

## **OPINION MONITORING: SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 2024**

VCIOM-Sputnik daily survey results. The survey method is stratified dual-frame sample consisting 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 aged 18 and older. 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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## POLITICS

### NEW REGIONS OF RUSSIA: TWO YEARS AFTER REUNIFICATION

#### NEW REGIONS OF RUSSIA: TWO YEARS AFTER REUNIFICATION

September 24, 2024

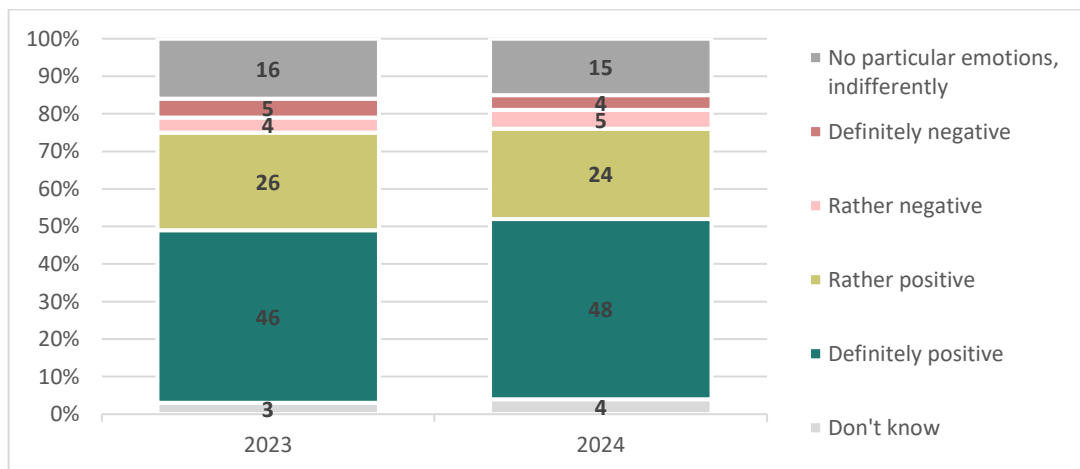
Two years ago, the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, as well as the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions, became part of Russia. Today, Russians' awareness of the past referendums remains high, with a total of 92% knowing well or having heard about it (2023 — 91%).

Over the past two years, the attitude of the Russian citizens towards the accession of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions to the Russian Federation has remained virtually unchanged. The majority still perceives these changes positively — 72% (2023 — 72%). 15% of respondents (2023 — 16%) calmly and without emotion assess the accession of new territories, 9% (2023 — 9%) reported a negative attitude.

The positive attitude of Russians towards the incorporation of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions into the country is explained by Russians, firstly, by the motives of reunification — 43% (*originally Russian lands* — 17%, *Russian people live there* — 10%, *one nation* — 8%, *the choice of the people* — 5%, *historical justice* — 3%). The second motive is concern for people, their protection — 18% (*liberation of people* — 9%, *help, compassion* — 5%, *it will be easier for people to live* — 4%). These results indicate a strong emotional and historical component in the perception of this event by Russians.

The respondents justified their negative attitude towards the annexation of new territories by the fact that military actions are ongoing and by the fact that this is the territory of another state (2% each).

**Fig. 1. Tell me, how do you feel about the entry of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics and the liberated areas of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions into the Russian Federation?**  
(closed-ended question, one answer, % of all respondents)



**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**  
**FREELANCE IN RUSSIA: MONITORING**  
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**FREELANCE IN RUSSIA: MONITORING**

September 6, 2024

Freelance, which until recently was a non-standard, innovative form of employment, has already become a common phenomenon in the Russian labor market. Following the growth in the number of *independent professionals*, the concept of freelance itself is taking root in the common vocabulary: over the past four years, the share of those ready to define it has grown from 32% to 44%. The figure of a freelancer in the public consciousness is assessed rather neutrally or positively, the emphasis in the answers is on the nature and format of employment. In the views of Russians, freelancers are independent, free and self-employed workers who make their own schedule (15%), work primarily remotely / via the Internet / at home (13%) and for themselves, and not «for someone else» (9%). Just over half of Russians are not familiar with the concept of freelancing (56%), four years ago same estimate was as high as 68%.

Over the past three years, according to 58% of the respondents the number of freelancers in Russia has changed. In most cases, respondents say their number has increased (51%). Only 7% said the opposite (*rather, it has become fewer*), while every tenth person noted that the number of freelancers remained unchanged (10%). In general, 2024 estimates of the prevalence of freelancing are comparable to estimates from four years ago: in 2020, the dominant opinion in society was that the number of freelancers in Russia had increased (48%), while 7% said that it had decreased; 17% said the situation had remained unchanged, which is slightly higher than today.

