

OPINION MONITORING: MARCH – APRIL 2020

VCIOM-Sputnik daily survey results. The survey method is stratified dual-frame sample consisted of telephone interviews. The sample is based on a complete list of landline and mobile phone numbers operating in Russia and involves 1,600 persons. The data were weighted for the probability of selection and reflect social and demographic characteristics. The margin of error at a 95% confidence level does not exceed 2.5%. In addition to sampling error, minor changes in question wording and different circumstances arising during the fieldwork can introduce bias into the survey.

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CRIMEA'S AND SEVASTOPOL'S REUNIFICATION WITH RUSSIA: SIX YEARS LATER

March 14–15, 2020

Today an absolute majority of the residents of the Republic of Crimea (93%) and Sevastopol (90%) assess Russia's reunification with Crimea in a positive way¹. As in 2014, 90% of Russians are confident that the decision was right. Almost every second Russian perceives Crimea as "Russia's ancestral land" (49%). Three-quarters of the Crimean residents (72%) and 67% of the Sevastopol residents say that Crimea's reunification with Russia has had positive effects on their lives and the life of their families. On the contrary, 8% of Crimeans and 12% of respondents living in Sevastopol consider that Crimea's incorporation into Russia has had a negative impact on their lives. In a situation simulating the referendum, 88% of Crimeans and 84% of Sevastopol residents say that in a repeat vote they would vote for Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Federation.

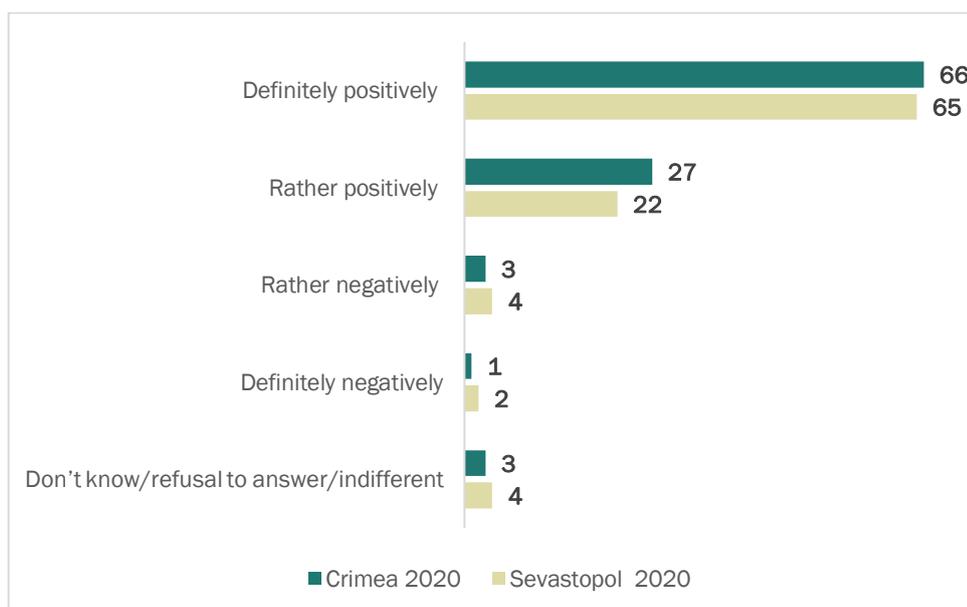


Figure 1. How do you generally assess the Crimea's reunification with the Russian Federation: positively or negatively? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

¹ Surveys in the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol were conducted on March 14–15 and commissioned by the Expert Institute for Social Research. The Crimean survey involved 1,200 respondents aged 18 and older; the Sevastopol survey involved 800 respondents. Method: stratified dual-frame random sample based on a complete list of Crimean landline and mobile phone numbers is used. The margin of error at a 95% confidence level does not exceed 3.5%.

