The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Poll: Fewer Russians Want to Emigrate Than in 1991

By Jonathan Earle

March 26, 2012

The percentage of Russians who say they want to leave the country has dropped by half since last summer and is now lower than it was in the final days of the Soviet Union, according to a new poll.

Eleven percent of all respondents told the state-run VTsIOM pollster that they would probably want to emigrate, a significant drop since June, when 22 percent said they would like to move abroad.

In 1991, with the Soviet Union on its deathbed, 16 percent said they wanted to emigrate.

Prior to the March 4 presidential election, some speculated that a victory by Vladimir Putin would cause a spike in emigration. But Svetlana Gannushkina, of Memorial's migrant rights division, said the findings cut to the core of what drove anti-Putin street protests, with those in the opposition now seeing themselves as empowered stakeholders in the country's future

who have a reason to stay.

"People began to feel that they're not alone, that something can and must be done. ... Regardless of Putin's return to the presidency, this is our country, and we can be responsible for it," she told Kommersant.

VTsIOM found that the most likely emigrants are young people, with 25 percent of 18-24 year olds saying they want to leave Russia, down from 39 percent in the June poll.

Additionally, the new poll found that 19 percent of active Internet users and 25 percent of supporters of former presidential hopeful Mikhail Prokhorov say they want to leave.

"These are precisely the people who would like change," Yury Dzhinbladze, president of the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, told Kommersant.

By comparison, only 6 percent of supporters of President-elect Vladimir Putin said they would like to leave, according to the poll. The survey was conducted after the March 4 election that Putin won by a wide margin.

Of those who want to emigrate, 24 percent said they planned to do so in the next five years, while 39 percent hadn't thought about when they might leave and 17 percent weren't sure.

The older the respondents, the less likely they were to want to leave: 25-35 year olds (14 percent), 35-44 year olds (13 percent), 45-59 year olds (7 percent) and people over 60 (1 percent).

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/03/26/poll-fewer-russians-want-to-emigrate-than-in-1991-a13553