

## **OPINION MONITORING: JANUARY—FEBRUARY 2026**

Results of the daily surveys “VCIOM–Sputnik”. Survey methods: 1) Telephone interviews based on a stratified dual-frame random sample of landline and mobile numbers, with a total of 1,600 respondents aged 18 and older (the sample was drawn from the completelist of phone numbers used within the Russian Federation); 2) Online survey using a structured questionnaire administered through the probability-based panel “VCIOM-Online.” Participants of the panel are recruited during the daily nationwide telephone (CATI) survey “Sputnik,” conducted with a random digit dialing (RDD) sample of mobile numbers drawn from the complete list of phone numbers used within the Russian Federation. The data are weighted by selection probability and socio-demographic parameters. The maximum sampling error with a 95% confidence level does not exceed 2.5–3.1%. In addition to sampling error, question wording and various circumstances arising during fieldwork may also introduce bias into the survey data.

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## **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES**

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### **EMOTIONAL TONOMETER:**

#### **A NEW TOOL FOR MEASURING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE OF OUR SOCIETY**

January 15, 2026

According to the January survey, a rather positive emotional tone prevails in Russian society: the dominant feelings defining citizens' moods at the beginning of the year were kindness, hope, and calmness. More than half of respondents also reported feelings of confidence and joy. A less prevalent positive emotion reported in January was inspiration; according to their own assessments, almost one in two Russians has recently experienced it. Negatively tinged emotions and feelings are recorded significantly less frequently: the most common of these was anxiety, characteristic of four in ten of respondents. Next come sadness and irritation, while fear, confusion, and anger are the least common (Figure 1).

Based on the nature of their emotions, Russian society is segmented as follows:

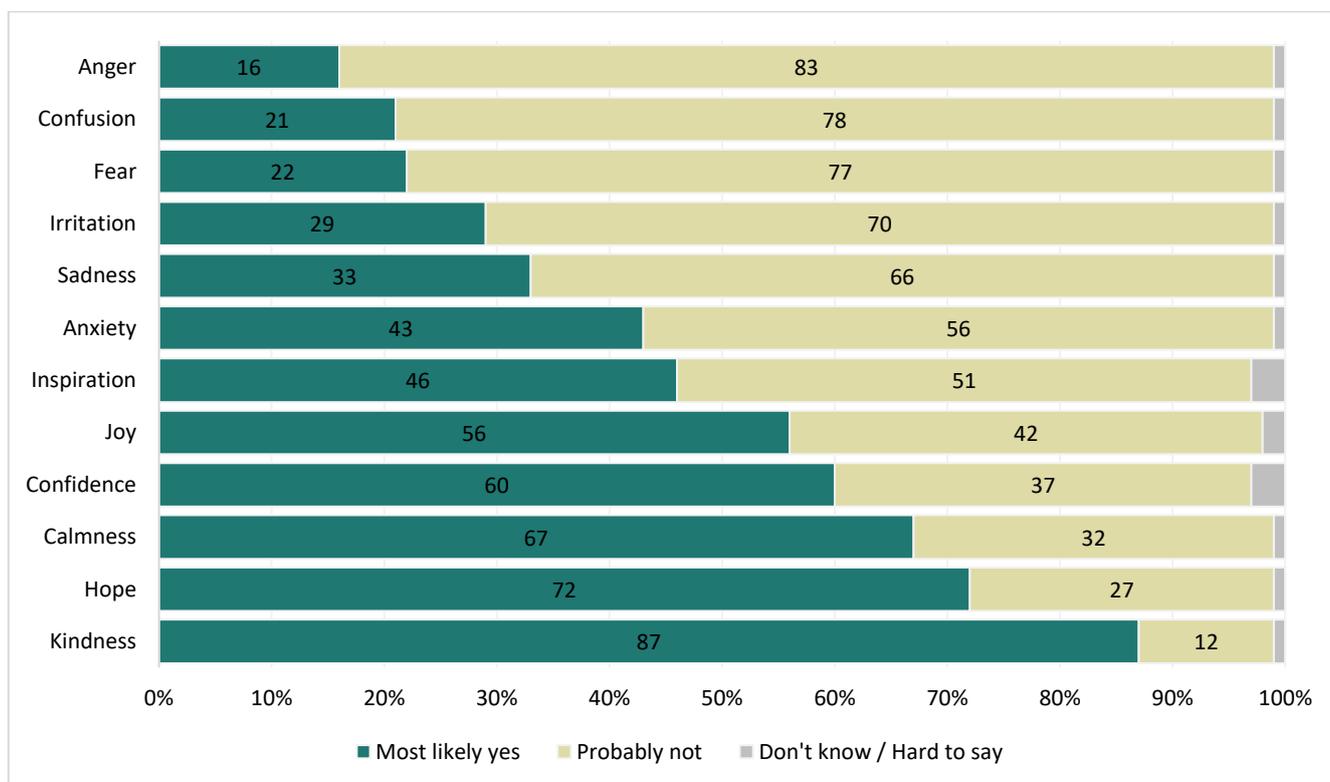
- Cheerful (the largest group, characterized by a predominance of positive emotions; 34% of the sample).
- Restrained (25%, or one in four); these individuals are less likely to express emotions and feelings, characterized by emotional restraint and an inward focus on their experiences.
- Anxious (23%, or almost one in four), characterized by a predominance of negative emotions.
- Excited (18%, or almost one in five), who experience the full range of emotions more intensely than others. It is in this group that emotions are most often expressed—in interpersonal communication, social media, assessments of the current situation, etc.