The freelancers' habitat is considered to be the Internet; in the academic community, they have long been known as *digital collars*. This is probably why the growth in their number is more often noticeable to active Internet users (58%) and adherents of a mixed media consumption model (TV + Internet, 50%) than to active TV viewers (35%).

Freelancers are a social group that lacks full guaranteed employment, and therefore, regular income and social protection. In this regard, they are often classified as part of the precariat. However, the financial instability that «digital collars» face is not a reason to consider this category of workers low-income. According to the data obtained, over the past four years, Russians have only become more convinced that freelancing brings in more income on average than hired work: today, 38% think that way (+7 percentage points compared to 2020). The share of Russians who believe that freelancers' average monthly earnings are similar to other employees, on the contrary, decreased over the period under review from 26% to 18%. The same applies to those who estimate the income of freelancers as lower than the income of full-time employees —7% (-5 percentage points over four years). Another 37%

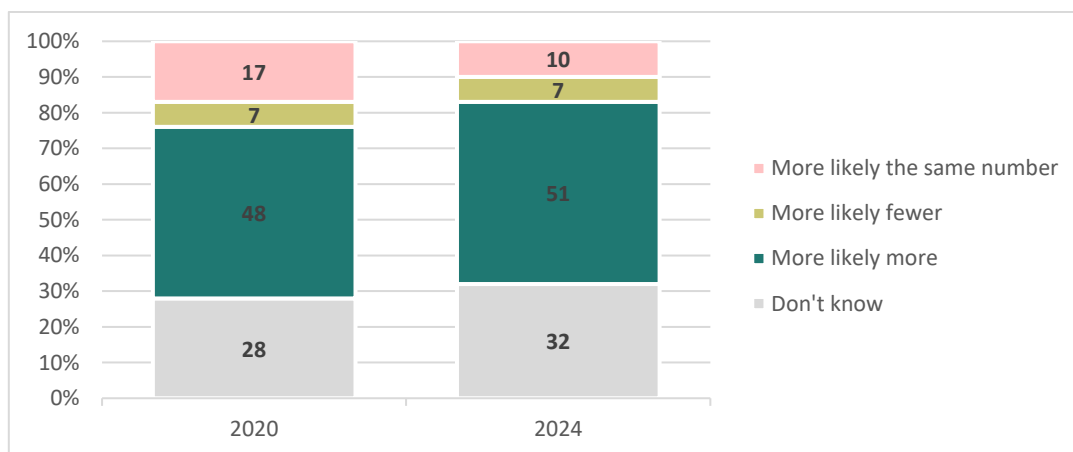
found it difficult to answer; of the three closed-ended questions about freelancers, this one turned out to be the most difficult for the respondents.

Women (41% vs. 35% of men), active TV viewers (43%), and residents of the North Caucasus Federal District (47%) see freelancing as more profitable than regular employment.

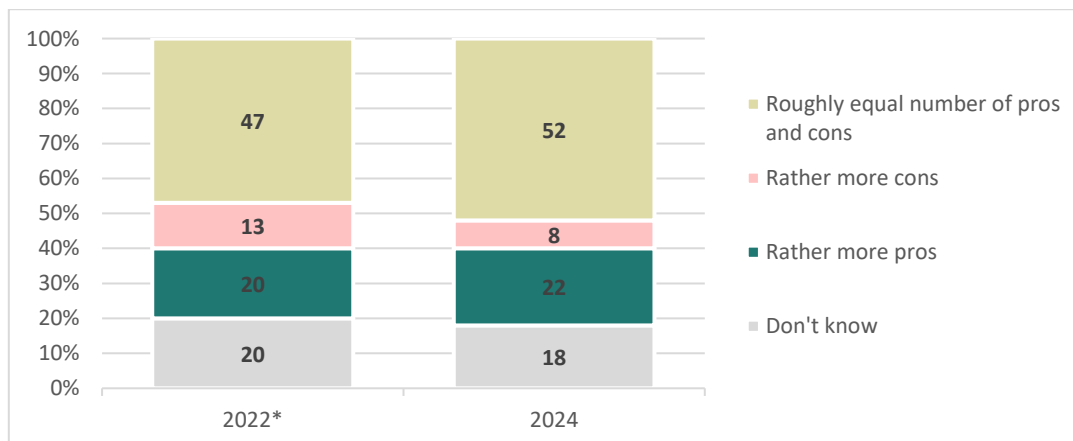
Every second working Russian believes that there are approximately equal pros and cons to working as a freelancer (52%), and this opinion has become a slightly more common thought over the past two years (+5 percentage points since 2022). The increase was due to a decrease in the number of conventional opponents of freelancing, i.e. those who see more cons in it (8%, 2022 – 13%). As two years ago, every fifth working Russian sees more advantages of this form of employment (22%, 2022 – 20%).

