

Russian Attitudes Toward Emigration Softened, Poll Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The attitudes of Russians toward their compatriots who have emigrated are softening, according to a poll carried out by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center.

Forty-eight percent of those surveyed said they understood why other Russians had left the country, citing personal comfort and security as justifiable priorities. This is up from 37 percent in 2008, Kommersant reported Thursday.

But 46 percent of respondents said that it is unpatriotic for Russians to leave the country they were brought up in.

Just 13 percent said they were considering emigrating permanently.

According to the state statistics service, Rosstat, the numbers of people leaving Russia had been steadily decreasing up until 2009. Emigration has been back on the rise since then

though, with 36,774 people relocating from Russia in 2011, according to the latest figures.

The number of Russians who expressed a desire to emigrate was inflated by those who only did so as a form of protest, Dr. Olga Kamenchuk, the research center's communications director, suggested.

Of those who declared their intention to leave the country, half had still not set out a time-frame, while only 5 percent said they were planning to emigrate in the next two years.

The most commonly cited reasons for wanting to move abroad included the chance of a better life, 58 percent, better opportunities to realize one's own potential, 21 percent, and more law and order, 7 percent.

Alexei Makarkin, first deputy president of the Center for Political Technologies, suggested an alternative reason.

"There is also a political factor: Citizens, especially the young, do not understand the recent past and therefore decide to emigrate," Makarkin said, adding that young people don't understand the state's message about the need for people to serve their country of birth.

"The number of those who wish to emigrate will only grow ... among the new generation," he said.

He also questioned the government's desire to halt this process as it predominantly sees politically active citizens leaving the country.

The poll was conducted among 1,600 Russians in 130 population centers with a 3.4 percent margin of error.

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