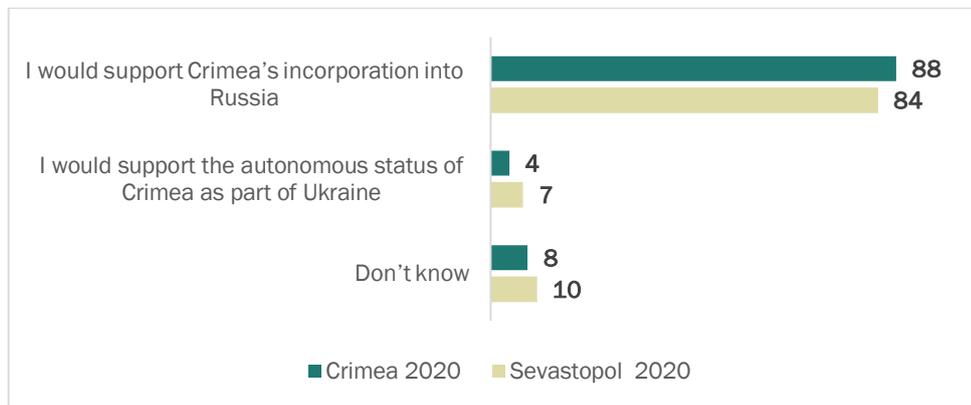


Figure 2. The Crimean status referendum was held in March 2014. If a referendum with the same questions as five years ago were held next Sunday, which option would you choose? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

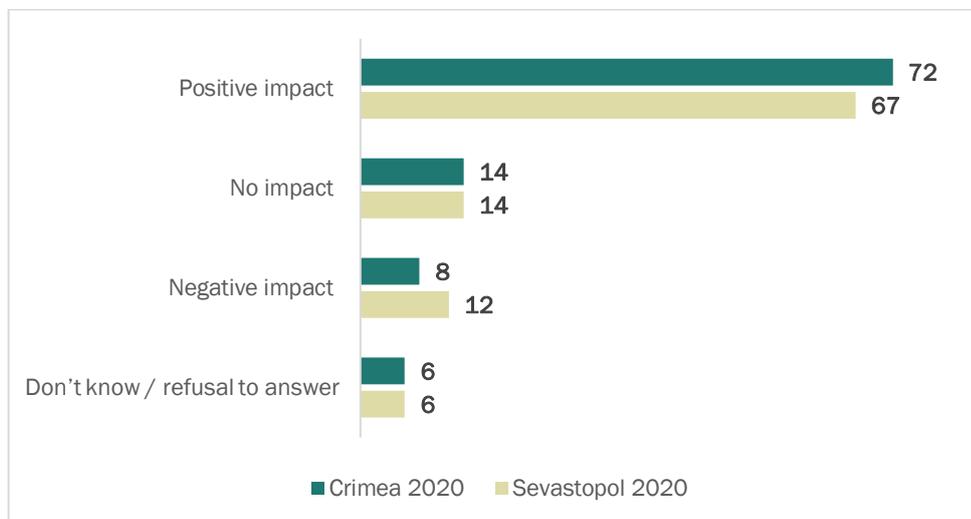


Figure 3. Has the Crimea's reunification with Russia had an impact on your life and the life of your family? If so, what kind of impact: positive or negative? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