The presented segmentation is partly consistent with the classical typology of temperaments: from ardent sanguine optimists to melancholics prone to inner turmoil.

Significant differences in the dominant emotional background, along the positive-negative spectrum, are observed across generations, specifically between the two youngest groups. Zoomers demonstrate the highest levels of optimism: the proportion of «Cheerful» individuals in this group reaches a record of 46%, while the proportion of «Anxious» individuals is a minimal 13%, partly due to the lack of accumulated social obligations. As they age (and, consequently, encounter life's realities), Russians' optimism fades, giving way to anxiety. Anxiety peaks among younger millennials, who, unlike Zoomers, have already faced the need to make long-term decisions—starting a family, having children, and buying a home. Men and women demonstrate completely different degrees of intensity of emotional response: while the male way of experiencing a situation often consists of a hidden

accumulation (and suppression) of emotions, the female way is manifested through their open broadcast to others.

**Fig. 1. Now I'll list various emotions and feelings. Please tell me, for each item, whether this describes your mood over the past two or three days? (closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)**



## WORKAHOLISM BY CONVENIENCE: RUSSIANS' ATTITUDES TO OVERTIME WORK

January 18, 2026

A survey conducted by the VCIOM Analytical Center found that Russians consider overtime work a voluntary choice: 86% of respondents say this about the organizations where they work. Only 7% report that overtime work is, to some extent, mandatory at their organizations. Does this mean that working additional hours at their main job is perceived less as an obligation and more as an opportunity?

Currently, there are legislative restrictions on the amount of overtime work: according to the Russian Labor Code, the maximum amount of overtime for an employee is 120 hours per year and 4 hours over two consecutive days. In December 2025, a bill was approved that proposes doubling this limit to 240 hours per year. The initiative was justified by concerns about increasing the flexibility of labor relations: on the one hand, employers will not need to increase staff to increase output, delegating tasks to existing employees who do not require additional training; on the other hand, employees themselves will be able to earn more without having to seek additional sources of income.

However, Russians' opinions on the possible increase in overtime limits are controversial, and skepticism toward the initiative prevails: 41% of respondents view the increase in overtime limits negatively, compared to 31% who respond to it positively. Just over a quarter (26%) are neutral toward

