

25% of Russians Think Government Is Corrupt, Poll Says

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A quarter of Russians think that the current government is corrupt.

One in four Russians think that the current government is corrupt and self-serving, while about one in eight have nothing bad to say whatsoever about the administration, a recent poll indicates.

The most common complaint of the government, selected by 41 percent of those questioned, is its perceived inability to deal with price inflation and a decline in income, a survey by the Levada Center pollster published on its website on Tuesday showed.

Around a quarter of Russians, 26 percent, take issue with what they perceive as a lack of a coherent economic development program.

A slightly lower number of 23 percent cited the government's inability to provide jobs, a lack of concern for social programs, with 22 percent, and a focus on serving the interests of big business, with 20 percent, as the government's main faults.

The number of Russians who think that the government is "corrupt and acts primarily to protect its own interests" totaled 25 percent, compared to a mere 7 percent a decade ago. The number had previously peaked at 22 percent in 2006 and seemed to have reached a relative plateau of 24 percent in 2012.

While the poll offered no explanation for those numbers, the mid- to late 2000s saw a mushrooming in the number of blogs and news websites — many of which exposed the government's misdoings — as a result of efforts to encourage mass use of the Internet in Russia.

A total of 12 percent of respondents saw no faults in the work of the government whatsoever.

While being out of a job may be no laughing matter, this does not seem to stop Russians from laughing. A separate poll by Levada, released on Sunday, showed that unemployed Russians were among those who laugh the most.

The number of Russians who said that they laugh often was 34 percent, compared to 40 percent in 2012 and 46 percent in 2006. The number was much higher among students, with 54 percent, and — perhaps less predictably — among the unemployed, with 43 percent. Those who laughed the least were residents of small villages, with 25 percent.

Both polls were conducted on March 21-24 among 1,603 people in 45 Russian regions. Each gave a margin of error of 3.4 percent.

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