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Most Russians See Western Sanctions as Attempt to Undermine Russia

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Most Russians see Western sanctions imposed on Russia over its annexation of Crimea as an attempt to weaken and humiliate the country, a new survey showed.

The poll, conducted by the independent Levada Center pollster and published Tuesday, showed that 71 percent of respondents shared that view.

Western countries have said the sanctions were imposed on Russia over its policy in Ukraine, where Western leaders claim pro-Russian separatists have received backing from the Kremlin to fight the new authorities in Kiev.

Another 18 percent of respondents to the poll described the sanctions as an attempt to rebalance the geopolitical scales after Russia's acquisition of Crimea in March. Only 4 percent of respondents said they saw the sanctions as a genuine attempt to stop the conflict in Ukraine.

The majority of respondents — 69 percent — also said the continuation of fighting in eastern

Ukraine was advantageous to the U.S. administration, while 23 percent considered the conflict to be beneficial to the new authorities in Kiev. Only 4 percent said the fighting was in some way advantageous to Russia.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents said Russia should continue its current policies in Ukraine despite Western sanctions, compared with 22 percent who said Russia should seek a compromise to get the sanctions revoked.

Most respondents shrugged off the effects of both the Western sanctions and Russia's tit-for-tat ban on Western imports, with 39 percent saying they would most likely not affect them or their families.

The European Union and the U.S. have both repeatedly imposed sanctions on Russia's economic, defense and finance sectors, as well as on numerous Russian officials, over Moscow's alleged involvement in the Ukrainian conflict.

The poll was conducted from Sept. 19-22 among 1,600 adults and had a margin of error not exceeding 3.4 percent.

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