

More Russians See 'Hard Times'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

August 26, 2010

The  **Moscow Times**

Confidence in the health of the economy plunged in August with more people predicting “hard times ahead,” according to a poll published Thursday by VTsIOM.

VTsIOM’s economic sentiment index fell to 5 points this month from 15 in July, after peaking at 24 in May, the researcher said. The index is compiled from a survey of 1,600 people in 42 regions.

The proportion of people who are optimistic about the Russian economy dropped by 7 percentage points to 41 percent, while those who are pessimistic rose by 12 points to 36 percent, according to VTsIOM. People living in central Russia and the Urals district tend to be more pessimistic, while those in the south and Far East are more optimistic, the survey shows.

VTsIOM released the index for the first time this month and has conducted the survey since March, said Ilona Gezalyan a spokeswoman for the research center. The margin of error is 3.4 percentage points.

A separate survey found that the proportion of people expecting “hard times” rose to 30 percent in August from 27 percent in July, VTsIOM said. The hard times survey has been conducted since 1991. It reached a peak of 67 percent in May 1992 and dropped to a record-low of 25 percent in June 2008.

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