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Nearly Half of Russians Oppose 4-Day Work Week, Poll Says

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Nearly half of Russians say they wouldn't support a switch to a four-day work week over fears that it would reduce their earnings, a new poll has said.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said that a shift to a four-day work week is "very likely" to happen as a way to help workers overcome burnout and chronic fatigue. Despite long hours at work, the Russian workforce's productivity is among the lowest of the world's major economies.

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Forty-eight percent of Russians oppose the idea of a four-day work week, according to a new survey published by the state-run VTsIOM pollster on Monday, while about one-third (29%) say they would have a positive reaction to a shortened work week.

"Russians' fears are mainly associated with the likely [subsequent] reduction in income, which is critical for pensioners and villagers — the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population," Valery Fyodorov, the head of VTsIOM, said. "Supporters of shorter work weeks, on the other hand, expect to use their free time more productively and to improve the balance between their work, leisure and personal life as a result."

When asked how the transition would affect their earnings, 82 percent of respondents said a reduced working week would lead to lower salaries, while 15 percent said it would have no effect on earnings.

Sixty-seven percent of Russians also said that shortening the work week would lead to lower productivity, while 29% said it would improve productivity.

Residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg and adults aged 25-34 were most likely to support a four-day work week, the poll said.

VTsIOM conducted its survey among 1,600 Russians aged 18 years and older across the country on June 13.

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