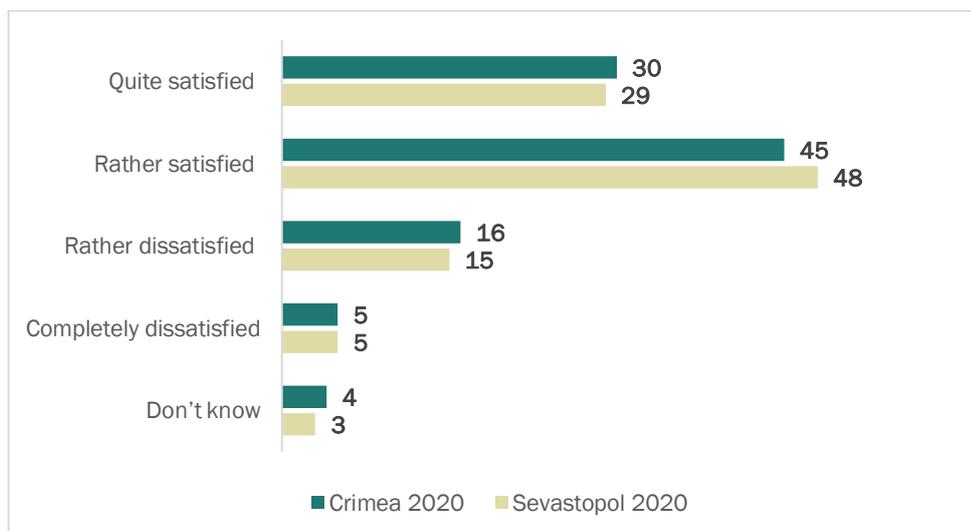


Figure 4. Speaking about the Republic of Crimea in general, are you satisfied with the situation in the republic? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

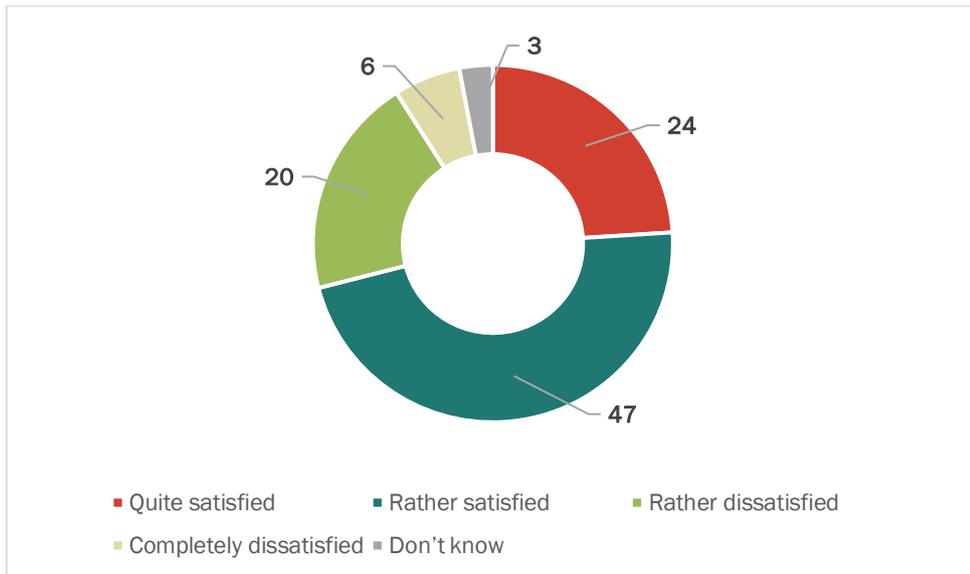


Figure 5. Speaking about the situation in Sevastopol in general, are you satisfied with the situation in the city? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

