

# Poll: Russians Dislike West About as Much as Westerners Dislike Russia

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A staggering majority of Russians view the West negatively, and the feeling is mutual, a poll conducted by the U.S.-based Pew Research Center revealed Wednesday.

According to the poll, 81% of Russians have unfavorable opinions of the United States, and 80% feel similarly about NATO. The European Union fared slightly better, with 60% of Russians harboring negative views toward it.

This general anti-Western sentiment may stem from the fact that popular Russian opinion dictates that the West is to blame for many woes.

One-third of Russians attribute the current economic crisis to Western sanctions imposed against their country in connection with the conflict in eastern Ukraine. And half of them believe Western nations are to blame for the ongoing violence in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russians continue to sing the praises of President Vladimir Putin. Despite the fact that 73 percent are unhappy with the country's economic situation, 66 percent of Russians hold highly favorable views of their leader.

And despite the economic woes and diplomatic tiffs, the number of Russians who hold their own country in very high regard has soared 40 percentage points since 2013, to 69 percent at present.

In the West, the opposite trend can be observed, with many primarily blaming Russia for the ongoing Ukraine crisis. Respondents from several key member nations were polled for the Pew survey, including the United States, Britain, Germany, Poland, France, Italy, Spain and Canada.

Of these countries combined, a median of 39 percent said Russia is the main villain in the Ukraine conflict. Half said Russia poses a major military threat to other neighboring nations.

Most of the Western respondents said they viewed Russia negatively, with only 25 percent saying they look fondly at the country. Russia's median favorability among these countries has dropped 11 percentage points, to 26 percent at present. Putin's median favorability also took a dive, down from 28 percent in 2007 to 16 percent currently.

When asked how the West should help fix the Ukraine conflict, most respondents voiced a preference for the option of economic aid over military aid.

Only 41 percent of respondents expressed the view that NATO should send arms to Ukraine. A median 70 percent opined that Western countries should send economic aid to the embattled nation.

The survey was conducted among 11,116 respondents between April and May. The pollster did not reveal the survey's overall margin of error.

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