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Over Half of Russians Say Life is Hard but Bearable, Poll Says

By The Moscow Times

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An elderly lady begs for money in the shadow of Moscow luxury department store "Tsum," , a common sight on the streets of Russia. **Igor Tabakov**

Some 57 percent of Russians feel that life is hard but bearable, according to a new survey, five percentage points higher than in 2011.

According to poll results released by the independent Levada Center, 25 percent of respondents said the phrase "things aren't that bad, it's livable" best sums up their view of life, a 4 percent drop compared to two years ago.

A total of 15 percent said that "our disastrous situation is intolerable" best expressed their feelings, against 17 percent in 2011 and 32 percent in 1994, while three percent did not answer, a total unchanged since the last poll.

The data represents a shift from a similar survey conducted during Russia's economic crisis in

September 1998, when 61 percent of respondents said they found life unbearable and only 3 percent were pleased.

The number of Russians who believe they have found new opportunities for achievement has increased over the past decade, from 7 percent in 2003 to 12 percent this year.

But economic hardships persist for many, with 31 percent saying they struggle to make ends meet and 23 percent saying they had given up all but the most basic needs.

The survey was conducted from Sept. 20 to 24, 2013 among 1,601 urban and rural residents aged 18 and above in 130 cities, towns and villages across 45 Russian regions. The statistical margin of error does is not above 3.4 percent, the pollster says.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

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