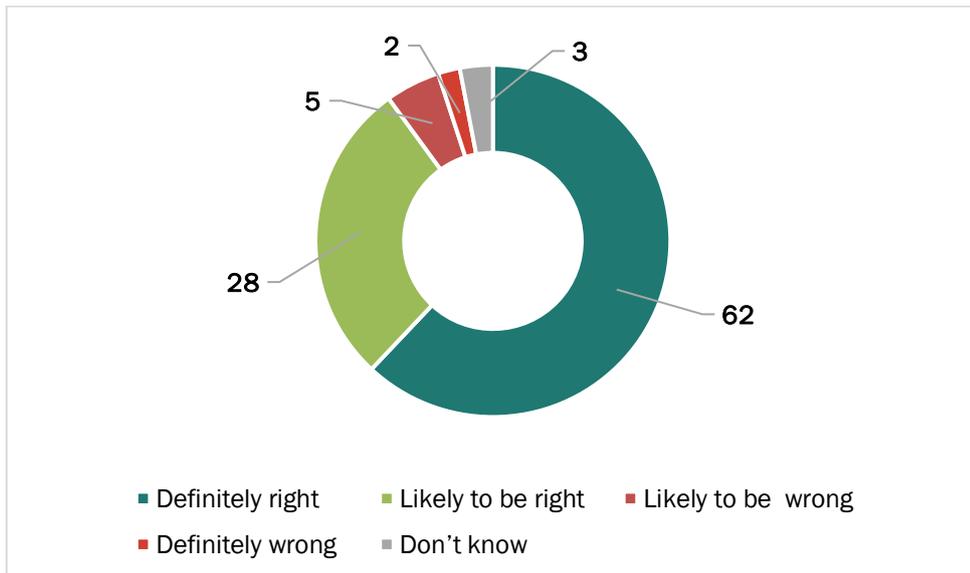


Figure 6. In your opinion, did Russia make a right decision to incorporate Crimea into the Russian Federation? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

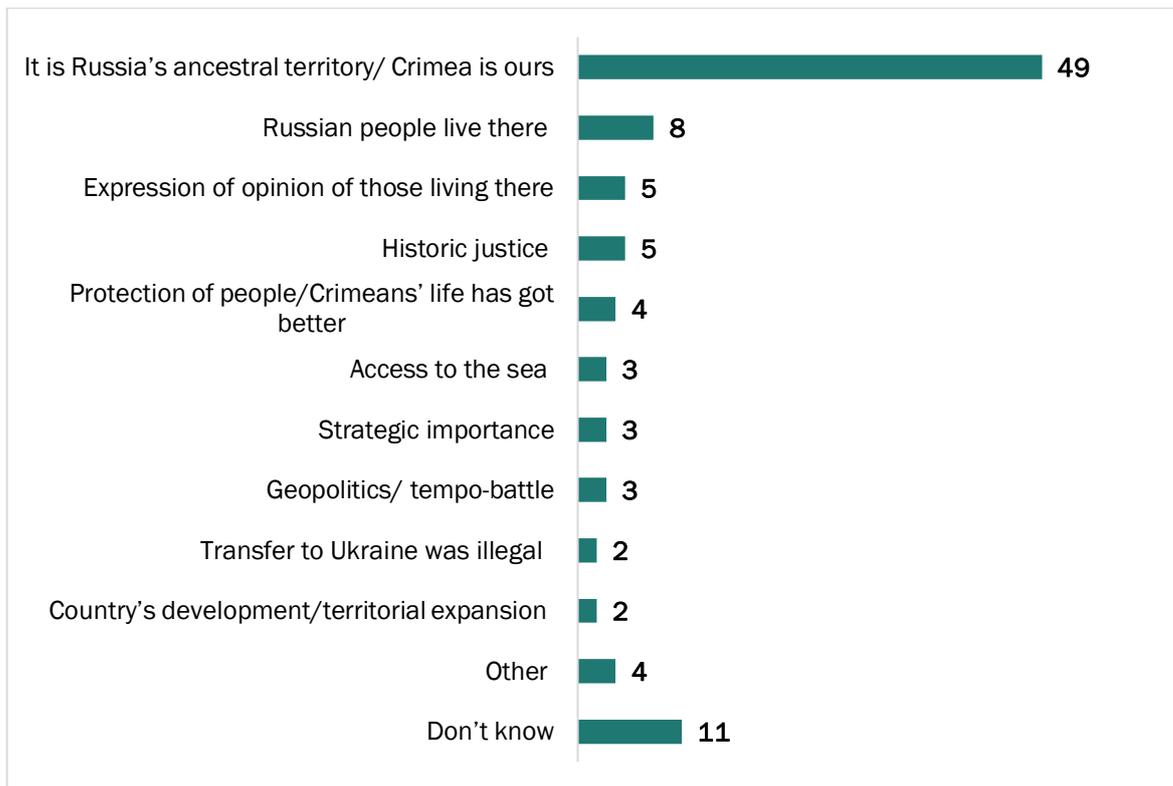


Figure 7. Why do you think that the Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Federation was a good decision? Give us a reason that you consider to be the most important (open-ended question, one answer, % of those who consider the decision right; answers of at least 2% of respondents)

