

Poll Finds 44% View Vote as Credible

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Fewer than half of Russians believe that the results of the March 4 presidential election are genuine, according to a new survey put out Thursday by state-run polling organization VTsIOM.

The poll asked respondents to what degree the election results could be trusted, and only 44 percent of respondents said the results were credible and "consistent with the will of voters."

Supporters of President-elect Vladimir Putin made up 66 percent of this group, the poll found.

VTsIOM head Valery Fyodorov told Kommersant that the "poll shows a decrease in trust of one concrete institution — elections."

"But as we see, it is not a radical decrease," he said, adding that "it could have been even worse if not for the countermeasures taken by Putin and his team over the course of three months," referring to web cameras and transparent ballot boxes installed at polling places.

Sixty-nine percent of those surveyed thought that the cameras were effective in preventing

fraud, and 61 percent said they placed high trust in the effectiveness of citizen observers and organizations like the League of Voters.

Communist Party official Sergei Obukhov told Kommersant that falling confidence confirms that the election was "unfair, unfree and illegitimate."

When asked whether they were aware of violations and where they had learned of them, 34 percent said they had heard of fraud from television, radio or printed media, while 55 percent had not heard of any.

Only 9 percent said they had heard about violations from the Internet, although social media tools like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube were among the most actively used platforms for sharing information about violations.

The results of the poll contrast with responses from the 2004 and 2008 elections, after each of which 53 percent of poll respondents said they trusted the election results.

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