Even though women more often than men (here and below we refer to all respondents, not only those who work) consider freelancing to be better paid compared to regular employment, it is men who more often find more advantages in it (24% vs. 18% of women). Assessments of the attractiveness of freelancing and its profitability also differ, those who call freelancers a higher-paid category of workers than full-time employees (29%) more often speak about the prevalence of advantages of freelance.

**Fig. 1. In your opinion, have there been more, fewer or the same number of freelancers in Russia in the last three years? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of all respondents)**



**Fig. 2. In your opinion, does working as a freelancer have more pros or more cons, or are there roughly equal number of pros and cons? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of all respondents)**



\* Initiative All-Russian Internet survey «VCIOM-Online». Sample size — 1806 working Russians aged 18 years and older

## MICROLOANS AND MICROBORROWERS

September 19–24, 2024

Microloans are an integral part of the modern economy, meeting the needs of many people for quick access to small financial resources. Despite the tightening of monetary policy in Russia, the borrower's profile has been quite stable over the last year.

Among borrowers, women are more common (57%), more than a quarter are aged 35 to 44 years old (29%), every second has a higher education (66%), 66% described their financial situation as average (+7 percentage points over the past year). Most borrowers are employed (56%), of which 57% are specialists. About half (55%) are married, almost as many noted that they do not have minor children (51%).

Among potential clients of microfinance organizations, the ratio of men and women is approximately the same (49% and 51%, respectively), about half (48%) are over 45 years old, the majority (73%) have higher or incomplete higher education. Six out of ten (63%) describe their financial situation as average, the majority are employed (56%) and more often (57%) as specialists. Every second (53%) is in a registered marriage and 67% do not have children under 18.

The main drivers for choosing micro financial organizations (MFOs) as a source of financing are speed of registration (37%, +9 p percentage points compared to last year) and fewer requirements for the package of documents (32%, +12 percentage points compared to last year). About a third (30%, +8 percentage points compared to last year) indicated such an option as *I was denied a loan at the bank*, more than a quarter (27%, +7 percentage points) choose MFOs because the probability of refusal is lower. The attractiveness of the opportunity to apply for a loan online has also increased (27%, +6 percentage points compared to last year).

Among the possible reasons for applying for microloans, potential borrowers mostly name low probability of refusal. This year, this option has received 36%, while a year ago it was chosen by 16%, i.e., we observe a more than twofold increase. The order of other reasons has remained the same, but the relevance of many of them has increased: the speed of obtaining a loan, fewer requirements and documents (33% each, +9 percentage points), refusal of a loan from a bank (23%, +9 percentage points).

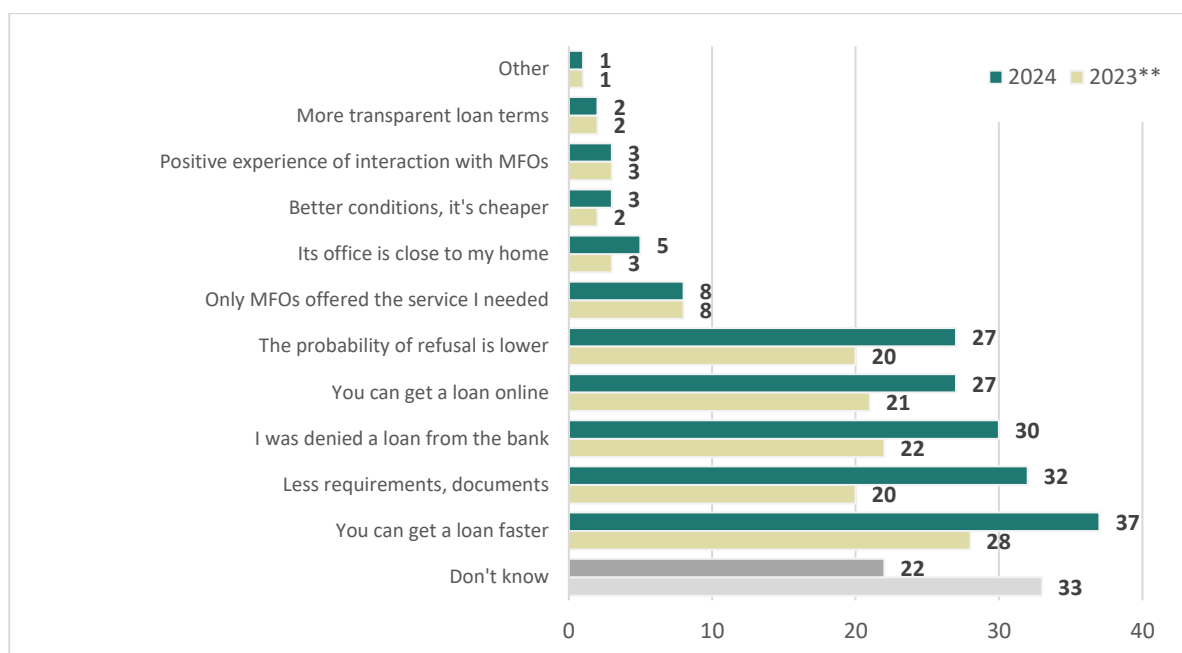
Microloans are becoming an alternative financial instrument for many, more accessible and flexible than banks. It can be said that MFOs partially compensate for the tightening of credit policies of traditional financial institutions.

