The Moscow Times
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Putin's Popularity on the Rise, Poll Says

By The Moscow Times

July 26, 2012



Levada Center pollsters found that 67 percent of respondents backed Putin's decisions and leadership in July. **Maxim Stulov**

President Vladimir Putin remains the country's most popular politician, and an increasing number of Russians approve of his work as head of state, a poll released Thursday showed.

Sixty-seven percent of respondents backed Putin's decisions and leadership in July, as opposed to 64 percent in June, pollsters from the independent Levada Center told Interfax. Forty-one percent said they trusted Putin, a 4 percent rise over the previous month.

The same survey, which gave no margin of error, found significantly less support for Putin's protege, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, whom 23 percent of respondents trusted. Fifty-nine percent, however, approved of Medvedev's work.

Among the 10 most popular politicians in the country, respondents also named Moscow region Governor Sergei Shoigu (whom 11 percent trusted), Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov (11 percent) and Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky (10 percent).

Other less popular figures included tycoon Mikhail Prokhorov (5 percent) and Patriarch Kirill (3 percent), while 18 percent said they didn't trust a single Russian politician.

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