

Russia Last in BRICS For Faith in Business

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Russia has seen the degree of confidence in its authorities falling dramatically this year in the wake of recent anti-government protests, as a survey said Wednesday that only 26 percent of respondents trust the government, down from 39 percent in 2011.

The figure places Russia 17 percent below the world average, on par with Spain, Italy, Poland and France, according to the Edelman Trust Barometer that surveyed 30,000 people in 25 countries.

Growing mistrust of government officials is an emerging trend across the world, and "the falling trust in authorities and nongovernmental institutions is most visible in Russia," Edelman said in a statement.

Edelman, an international public relations firm, has included Russia in the survey since 2007. This year, it surveyed 1,000 members of the general public and 200 representatives of the elite

who influence public opinion, aged 25 to 64, across the country.

One reason behind the lack of trust is the sharp increase of prices at the beginning of last year, said Alexander Oslon, president of the Public Opinion Fund.

"The issue is not whether people trust the government or not, but what they have in their pockets or see on a price label," he told a business forum organized by the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

The respondents also appeared to have a lack of trust in nongovernmental organizations, with the number of survey participants reporting they have confidence in such organizations falling from 42 percent in 2011 to 28 percent this year.

Confidence in the country's media also declined to 33 percent from 37 percent last year, with a distinct shift of trust from traditional to social media, the survey said.

A total of 13 percent of respondents said they trust social media like blogs and social networks, up from 12 percent last year. The level of trust in traditional media dropped from 20 percent in 2011 to 9 percent this year.

Meanwhile, the level of confidence in business remained stable, with 41 percent of Russians indicating that they trust domestic companies, unchanged from last year's figure.

However, Russia still lags behind its BRICS peers, such as China, which topped the list with 71 percent of respondents saying they trust business, the survey said.

"Business in Russia still doesn't meet society's expectations — primarily from the point of view of the quality of goods and services, readiness to engage in a constructive dialog with consumers, introducing transparent business practices, and ensuring a favorable work climate inside a company," Edelman said in the statement.

Among the sectors Russians trust least are banking and financial services, while the most trusted is the information technology industry, Robert Phillips, the company's president and chief executive for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, said at the forum.

Respondents said they would feel more confident if companies provided goods and services of a high quality, addressed society's needs, put customers above profits, followed the norms of business ethics and developed innovations.

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