An organization acquires the status of a MFO from the moment its information is included in the state register. This register is an official list of all legally operating MFOs supervised by the Central Bank. Borrowers, both current and potential, are aware of the register of MFOs of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation: 9 out of 10 (88% of current borrowers and 84% of potential borrowers) know about it. And for most respondents (71%) it is important that the MFO is included in the register of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.

This is probably why half of current borrowers declare that they check the status of the organization from which they take a loan (52%), including 21% who almost always do this, and 31% check if they have not applied to the organization before. Every fourth (25%) noted that they never check the legal status of the MFO. This creates risks for borrowers to apply to an illegal organization that does not have state registration.

In general, borrowers use a wide range of methods to check MFOs. Those who check an organization before applying for a loan most often look at reviews on the Internet (61%) and the MFO register on the Bank of Russia website (54%), every third uses information on the organization's website itself (33%), and every fifth (22%) checks for the presence of the site's marking in search engines.

**Fig. 3. Please indicate three main reasons why you applied to a microfinance organization (MFO) and not to another financial organization (closed-ended question, up to 3 answers, % of all borrowers)**



\*\* The 2023 survey was conducted from September 15 to 25 using the same method. The target sample for 2023 was 1,216 interviews. The share of actual borrowers in the sample structure was 60%, the share of potential clients without experience of borrowing from MFOs was 40%.

## DIVORCES IN RUSSIA: MONITORING

October 11, 2024

According to the results of VCIOM polls, Russians, as in previous years, are more attracted to starting a family than being alone (84% vs. 8%). Most often, this refers to an officially registered marriage — 73% (2017 — 78%, 2019 — 77%, 2021 — 71%), while only 11% prefer cohabitation without registration; the popularity of this form of relationship has not increased at all over the past seven years (2017 — 12%, 2019 — 11%, 2021 — 10%). A fictitious marriage registered without the intention of starting a family does not attract Russians; throughout the entire observation period, this answer gained no more than 2% (in 2024 — less than 1%).

The older the respondent, the more often he/she is in favor of a traditional registered marriage: the maximum number of its supporters is recorded in the *thaw generation* — 85% (vs. 62–64% in the

two youngest generations). Young people, on the contrary, are a little more liberated in this matter, and even, perhaps, free from stereotypes: 16–18% of *zoomers* and younger *millennials* admit unregistered relationships, 14–15% even believe that in our days it is preferable to live alone. Representatives of the oldest *thaw generation* do not recognize either one or the other (1% and 3%, respectively).

Along with the older generation, there are slightly more supporters of official marriage among women (75% vs. 70% of men), the highly educated audience (77%), and Russians with good and average incomes (77% and 74%, respectively). Every seventh respondent with an income below average (bad and very bad financial situation) believes that it is better to live alone or with a partner, but without registering a marriage (14% each).

The answers of residents of a region of our country that is quite conservative in matters of family relations — the North Caucasus Federal District — are close to the average for the sample, that is, their opinion is no different from the opinion of the majority. Thus, 73% of residents of this federal district choose official marriage, 14% — cohabitation, 6% — loneliness. The level of urbanization does not matter in this matter: the shares of supporters of «traditional» marriage are almost the same in capital cities and in the countryside (69% and 73%, respectively).

