Majority of Russians See Britain as a Friendly Nation

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The British Embassy building in Moscow.

A majority of Russians continue to see Britain in a favorable light and would like to visit it sometime despite tensions between Russia and Western countries over the political turmoil in Crimea.

Fifty-three percent of those polled said they considered Britain to be a friendly nation while 29 percent said Britain was hostile in its stance toward Russia, a poll conducted by the state-owned Public Opinion Foundation concluded.

Asked whether they had noticed a change in Russia's relationship with Britain over the past year, 66 percent of respondents said that relations had not changed or gotten better.

When asked to say what associations they had with Great Britain, the largest portion of respondents, 12 percent, replied with answers related to the nation's monarchy, followed by 9 percent who responded by mentioning tourist attractions like Big Ben.

Britain continues to be a dream travel destination for ordinary Russians, with 52 percent saying they would like to go there someday, though only two percent have already gone there. Young people with higher education showed the greatest desire to head to the island nation, 71 percent, while 69 percent of people over 60 years old said they would not want to visit.

However getting to see the sights in Britain has become a little more difficult recently, as the British Embassy visa process has experiencing technical difficulties. The British Embassy in Moscow said Tuesday it hoped to complete 90 percent of the pending applications within 15 work days but that at least 118 applicants, most of them students, would not be able to fly to Britain according to plan, Interfax reported.

The public opinion poll was conducted on March 8 and 9, among 1500 respondents in 43 Russian regions and carried a margin of error of 3.6 percent.