

# Russians Name Utilities Payments as Most Noticeable Price Hikes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Of all price increases in the last two months, Russians most keenly felt hikes in housing and utilities payments, state-sponsored pollster VTsIOM reported Thursday.

Increases in housing and utilities payments were noticed by 82 percent of the poll's respondents, and 47 percent of those polled said the rise was "significant."

In second place among areas in which respondents said they had noticed price rises was meat: 79 percent of Russians said meat products had become more expensive.

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Gasoline price increases were noticed by 67 percent of Russians, while public transport ticket

prices were considered the most inflation-resistant.

The poll by VTsIOM was conducted in 46 regions among 1,600 participants and had a margin of error not exceeding 3.5 percent.

“It's important that price increases were noticed mostly by low-income groups of the population — the ones who cannot switch to cheaper food and goods [because they already buy the cheapest available],” said VTsIOM expert Yulia Baskakova in a report accompanying the poll results.

And those groups account for a large proportion of the population: One-third of the survey's participants said they only spent money on food, and were barely making ends meet, said Baskakova.

Russia inflation dropped slightly in September to 15.7 percent year-on-year.

Deputy Energy Minister Vyacheslav Kravchenko told Ekho Moskvyy radio Tuesday that Russian people owed 40 billion rubles (\$643 million) for electricity.

When industrial and agricultural users and state-funded organizations are added into the equation, the overall electricity debt totals 200 billion rubles (\$3.1 billion). Unpaid bills for gas, water, heating, housing and utilities are now worth nearly 900 billion rubles (\$13 billion), said the official.

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