The dynamics of public perception of circumstances that prevent divorce are non-linear. Throughout the entire observation period, our fellow citizens have seen the barriers to divorce differently. But there are also things that remain unchanged. Since 2007, the leading circumstances have been the impossibility of «dividing» children between parents (30%, 2007 — 33%), financial dependence of one of the spouses (26%, 2007 — 24%) and difficulties with splitting housing (20%, 2007 — 32%). Along with the property issue, over the past 17 years, the following arguments have become less convincing for Russians: disagreement with the divorce of one of the spouses (11%, -9 percentage points since 2007) and an unpleasant divorce procedure (7%, -5 percentage points), while the importance of national and religious customs, on the contrary, has grown in the eyes of Russians (18%, +8 percentage points). Condemnation of close circle is seen as an obstacle by another 11%.

More than a third of Russians believe that it is always possible to get a divorce (37%). Russians have been stating the absence of insurmountable obstacles in the last five years much more often than before (in 2007 — 23%, in 2015 — 28%). This answer is most popular among Russians with more extensive family experience (from younger millennials to the reform generation, 42–44% vs. 15% of *zoomers*); young people, on the contrary, much more often named specific circumstances that prevent divorce. In particular, the impossibility of «dividing» children between parents (51% vs. 30% among all respondents), financial dependence of one of the spouses (37% vs. 26%), national or religious customs (44% vs. 18%), etc.

It turned out to be somewhat easier for women than for the male part of the population to discuss the factors that complicate the divorce process (6% found it difficult to answer vs. 14% of men). Russian women more often appeal to national and religious customs (21% vs. 15% of men) and the financial dependence of one of the spouses (31% vs. 20%).

Regarding divorce, the situation is less clear. In 1990 and 2007, two views on the point of no return in family relationships competed in Russian society: it is possible to get divorced when the family has broken up (36–39%), and the need for divorce should be judged based on a specific case (36–40%). A turning point in views occurred in the early 2010s: since 2013, a situational approach to the problem has dominated in Russian society, most respondents are of the opinion that everything depends on the specific case (in 2024 – 58%, +22 percentage points compared to 1990). Russians are less willing to say today that divorce is permissible only when there is actually nothing left of the family (26%, -13 percentage points). Those who believe that a marriage must be saved at any cost are still rare among the respondents (9%). Finally, the least support is given to a radical solution to family problems (*you can get divorced in any case, it won't make things worse* – 5%); during the period under review, the share of ardent supporters of divorce varied from 3% to 11%.

Men (12% vs. 6% of women) and residents of the North Caucasus Federal District (19%) are more likely to support preserving a marriage at any cost. The older the respondent, the higher the support for this judgment: in the generations of stagnation and thaw, it reaches 12% and 14%, respectively (vs. 4% among zoomers). Representatives of the oldest generation (thaw) more often support divorce in a situation where family relationships have come to naught (32% vs. 14% of zoomers). Young people aged 18–23, on the contrary, suggest considering each case individually (73% among zoomers vs. 49% among representatives of the thaw generation).

Over the past five years, Russians' ideas about the reasons for divorce have remained almost unchanged. An analysis of the responses allowed us to identify seven groups of factors that negatively affect family relationships. As in 2019, financial difficulties are today the leading reasons for divorce (46% of responses, 2019 - 38%), in particular lack of money (38%) and housing problems, high mortgage rates (8%). Most often, Russians with poor incomes justify their divorces with this (50% and 10%, respectively, vs. 30% and 5% among the financially well-off). The second most popular group of factors is the destructive behavior of a partner (31% of responses, in 2019 – 22%), this includes cheating (18%), bad habits/addictions (10%) and assault (3%). Then, with approximately equal frequency, respondents named communication problems in the family (23% of responses, including misunderstanding – 14%, conflicts – 5%, inability to give in to each other – 4%) and loss of family values (21% of responses, including lack of respect/intolerance – 6%, lack of trust, attention, feelings for each other – 4% each, etc.). There are also those who believe that the reason for divorce is the incompatibility of spouses (16% of responses, including incompatible characters – 9%, different interests/outlook on life – 4%, not suited to each other – 3%) and unpreparedness for family life (ill-considered marriage – 7%, irresponsibility/infantility – 5%). The last argument has become more convincing for Russians since 2019 (12% of responses in 2024 vs. 4% in 2019). Finally, another group of reasons is external circumstances (7% of responses, including unemployment – 5%, domestic politics/instability – 2%).



Male and female views on the causes of divorce are quite similar. However, women are slightly more likely to see the source of the problem in the partner's bad habits (13% vs. 8% of men), unemployment/unwillingness of the partner to work (6% vs. 3%) and assault (5% vs. 1%).

