

The Russian Youth Are Packing Their Bags

Sociologists have noted a growth in young Russians' desire to emigrate. The Kremlin should be worried.

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According to sociologists, young Russians are increasingly eager to emigrate. This trend warrants serious consideration from the Kremlin and not just abstract responses. Russia's emigration-fever casts serious doubt on the country's potential for economic growth in the current era of technological development.

On Monday, the Levada polling center [published](#) the results of a survey which found that 82 percent of Russians do not intend to move abroad on a permanent basis. However, the number of young people who want to live abroad stands at 41 percent, and this number is only growing. In May 2017, 32 percent of 18–24 year olds surveyed stated a desire to live abroad.

According to Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, these findings aren't a cause for alarm. He claimed that the number of young people interested in emigrating wasn't that high and that "it's all relative" — a convenient response, but not a serious stance.

Of course, the desire to move abroad does not always materialize. But just the fact that young people are willing to leave should be a cause for alarm. After all, they are the most active and innovative members of the population and are more inclined to take the kind of risks that could spur Russia's economic development.

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From the point of view of the Russian Federal State Statistics Services, the scale of emigration doesn't seem too frightening. However, through the 2010s, there has been a discernible rise in Russians permanently leaving the country: 14,206 in 2011 versus 51,281 between January and November 2018.

The most qualified and ambitious young people are the ones who are leaving the country. The percentage of Russian emigrants with a higher education hovers between 30 and 50 percent, with Canada and Australia seen as the most popular destinations.

What's more, official statistics don't take into account those who have gone abroad to study or on part-time contracts and have ended up staying.

According to [data](#) from The Boston Consulting Group, 59 percent of respondents under 21 and 57 percent between the ages of 21 and 30 would like to work abroad. Over half of the respondents were IT specialists and scientists who felt inspired by the success stories of other Russian emigrants.

The survey data showed Russia's "brain drain" continues and could complicate the potential for technological breakthroughs the government has in mind.

Very strange then, that this desire to emigrate doesn't alarm the authorities.

Pavel Aptekar is a columnist at the Vedomosti business daily, where a version of this [article](#) was originally published. The views and opinions expressed in opinion pieces do not necessarily reflect the position of The Moscow Times.

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