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL AMENDMENTS: RANKING THE RUSSIAN PREFERENCES

March 22 and 29, 2020

Russians recognize the importance of social and political changes in Russia. The state's obligation to provide available and high-quality health services is considered to be the most important social amendment by most of Russians (95%). Sixty-five percent of Russians consider the amendment lifting the restriction to run for president in the next presidential elections applied to the former or current Russian president to be the most important in the political sphere. More than half of Russians (57%), to a certain degree, would support this change.

Table 1. Do you personally think it is important or not important to enshrine the following ideas in the Russian Constitution? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

	29.III	29.III	22.III	22.III
	<i>Likely to be important</i>	<i>Likely to be unimportant</i>	<i>Likely to be important</i>	<i>Likely to be unimportant</i>
The state provides available and high quality health services	95	3	95	4
Yearly indexation of pensions is mandatory	91	6	92	6
The Russian government must create conditions for the promotion of environmental literacy, environment-oriented education for the Russian citizens*	88	9	—	—
Recognizing the Russian culture as a unique cultural heritage of a poly-ethnic nation*	87	10	—	—
Protecting animals, promoting responsible treatment of animals	86	11	85	13
Lifting the restrictions to run for president in the next elections for a person who has held or currently holds presidential office in Russia	65	26	61	30
Creating a public authority unified system	64	21	57	24
Broadening the powers of Russia's State Duma. State Duma deputies will be able to approve the appointment of the deputy prime ministers and federal ministers	55	33	47	39
Broadening the powers of Russia's Federation Council. Senators will be able to participate in the appointment of defense and law enforcement ministries and prosecutors as well as judges in the key bodies	53	34	47	39
The seat of certain federal agencies may be in a city other than the capital*	40	49	—	—

Note. The questions marked with an asterisk were asked for the first time on March 29, 2020.



Figure 8. Do you personally support or oppose the introduction of the following amendments to the Russian Constitution? Lifting the restrictions to run for president in the next elections for a person who has held or currently holds presidential office in Russia (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

VACATION-2020: CHANGE OF PLANS?

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April 15, 2020

Russians are gradually changing their plans for the May holidays and summer vacation: one in four Russians are making changes (26%). A month earlier (on March 21), 17% of respondents said they were going to change their vacation plans. More than half (57%) say they are going to stay at home in the summer 2020; one in three Russians are going to spend their summer at their dachas (35%). Respondents cite the following reasons (as of April 15): coronavirus (50%), lockdown (34%), and border closure (11%). Those who have changed their plans were initially going to go on vacation to another city or rural settlement within Russia (30%; +10 p.p. since March), as well as to other countries outside the former USSR (27%; -20 p.p.) or to stay at dachas, in the garden (19%; +10 p.p.).

