

Russia Day Holiday Important for only 3% of Russians

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A man holding a Russian flag looks out of the car window in Sevastopol.

Only 3 percent of Russians consider the upcoming Russia Day national holiday, celebrated on June 12, among the important celebrations of the year, according to a recent poll by the analytical Levada Center.

By far the most significant holiday for Russians is New Year's, which more than 80 percent of respondents listed when asked which holidays were most important to them. Respondents could choose more than one answer. The birthdays of friends and loved ones had the next highest ranking, with 44 percent.

One's own birthday and Victory Day, celebrated on May 9, tied for the third and fourth places with 42 percent each.

Russia Day ranked the same on the importance scale as wedding anniversaries, which also

scored 3 percent, according to the poll. But it beat the Nov. 7 anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, Nov. 4 National Unity Day, and Russia's Constitution Day, which scored 1 percent each, the poll indicated.

Easter was considered one of the most important holidays by 27 percent, while Russian Orthodox Christmas lagged behind with 15 percent, according to the poll. Catholic Christmas was viewed as important by 1 percent, the poll indicated, in a country where Catholics reportedly make up less than 1 percent of the population.

Russia Day marks the day when the legislature of the then-Russian Federative Socialist Soviet Republic adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty — June 12, 1990. The day was made a national holiday in 1992.

Despite Russians' indifferent attitudes toward the holiday, a majority of the population, or 61 percent, consider national independence proclaimed in 1990 to have been “definitely” or mostly beneficial for the country, the poll indicated.

That is down from 71 percent a year earlier, but marks a rise from a low of 35 percent in 2002, Levada Center said in its report.

Fifteen percent of Russians think national independence was damaging for the country, according to this year's poll, compared to 26 percent in 2002 and a high of 35 percent in 2004, according to Levada Center data.

The poll was conducted on May 22-25 among 800 people in 46 of Russia's regions, and had a margin of error of no more than 4.1 percentage points.

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