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Most Russians Want 'Decisive' Change – Study

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Russians want higher wages and standards of living. **Donat Sorokin / TASS**

The share of Russians who say the country needs sweeping changes has grown to 59% this year, according to new research from the Carnegie Moscow Center and the independent Levada Center pollster cited by the Vedomosti newspaper Wednesday.

"There's increasing dissatisfaction with the work of the state," Vedomosti quoted Levada sociologist and co-author Denis Volkov as saying. "New people are needed, but it's unclear which ones."

The number of Russians wanting "decisive, large-scale" changes has risen for the second consecutive year, increasing from 57% in 2018 and 42% in 2017.

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Some 53% of the respondents said only serious reforms to Russia's existing political system

could bring about the needed changes. Another 34% said the changes are possible within the existing system, according to Carnegie and Levada's research.

When asked to identify the specific changes they want to see, 24% of the respondents named higher wages and standards of living. They were followed by 13% who wanted a different government and president and 11% who wanted lower drug and utility costs.

Meanwhile, 31% of respondents favored gradual changes in Russia while 8% opposed any changes.

Andrei Kolesnikov, chairman of Carnegie Moscow Center's domestic politics program, warned that "populist" demands for changes are unrealistic and said the government is trying to address these demands from within the system.

"People expect changes on a silver platter without paying anything for them. They're not ready for changes in the social sector except for [getting an] additional education," Vedomosti quoted Kolesnikov as saying.

Respondents were more likely to name state bureaucrats as most resistant to change (69%), followed by oligarchs and big business (67%) and President Vladimir Putin (25%).

The Carnegie Moscow Center and Levada carried out the study in July 2019.

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