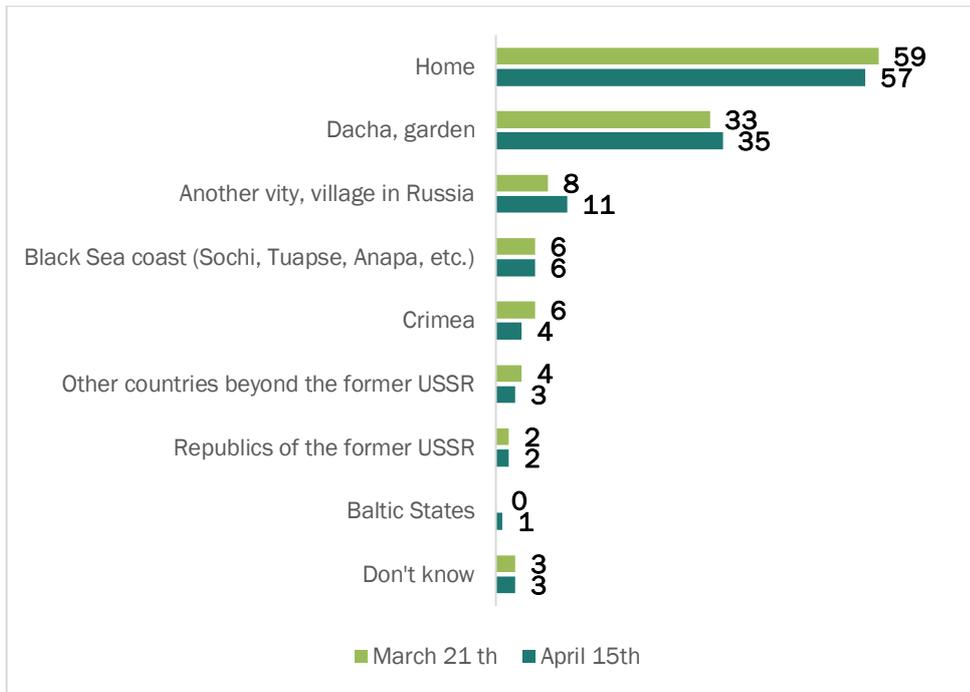


Figure 1. Where are you going to have a rest/spend your vacation during the May holidays or this summer? Any number of answers is possible (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

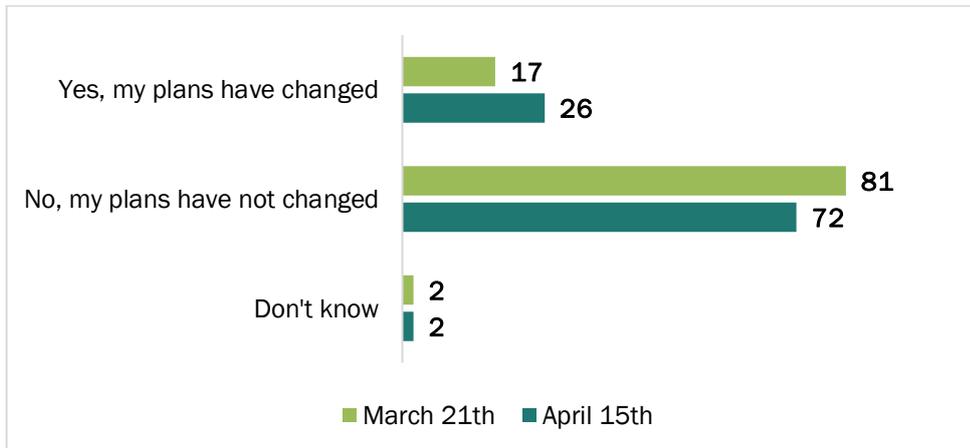


Figure 2. Have your plans for the May holidays and summer vacation changed over the recent two months? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