The opinions of representatives of different generations differ more. The four «middle» generations, from younger millennials to the generation of stagnation (37—44%), appeal to financial problems more often than others, while in the youngest and oldest groups this answer is much less frequent (27% and 29%, respectively). As for destructive behavior, for young people, a partner's infidelity is more often seen as a compelling reason for divorce (25% among zoomers and younger millennials), while for Russians aged 77+, it is bad habits (17% among the generation of the thaw). Zoomers are also more likely than Russians in general to note such reasons as a hasty decision to marry (16%), conflicts (14%), and a lack of feelings (8%).

## **LIFESTYLE**

### **FRIENDSHIP AND FRIENDS: MONITORING**

#### **A NEW ERA OF SOBRIETY**

### **FRIENDSHIP AND FRIENDS: MONITORING**

**September 13, 2024**

According to a September survey, a friend in the understanding of Russians is, first of all, a loyal, reliable, and devoted person who will always support and never leave in difficult times (61%). For some, a friend is a like-minded person who shares views and interests (16%), a decent, honest, selfless person (11%) and a person who has stood the test of time (7%). Among specific examples of friends, Russians named a family member, relative, colleague, neighbor (8%).

According to the results obtained, most Russians have people in their circle who can be called friends (83%), over the years this figure remains almost unchanged (in 2013 — 80%, in 2023 — 79%), which cannot be said about the social circle. If in 2013 Russians were friends with four people on average, in 2023 — with six, today the number of friends has grown to eight. That is, in 11 years an average size of the network of friends has doubled.

The fact that Russians have become more active in their search for friends is also indicated by the growing number of those who have made new acquaintances over the past two or three years: today there are 40% of them (in the group of those who have friends), which is almost 1.5 times more compared to 2013 (29%). According to respondents, their circle of friends has been replenished with an average of seven new acquaintances over the past few years. Such a high value may indicate the communication skills of Russians, the desire and ability to quickly establish contacts and make friends, and the willingness to call good friends and acquaintances friends. As shown above, the concept of a friend is very subjective; a relative or a colleague can be called one with equal success. In other words, it is quite possible that in the answers of Russians we are talking not about new friends, but about new acquaintances that can develop into something more.

Most respondents still prefer to be friends with people who have stood the test of time: according to 56% of Russians who have friends, they have not made a single new friend in the last two or three years (-8 percentage points since 2013).

Having friends is determined by many factors. These include age, level of education, and financial status, as well as place of residence. The best at making friends are young people aged 18–24 (97% are surrounded by friends), Russians with higher and incomplete higher education (88%) and good income (87%), living in capital cities rather than rural areas (90% vs. 77%). These same groups (except for the highly educated) can also be considered the most sociable: over the past two or three years, 76% of young people aged 18–24 have made new friends (that is, twice as many as in the sample as a whole — 40%), every second respondent with a good financial status (48%) and a resident of Moscow and St. Petersburg (48%).

Using Internet also increases the chances of finding friends. Nine out of ten active Internet users (89% vs. 69% of active TV viewers) reported having the latter. As for new acquaintances, 44% of Internet users and only a third of TV viewers (32%) have them.

The frequency of communication with friends remains high: three quarters of respondents who have friends keep in touch with them regularly, at least once or twice a week (74%, in 2013 — 78%, in 2023 — 73%), including 38% respondents communicating almost daily. Another 17% communicate with friends once or twice a month, 6% — even less often.

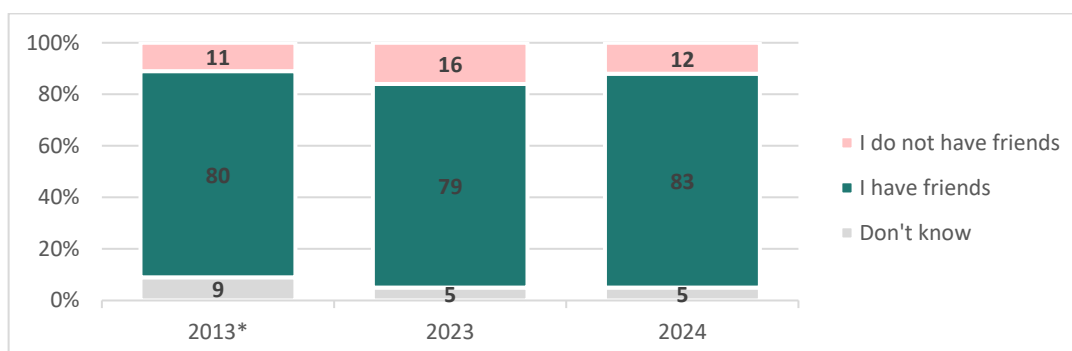
Young people aged 18–24 devote the most time to their friends, 61% of this group communicate with them daily. As the respondents get older, the intensity of communication with friends decreases, and in the group of those aged 25–34 years, the estimate drops to 46%, among older Russians it lies between 30% and 36%.

