

Poll: Russians Haven't Been This Positive About Their Country in 5 Years

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The annexation of the Crimea Peninsula on the Black Sea from Ukraine last March was a hit with the Russian public, sending President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings soaring.

Russians are more positive about their country than they have been since the state-run Public Opinion Research Center began surveys for its social sentiment index five years ago, the pollster said Tuesday.

The index, based on a comparison of respondents' assessments ranging from "everything is terrible" to "everything is excellent," reached its high of 70 points regarding attitudes toward the country in March this year, compared with 22 points in early 2010 and 2011.

Respondents were even happier about their own lives, with that aspect of the index reaching 81 points, slightly below the previous month's high of 84 points, compared with 55 and 53 in 2010-11.

The index is established by calculating the difference between the number of people who had positive responses and the number who had negative responses.

While the pollster did not give any specific reasons for the high spirits, Russia's isolation from the West amid the Ukraine crisis may have something to do with it.

Russia's severe economic downturn amid the sanctions war, as well as a deluge of criticism of the West in the national media, has contributed to a surge of patriotism among the Russian people. The annexation of the Crimea Peninsula on the Black Sea from Ukraine last March was also a hit with the Russian public, sending President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings soaring.

The Public Opinion Research Center, commonly known by its Russian acronym VTsIOM, said the survey considered the opinions of 1,600 respondents across 46 Russian regions.

The poll had a statistical margin of error of no more than 3.5 percent, the researcher said in an online statement.

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