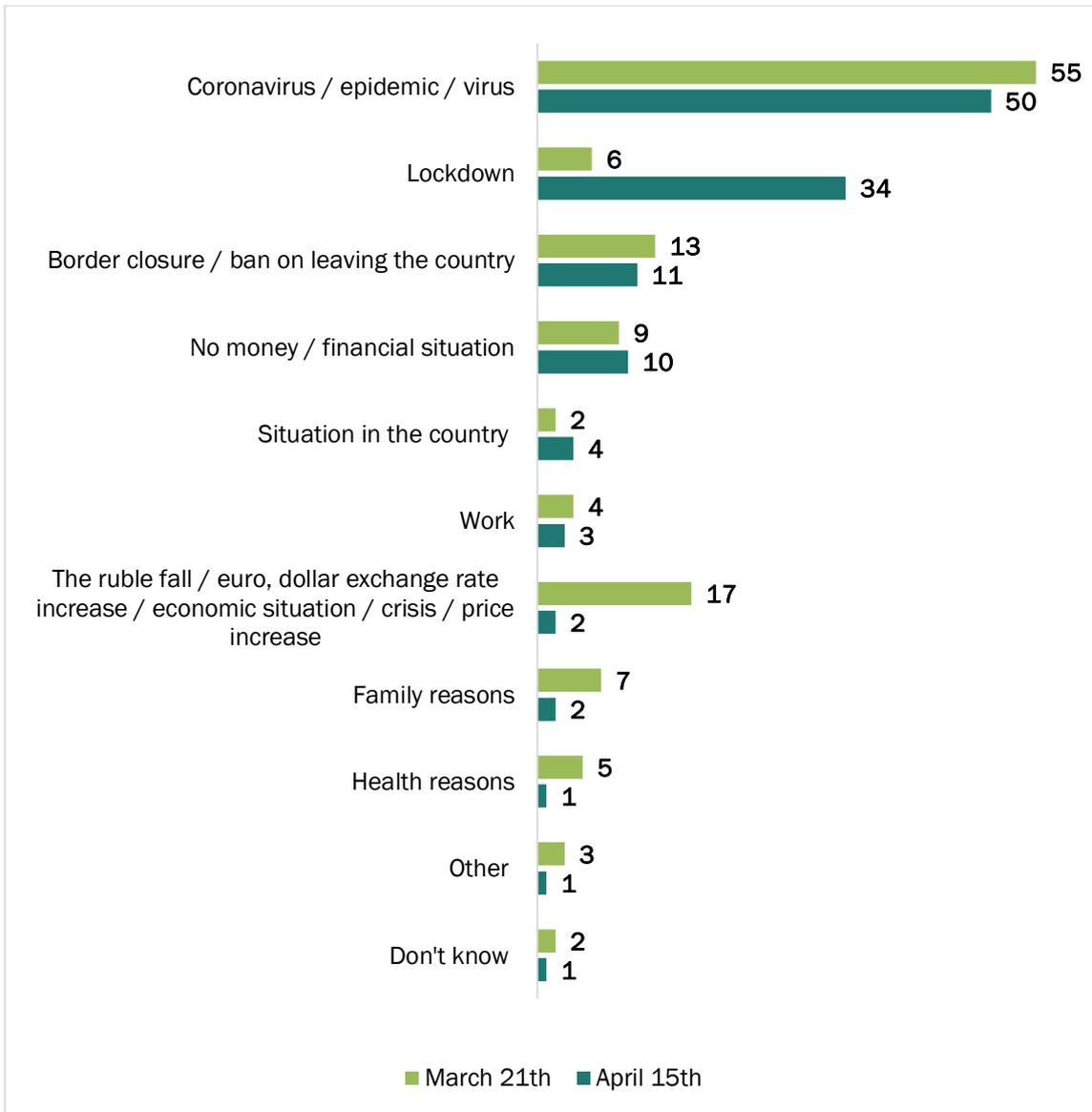


Figure 3. Why have you changed your plans for the May holidays and summer vacation? Up to three answers (open-ended question, up to 3 answers, % of those who have changed their plans; answers of at least 2% of respondents)

