68.6	0	+1	
Over 55	37.4	54.8	58.3	62.1	65.2	63.3	57.4	60.5	61.1	65.3	64.6	58.7	57.2	58.1	56.9	55.4	-10	-2	
Education																			
Secondary and incomplete secondary	41.7	58.4	57.4	57.2	64.8	63.2	56.1	62.1	64.6	65.8	68.5	58.9	62.7	57.2	60.2	61.6	-4	+1	
Secondary vocational	46.4	64.6	63.6	66.7	72.2	72.7	63.5	66.7	68.3	70.5	71.0	65.8	64.3	63.7	65.1	63.7	-7	-1	
Higher and incomplete higher	53.3	68.6	68.3	77.0	76.8	73.4	63.3	71.5	69.5	69.7	70.8	67.5	70.6	67.3	67.3	68.2	-2	+1	
Income group																			
Bottom 20%	28.4	51.6	45.3	51.5	57.3	53.2	43.4	54.6	57.0	58.4	55.4	50.7	55.4	46.2	47.8	50.4	-8	+3	
Middle 60%	45.5	62.9	65.3	68.7	71.9	71.4	62.6	67.3	68.1	70.3	73.2	65.9	66.1	62.2	64.4	65.7	-5	+1	
Top 20%	64.6	74.9	75.3	81.1	82.9	81.8	75.6	79.9	78.3	75.7	77.0	78.7	74.9	73.8	78.2	72.1	-4	-6	
Territory																			
Vologda	49.2	63.1	67.1	73.6	71.0	68.6	60.9	60.3	59.8	61.0	61.5	55.7	57.2	54.5	56.0	57.8	-3	+2	
Cherepovets	50.8	68.1	71.2	76.2	75.8	71.2	60.4	71.0	71.2	72.8	74.6	67.9	69.1	65.9	68.4	67.9	-5	-1	
Districts	42.2	61.6	57.1	59.8	68.7	69.8	61.4	67.8	69.5	70.6	72.3	66.6	68.5	65.3	66.6	65.6	-5	-1	
Oblast	46.2	63.6	63.1	67.3	71.2	69.9	61.0	66.6	67.4	68.7	70.1	64.1	65.7	62.6	64.3	64.1	-5	0	

RESUME

The next round of the public opinion monitoring took place in May – June 2023 against the background of aggravated threats to national security, primarily of a military and terrorist nature, among which we should highlight the drone attack on residential areas of Moscow (May 30), the beginning of the AFU counteroffensive (June 4), the terrorist attack on the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant carried out on the night of June 5 to 6, 2023⁵.

However, according to the results of the surveys, these events did not lead to a significant increase in social tension. According to key monitoring indicators, public opinion remains stable:

- ✓ the level of support for the President of the Russian Federation (61%) and the Government of the Russian Federation (49%) remain high;
- ✓ the share of people who believe that the United Russia party, which makes up the majority in the State Duma, expresses their interests has not changed (39%);
- ✓ there are no negative changes in the dynamics of the assessment of the standard of living (the share of the “poor and extremely poor” remained at the level of 30–31%) and the prospects for its development (the consumer sentiment index was 83–84 points); moreover, in the past 12 months, there has been a significant increase in the share of those who believe that the RF President is successfully coping with the problem of economic recovery and welfare growth (by 6 percentage points, from 31 to 37%);
- ✓ estimates of social mood remain consistently high (the proportion of those who experience predominantly positive emotions was 64%; 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%).

These data indicate that the society retains a high potential for stability, support for the head of state and the goals of the SMO. According to the latest VCIOM data (as of February 2023), 68% of Russians support the decision of the head of state to conduct the special military operation; 20% of the population holds the opposite opinion⁶.

At the same time, according to the results of VolRC RAS surveys, over the past year (June 2022 – June 2023) the majority of the main socio-demographic groups showed a decrease in the proportion of those who positively characterize their daily emotional state. Moreover, this applies not only to low-income groups (where the share of positive assessments of social mood decreased by 8 percentage points, from 58 to 50%), but also urban residents (a decrease of 3–5 percentage points, from 61 to 58% in Vologda and from 73 to 68% in Cherepovets), people aged over 55 (by 10 percentage points, from 65 to 55%), persons with secondary vocational education (by 7 percentage points, from 71 to 64%), etc.

The main negative changes in the dynamics of social well-being occurred in 2019–2020 (against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic): the share of positive assessments for this period decreased by 9 percentage points (from 70 to 61%), negative changes were registered in all major population groups. In this context, we can point out that in 2021–2022, estimates of social mood stabilized (at the level of 67%).

⁵ The survey took place before the events of June 24, related to the attempted armed rebellion organized by E. Prigozhin, head of the PMC Wagner.

⁶ Special military operation: A year later. VCIOM analytical review. February 20, 2023. Available at: <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/specialnaja-voennaja-operacija-god-spustja>

However, the general decline in the share of positive characteristics of social well-being in the annual retrospective indicates in many ways that the patience of society is an exhaustible resource, and, like any other resource, it requires “replenishment” in the form of tangible successes on the front line and in addressing issues of social justice in the rear.

In both cases, the situation remains quite tense so far. Official reports of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation⁷, public statements of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief⁸, as well as the assessments of military experts⁹ clearly indicate that the attempts at counteroffensive strikes on the part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine have not yet been successful. But we should also note that “the offensive potential of the enemy has not been exhausted, a number of strategic reserves have not yet been used ... and it is necessary to proceed from the realities”¹⁰.

As for the issues related to bringing the public administration system in line with the principles of the welfare state and social justice, their solution is designed rather for the long term and will actually be implemented after the end of the hostilities.

Many of these questions were asked to the RF President by war correspondents during a meeting on June 13, 2023: about the personnel promotion of the military who distinguished themselves during the SMO; about payments to participants in hostilities; about people leading anti-Russian propaganda in the rear, etc.¹¹ And judging by the answers of the head of state, the solution of a significant part of these problems is in the process of implementation. The President openly acknowledged the accumulated nature of difficulties and shortcomings in many areas of public life (in the space industry, in the work of the military-industrial complex, in the functioning of the bureaucratic system. etc.), but he still noted that “in general, the situation is changing for the better”, “there is groundwork in all areas” and, no less important, it was the SMO that has revealed the situation when “it became clear that many things are missing”¹².

Thus, the absence of tangible positive changes in key indicators of public opinion monitoring in May – June 2023, taking into account the increased military and terrorist threats to national security, can be attributed more to the “pros” than to the “cons”. But it must be borne in mind that society is still waiting for the SMO goals to be fully achieved, and then positive changes will begin to occur in the internal life of the country; besides, society pins its hopes on the head of state. And these hopes cannot but be justified.

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⁷ See, for example: Meeting of the President with Permanent members of the Security Council. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/71482>

⁸ See, for example: The President’s answer to a journalist’s question about the situation at the front. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/71474>

⁹ See, for example: The expert recognized the fact of the failure of the first wave of the AFU counteroffensive (opinion of K. Sivkov. Doctor of Military Sciences. Captain 1st rank. retired). Available at: <https://voennoedelo.com/posts/id46045-konstatirovan-fakt-provala-pervoj-volny-nastuplenija-vsu>

¹⁰ Meeting of the President with Permanent members of the Security Council. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/71482>

¹¹ Vladimir Putin’s meeting with war correspondents. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/71391>

¹² Ibidem.