

Russia Remains in Last Place for Public Trust

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Trust in the government is extremely low, leading to frequent protests. **Vladimir Filonov**

The level of trust in government officials and business executives remains dramatically low in Russia, with most residents saying they are more inclined to rely on their colleagues and independent experts, a research company said Tuesday.

Only 5 percent of Russians believe that any government official tends to tell the truth, while the share of those believing in business leaders stands at 12 percent, global communications firm Edelman said in its annual Trust Barometer survey.

"We're clearly experiencing a crisis in leadership," the company's president and chief executive, Richard Edelman, said in a statement. He recommended that business leaders and governmental officials become more engaged into dialogue with the general public, as well as activists and experts.

In an opposite trend, 71 percent of local respondents showed confidence in scientists, while 52 percent said they rely on their peers as credible sources of information about the companies they work at.

To compile the Trust Barometer, Edelman surveyed over 30,000 people aged 18 to 64 across 26 countries, including both developed and emerging economies.

The survey echoed the findings released by state-run pollster VTsIOM earlier this month, which indicated that trust in President Vladimir Putin had dropped dramatically over the last year. Only 16 percent of Russians believe that their leader will fulfill his election promises, down from 37 percent in 2012.

The share of those who said the president won't deliver on his promises increased from 15 percent in 2012 to 19 percent this year, while most respondents believe that only part of the promises will be fulfilled.

Russia maintained last place in Edelman's ranking of the level of public trust in government and non-government organizations, business and media in 26 countries. The share of Russian respondents showing some degree of confidence in all four kinds of institutions reached 36 percent this year, a slight increase from 32 percent in 2012 but still significantly below the global average of 57 percent.

China took first place in the ranking, with 80 percent of its population showing confidence.

In Russia, the corporate sector in general and non-government organizations enjoy the highest level of trust, with the latter seeing the biggest jump versus last year, from 28 percent to 40 percent.

The same number of respondents showed trust in business in general, with companies working in the technology sector, as well as carmakers and telecommunications firms, enjoying the highest level of confidence.

Media won 38 percent of supporters this year, up from 33 percent a year earlier, while government institutions were the least trusted among the four groups, having received only 29 percent of votes.

Fifty-seven percent of survey participants said the major reason for the lack of trust in government institutions is that fraud and corruption thrives there. Half of respondents said they don't trust the corporate sector for the same reasons.

Other reasons included "wrong incentives" driving business decisions and government policies; leaders' incompetence; a lack of regulation and control; and transparency issues.

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