

Russia's Image Mostly Negative, Poll Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 04, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

Russia's image among citizens of other countries has taken a beating in recent years, with people in 39 countries around the world more likely to have negative opinions of Russia than positive ones, a survey published Tuesday showed.

The slump in other countries' perception of Russia comes as Moscow takes a lead role in the Syria crisis, where it has sided with the regime of embattled President Bashar Assad, and is preparing to host major events such as the G20 meeting of the world's leading economies this week, researchers who conducted the poll for the Pew Research Center noted.

In fact, they said Russia's increasing involvement in Middle Eastern affairs could help to explain why the majorities of Egyptians (64 percent), Israelis (77 percent), Jordanians (70 percent), Turks (66 percent), the Palestinian territories (57 percent) and Lebanese (53 percent) said they viewed Russia in a bad light.

Compared to six years ago, when the poll was first conducted, Russia's image has seen particularly steep falls in Jordan and Egypt, where the percentage of citizens with a positive view of Russia fell by 23 and 16 percentage points, respectively. The declines could reflect "dissatisfaction with Russia's involvement in Middle Eastern affairs," the Pew researchers said.

Between 2007 and 2013, Russia's image significantly improved in only Indonesia and Argentina, going up by seven percentage points in both countries, the poll found.

Europeans also took a dim view of Russia, with majorities in six countries — the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain — saying they saw their vast Eastern neighbor in a negative light. The British were divided over how they felt, with 39 percent saying they had a negative view of Russia compared with 38 percent who saw it positively.

Greece, meanwhile, was "the one country in Europe where warmer views of Russia prevail," the poll said: 63 percent of Greeks expressed a positive opinion of Russia compared with only 33 percent who were negative.

In 23 countries polled in Africa, Asia and the Americas, Russia got an easier ride: Only in Brazil, Japan, the Philippines and South Africa did a majority of respondents see Russia negatively.

In China, 39 percent viewed Russia favorably, while 49 percent said they saw Russia in an unfavorable light.

Russia can also take heart in the fact that, in the U.S., poll respondents took a kinder view of Russia than most Europeans, Middle Easterners and South Americans.

Although 43 percent of Americans saw Russia in a negative light, 37 percent had a favorable view of Russia, which, to cite just three examples, compares favorably with Brazil, where only 34 percent were positive about Russia, and Turkey and Pakistan, where just 19 percent of poll respondents in each country had a positive view of Russia.

The poll was conducted before U.S. intelligence leaker Edward Snowden fled to Russia, where he was eventually granted temporary asylum, and before tensions soared between Washington and Moscow over Syria after an apparent chemical weapons attack last month that the U.S. has blamed on the Assad regime — a claim that Syria and Russia vehemently deny.

About 800 to 1,200 people were interviewed by phone or face-to-face between March and May this year in each of the countries included in the poll except China, where more than 3,000 were polled.

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