

Poll Shows Russian Attitudes to Gay People Are Worse Than Decade Ago

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A couple hold hands at a celebration rally in West Hollywood, California, United States.

Russian intolerance of gay people and same-sex marriages has grown significantly in the last decade, state-run pollster VTsIOM said Friday.

Eighty percent of Russians said they were against same-sex marriages, as opposed to 59 percent in 2005, the pollster found.

The number of those who think gay people should be allowed to get married has decreased from 14 percent in 2005 to 8 percent in 2015. According to the poll, only 3 percent of respondents said LGBT people should be able to bring up children. Another 3 percent supported the idea of marriage, but said children should not be brought up in such households.

The number of people who consider gay people dangerous and said they should be “isolated

from society” has also grown significantly since 2004, from 12 to 20 percent, the poll shows.

The Russian government adopted a law in 2013 banning the promotion of “non-traditional sexual relations” to minors. Since then, human rights activists say the number of violent homophobic attacks in the country has increased.

Twenty-two percent of respondents said they didn't care about other people's sexual preferences, compared to 24 percent in 2004, and another 15 percent said homosexuals were “normal people,” adding, however, that they wouldn't socialize with them.

A small decrease was recorded in the number of people who think being gay is either a medical or social disease, from 36 percent in 2004 to 35 percent in 2015.

Almost half of Russians — 41 percent — said the authorities should persecute people with “untraditional sexual preferences” in order to “exterminate the phenomenon.” Thirty-two percent said the authorities shouldn't care at all, and only 12 percent agreed that the government should acknowledge gay rights and protect the LGBT community from discrimination.

“In this aspect Russia is about twice as conservative as even China,” Alexei Firsov, VTsIOM's communications director, was cited as saying Friday on the pollster's website.

“It's interesting that we [Russia] are swimming against the current, strengthening, despite global trends, intolerance toward homosexual relationships. This indicator might serve as a parameter of national identification,” he said.

The VTsIOM poll was carried out on April 11-12 and July 4-5 among 1,600 respondents in 46 Russian regions. The margin of error was no greater than 3.5 percent, the pollster said.

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