

British Companies Blame Media for Lack of Investment in Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Leading British and Russian companies see big opportunities in each other's countries but are not investing because of a barrage of negative media reports about Russia, according to a new survey.

The survey of about 100 business leaders found that 70 percent of the British participants and 66 percent of the Russians felt optimistic about the business climate in the other side's country, and more than half of all participants believed the climate had improved over the past five years, according to the [Russian-British Business Barometer](#).

But more than half also said they had no plans to invest in the other side's country in the next year, according to the survey conducted by Portland, an international strategic communications consultancy, in partnership with the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce.

The key factor influencing the reluctance to invest are negative perceptions of Russia in the

Western media.

Eighty percent of British investors feel that Western media coverage of Russia and Russian business has a negative impact on investment decision making, while 75 percent of Russian investors share the same sentiment, the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce said in a statement.

"What's clear from our research is that while British investors recognize the opportunity, the majority are still unduly influenced by the backdrop of negative headlines which paint an inaccurate picture of the reality on the ground," said Portland associate director Paul Slinger. "Although a sizable minority of British businesses are actively pursuing new opportunities there are many that are potentially missing out."

A report accompanying the survey said business leaders needed to find ways "to counter the media's steady trickle of negative headlines" in order to narrow the gap between perception and reality. The governments of both countries also have a role to play, it said.

"Bilateral governmental issues were seen by many as the key to unlocking the opportunities — even when it came to issues as basic as visa restrictions," the report said.

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