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National Unity Day: Only Half of Russians Know What It Is, Poll Shows

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The main nationalist event, the "Russian March," sees about 20,000 demonstrators brandishing all manner of banners, imperial flags and icons in their march across Moscow.

One in two Russians are not certain what their country will be celebrating this Tuesday, with some planning to honor the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution even though they know it is not the official reason for the day off work, a recent poll indicated.

Out of those questioned in the survey published Friday by independent pollster Levada Center, 54 percent identified the correct name of the holiday — National Unity Day.

The remaining respondents were split among various other possibilities, with top choices being the now-defunct Day of Accord and Reconciliation, with 22 percent, followed by the October Revolution Day, with 5 percent.

Another 16 percent said they simply did not know, the poll showed.

But asked what, if anything, they would personally celebrate, 12 percent of respondents opted for the anniversary of the October Revolution — a much larger number than those who thought that was the official reason for the celebration.

President Vladimir Putin established Nov. 4 as National Unity Day in 2005, but only 8 percent of Russians knew the correct name of the holiday that year, according to Levada Center's previous polling data cited in the report.

The holiday, which commemorates Russia's defeat of Polish invaders in 1612, replaced the Day of Accord and Reconciliation, established by former President Boris Yeltsin following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Before that, Nov. 7 was celebrated in the Soviet Union as the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The holiday is also the occasion for nationalists to stage street rallies, known as "Russian Marches."

This year, one of the marches will take place in Moscow's southeastern neighborhoods of Lyublino and Marino, accommodating up to 10,000 people, Interfax reported.

The second street gathering, set to host a maximum of 5,000 participants, will take place in the northwestern neighborhood of Shchukino.

The poll was conducted on Oct. 24-27 among 1,600 people in 46 Russian regions. The margin of error did not exceed 3.4 percentage points.

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