

Latvians' Negativity Toward Russia Reaches 7-Year High

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A Latvian (L) flag flutters in the wind next to a Russian flag near a hotel in Daugavpils, Latvia.

Nearly half of Latvians (46 percent) have a negative view of Russia: the highest number in seven years, data from Latvian market researcher SKDS published on Twitter shows.

Forty-one percent of those polled this year said they had a positive view of Russia and 13 percent responded that they could not say, the data published last week showed.

The results of a similar poll conducted in 2008 showed that 33 percent of Latvians viewed Russia negatively that year.

Russia's image took its sharpest hit between July 2013 and July 2014, when the number of Latvians who viewed the country negatively soared from 30 percent to 43 percent, the data showed.

Opinions of the United States also hit their lowest levels in seven years, with 43 percent of Latvians having a negative opinion of the country. Twenty-seven percent of Latvians also had

a negative view of the European Union, though the trend is positive: 63 percent of Latvians hold a positive view of the EU this year compared with only 42 percent in 2008.

The survey questioned 1,000 people in August and had a margin of error of 3 percent, SKDS said.

Relations between Moscow and Baltic states Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have become increasingly strained since Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine last year, leading to fears of a similar Moscow-led incursion into the former Soviet republics, which have sizable Russian-speaking minorities.

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