Even though friendship is in the top 5 most important values for Russians, life circumstances sometimes develop in such a way that it is necessary to end friendship. Over the past 11 years, the share of Russians with such experience has grown from 44% to 68%. The main reason has remained unchanged — the death of a friend (24%, in 2013 — 20%). Friendship also fades away due to moving (8%), betrayal (7%), differences in views on life and quarrels, misunderstandings (5% each). A quarter of Russians (24%) have not experienced the loss of friends, half as many compared to 2013 (50%).

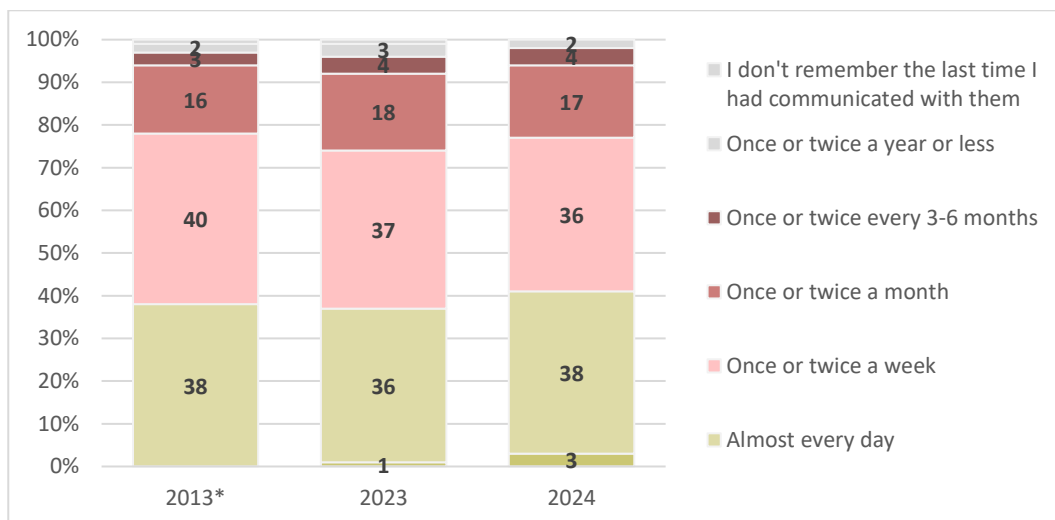
According to the results obtained, making friends in adulthood becomes more difficult — most of the time is taken up by work, family, and daily concerns. With retirement, the social circle narrows completely, childhood and youth friends pass away, which is why older people can suffer from loneliness. According to VCIOM data from 2021, it is the older generation aged 60+ who experience loneliness on a permanent basis more often than others (7% vs. 2–4% among younger Russians).

In a September survey on friendship, 44% of Russians aged 60 and over admitted that they had experienced the death of friends. As a result, representatives of the older generation are less likely than others not only to have friends (75% vs. 80–97% in other age groups), but also to make new acquaintances (33%). However, making new friends is also becoming problematic for younger Russians: 35–59-year-olds also lose out to more sociable young people in this matter (33–36% vs. 48–76% among 18–34-year-olds).

**Fig. 1. Do you have any friends? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of all respondents)**



**Fig. 2. How often do you communicate with your friends (meet, call, text)? (closed-ended question, one answer, % of those having friends)**



\* Until 2017, surveys were conducted using door-to-door face-to-face interviews (Express project), stratified multi-stage sampling with quotas for socio-demographic parameters, representing the population of the Russian Federation aged 18 and older by type of settlement, gender, age, education and federal district. The sample size is 1,600 respondents.

## A NEW ERA OF SOBRIETY

September 27, 2024

There is a noticeable shift in the culture of alcohol consumption in Russia. More and more people are demonstrating a commitment to a sober lifestyle, which is due to a combination of various factors, namely a change of generations, the activation of anti-alcohol policy, fashion, and others. According to the results of a VCIOM survey, the share of abstainers (those who do not consume alcoholic beverages at all) in Russia is almost equal to the share of current alcohol consumers (48% and 52%, respectively), whereas 20 years ago the latter were almost three times more than teetotalers (73% vs. 27%).