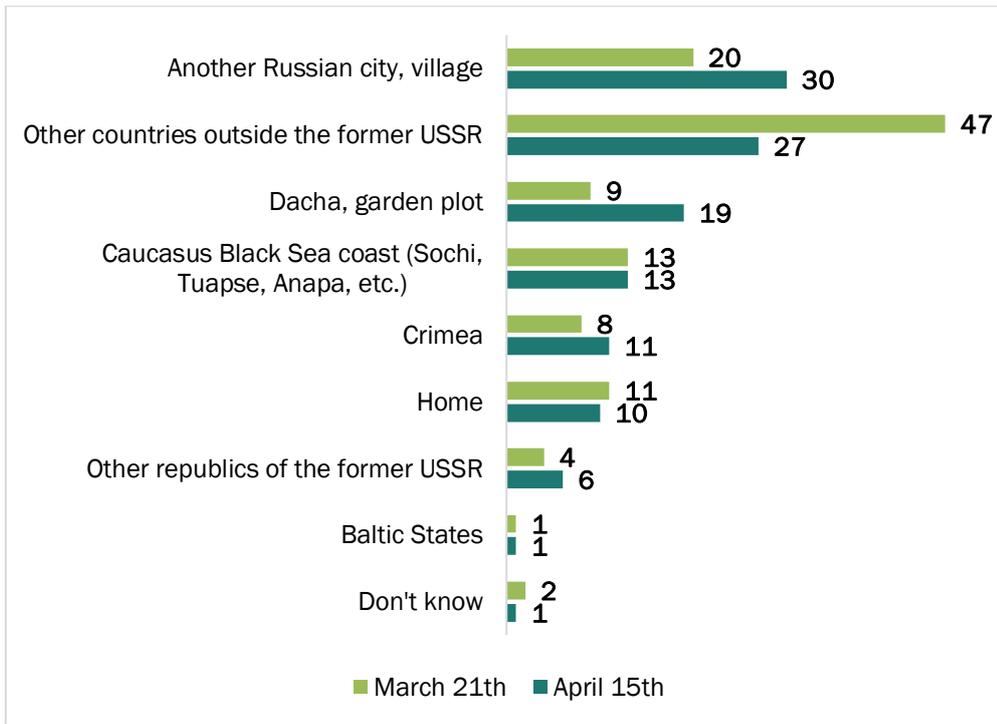


Figure 4. Where were you going to spend your summer vacation and May holidays before your plans changed? Any number of answers is possible (closed-ended question, any number of answers, % of those who have changed their May and summer plans)

LIFESTYLE

CYBERSPACE AS A SALVATION

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April 5, 2020

Today 82% of Russians are engaged with digital environment. Seventy-one percent of respondents use the Internet on a daily basis; almost one in ten Russians use it several times a week (7%); 18% do not use the Internet. Amidst self-isolation to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, certain Internet usage patterns have changed. Compared to February 2020, there has been a 6-point increase in the number of those who use the Internet to get news about their city, country or the world (89% vs. 83%). The share of Russians who use the Internet for education or self-education has also increased by 6 p.p. since February this year, reaching 69%. Most of respondents use the Runet to communicate with friends, relatives (89%). The Runet is also used for leisure and entertainment: 77% of respondents watch movies, play games and read books online; this share was smaller two years ago (71%). The share of those who buy everyday essentials or durables (domestic appliances, furniture) has not changed much.

Table 1. Do you use the Internet; if so, how often? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

	1 qrt 2015	1 qrt 2016	1 qrt 2017	1 qrt 2018	1 qrt 2019	February 2020	April 2020
Almost every day	51	53	56	62	66	69	71
Several times a week	13	12	13	12	11	9	7
Several times a month	5	4	4	4	3	2	2
Occasionally but at least once every six months	2	1	2	2	2	1	2
I do not use it	29	29	25	19	18	19	18
Don't know	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Table 2. I will read a list of activities. Please, tell me what for do you use the Internet today? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of total respondents)

	Year	I use the Internet	I do not use the Internet	I do not do this
Communicating with friends, relatives	2018	79	15	5
	February 2020	88	9	3
	April 2020	89	9	2
Getting news about city's life, country, world	2018	85	12	3
	February 2020	83	11	6
	April 2020	89	7	4

Banking, online transactions	2018	68	25	7
	February 2020	72	17	11
	April 2020	78	14	9
Entertainment: movies, games, books	2018	71	23	6
	February 2020	75	17	8
	April 2020	77	17	6
Paying the bills	2018	60	33	7
	February 2020	68	22	10
	April 2020	71	21	8
Education, self-education	2018	67	25	8
	February 2020	63	22	15
	April 2020	69	19	12
State services – submitting documents, getting certificates	2018	57	33	10
	February 2020	57	29	14
	April 2020	60	28	12
Buying durables - domestic appliances, furniture, etc.	2018	41	48	11
	February 2020	35	45	20
	April 2020	39	45	15
Buying everyday essentials – foods, household detergents, etc.	2018	14	72	14
	February 2020	24	55	21
	April 2020	26	59	16