

Poll Shows Russians See Ukraine Drifting Away

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Flags of the EU and Ukraine fly in Kiev. **Andrew Bossi**

Some 40 percent of Russians believe that Ukraine is drifting further away from Moscow and toward closer relations with the European Union and the U.S., a survey released Tuesday indicates.

That figure, obtained in a poll by the Levada Center ahead of Ukraine's planned signing of a free trade deal with the EU later this month, is up 8 percentage points from last year's results, when 32 percent of respondents said that Ukraine was distancing itself from Moscow. In a 2011 poll 21 percent of respondents thought so, Interfax reported.

Another 32 percent of respondents said that Ukraine was vacillating between Moscow and the West, compared to 36 percent last year and 38 percent in 2011, while 14 percent said that Ukraine is seeking closer ties with Moscow, compared to 19 percent last year and 29 percent the year before.

About a half of respondents said they would like to see Ukraine as an independent nation, but with friendly political relations and close economic ties with Russia. Another 35 percent would like Ukraine to be under Moscow's political and economic control, the poll indicates.

Amid the perception that Ukraine is drifting further away, 47 percent of respondents said they expected no change in the Russian-Ukrainian relations, compared to 51 percent last year and 50 percent the year before, while 19 percent expect relations to sour and 17 percent expect an improvement.

The majority of Russians, 61 percent, view Ukraine as Moscow's backyard where they can go for a holiday, while another 37 percent see it as an independent state. More than a half of the respondents said they would like to see the Russian-Ukrainian border to remain free of additional controls, while 23 percent supported introducing visa requirements for travel between the two countries.

No margin of error was given for the poll conducted in late October among 1,603 people in 130 cities and towns across Russia.

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