According to available data, the breakdown of the Soviet, or vodka model of alcohol consumption was observed already in the early 2000s. In 2004, almost every second person preferred beer — 47%. But at the dawn of the 21st century, Russians preferred wine and vodka equally, every third person drank them (33% each). In our time, these three alcoholic drinks are still competing for the attention of consumers. However, against the backdrop of an increase in the proportion of teetotalers, their previous popularity has decreased: wine consumers today account for 19% (-14 percentage points since 2004), beer consumers — 18% (-29 percentage points), vodka — 11% (-22 percentage points). In other words, today in Russian society there is an even stronger transition to the southern type of alcohol consumption, characterized by the predominance of light alcoholic beverages, usually beer and wine. If in 2004 vodka could still compete with them, but not today. In the case of other strong alcoholic drinks, the situation has remained unchanged: cognac, whiskey, rum, and gin are rarely consumed by Russians.

Alcohol preferences have a clearly expressed gender specificity. «Male» drinks include beer (25% vs. 13% of women) and strong alcohol — vodka (19% vs. 5%), whiskey (5% vs. 1%) and cognac (9% vs.

5%), «female» — only wine (26% vs. 11% of men). Wine consumers are also distinguished by having a higher education (26%) and a good financial situation (24%).

The share of Russians who do not drink alcohol has increased by 1.8 times over the past 20 years, from 27% to 48%. The influence of strict cultural and religious norms on alcohol consumption patterns can be seen most clearly in the example of the North Caucasus Federal District, the country's most non-drinking region. The share of teetotalers there was a record 71%, while in other regions of Russia the figure is between 45% and 50%.

In addition to the region of residence, commitment to a sober lifestyle is determined by gender, income level, and place of work. Russians who do not drink alcohol are more often women (53% vs. 43% of men), representatives of the two younger (54–61%) and the oldest generation (56%), as well as those working in budgetary organizations (51% vs. 39% among employees of commercial structures).

The older the Russians, the more clearly the echoes of the Soviet model of alcohol consumption are observed. Vodka is most often drunk by representatives of the three oldest Soviet generations: the reform generation (born in 1968–1981) — 15%, the generation of stagnation (1948–1967) — 16%, and the generation of the thaw (before 1947) — 16%. It is noteworthy that for Russians who came of age in the Brezhnev era and experienced the third anti-alcohol campaign in the USSR as adults, vodka is even preferable to beer (16% vs. 10%). The heaviest drinkers are representatives of the reform generation (61%), who equally prefer wine and beer (21% and 19%, respectively).

Beer lovers are more common among zoomers, or the digital generation (born in 2001 and later), and older millennials (1982–1991) — 27% each. However, unlike older millennials, there are significantly fewer wine consumers among representatives of the digital generation (13%) and almost no vodka consumers (1%). As noted above, along with younger millennials (born in 1992–2000) and the older generation over 77 years old, zoomers are more likely to lead a sober lifestyle — the share of abstinent drinkers in these age cohorts varies from 54% to 61%.

The main motive for alcohol abuse among Russians is still the desire to relieve stress and tension (38% in 2024 and 2004). More than a quarter of respondents believe that the reason for this habit is a lack of willpower (27%, in 2004 — 29%), every fifth person speaks of the need to «drown away» grief and trouble (20%, in 2004 — 17%). Less convincing reasons for alcohol abuse over the past 20 years for Russians have become idleness (26%, -11 percentage points since 2004), the influence of the immediate environment (18%, -5 percentage points) and uncertainty about the future (14%, -11 percentage points). The same applies to the so-called myth of *drinking Russia*: today, drinking alcohol is much less often perceived as part of culture; only 7% can call it a national tradition (vs. 20% in 2004). Another 11% note the availability of alcohol (2004 — 14%). Despite the long-standing ban on advertising alcoholic beverages in the media and on the Internet, this option was noted by 4%, or half as many as in 2004 (8%).

The opinion of the oldest generation — the stagnation generation (aged 77+ years) — runs counter to the opinion of the majority. The key reason for alcohol abuse in this group is considered to be lack of

willpower and weak character (32%), while in other age groups the dominant answer is to relieve stress and tension, more often chosen by younger millennials — 52%. On the contrary, the older generation talks about the influence of their immediate environment 2-2.5 times less often than Russians aged 18-56 (20-24% vs. 10%). Drinking away their sorrows is also an unconvincing argument for them (12% vs. 28-32% among zoomers and younger millennials). In other words, the view of alcoholism among representatives of the stagnation generation is more mundane, they make attempts to justify the abuse of alcoholic beverages less often than others.

At the same time, alcohol consumption has virtually no effect on perceptions of the causes of alcoholism. Current consumers are only slightly more likely than teetotalers to talk about stress relief (44% vs. 32%), while teetotalers talk about lack of willpower (30% vs. 25% among those who drink alcohol), availability of alcohol (14% vs. 9%), and the influence of advertising (6% vs. 3%).