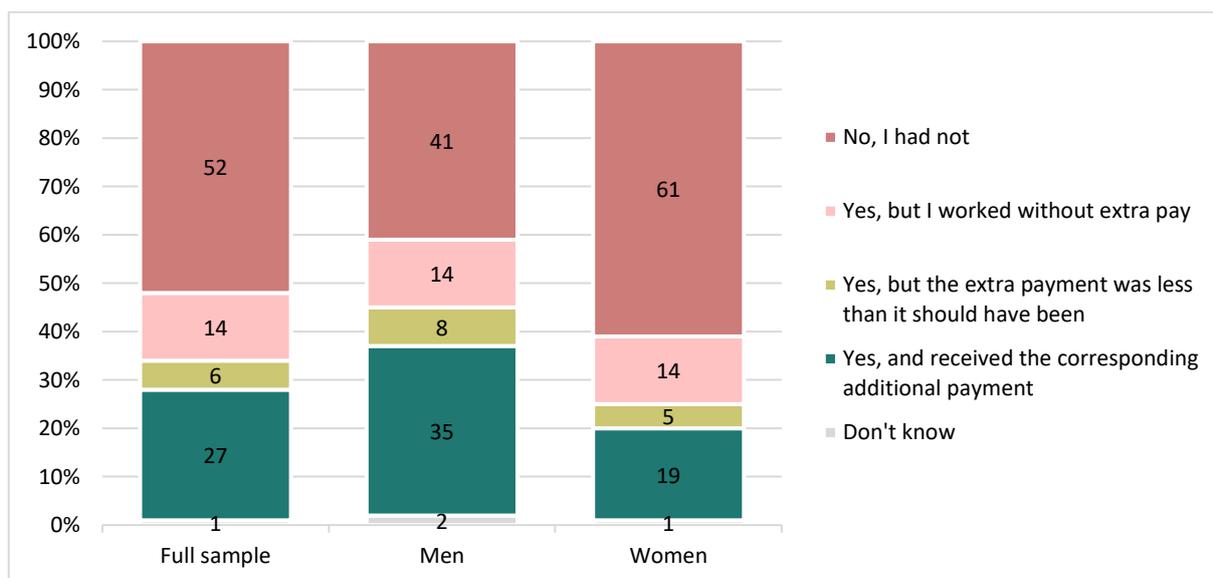
the amendments to the Labor Code. This perception may be due to negative experiences among Russian workers.

Overtime work experience is more commonly reported among the Digital generation (59%) and older millennials (55%), residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg (54%), and cities with populations of 100,000-500,000 (56%). Slightly more people with overtime experience work for commercial organizations (50%) than for public sector organizations (40%). Income does not differentiate overtime experience: Russians with both poor (52%) and good financial situations (45%) have it.

The situation concerning payments for additional work is alarming: even though the law provides for increased payments for overtime work, 30% of workers who have worked overtime in the last 12 months claim that they did not receive them, and another 13% said that their additional payment was less than they were entitled to.

From the perspective of Russians, the amendments to the Labor Code are aimed more at meeting the needs of organizations in the face of labor shortages, a phenomenon that has been regularly reported in recent years. Over half (55%) of respondents believe that increasing the overtime limit would be most beneficial to employers, while only 14% each believe it would benefit employees or the state. Respondents' responses indicate that, in the public consciousness, the need for overtime is linked to the needs of organizations, not employees. This perception could potentially lead to conflicts: employees will attempt to dictate their terms to employers when overtime is requested. This means that organizations will need to seek additional incentives to motivate employees, such as non-material rewards and team recognition.

**Fig. 2. Over the past 12 months, have you had to work overtime, i.e., work beyond your standard working hours established by your employment contract, and if so, have you received appropriate additional pay for this?**  
(closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)



## **ALIMONY AND ITS (NON)PAYERS**

January 24, 2026

A total of 22% of Russians have received or paid child support, or alimony, but for the majority, the topic remains beyond their personal experience. Those who have experienced it are predictably divided: women are recipients, men are payers. Almost one in five women (19%) has received or is receiving child support, while 15% of men have paid or are paying child support.

The peak of involvement in alimony issues occurs among the reform generation—Russians aged 45 to 58. These men and women already have experience with divorce, and their life cycle also saw a rise in its prevalence. The institutional context is also important: in 1968, the law «Fundamentals of the USSR Legislation on Marriage and Family» was passed, making alimony a mandatory legal norm.

According to the data, alimony is a rather contentious issue: 55% of recipients have experienced payment evasion, and 38% of payers admit to sometimes failing to pay alimony themselves. This means that alimony evasion is a widespread problem.

The smaller the size of the locality, the higher the proportion of alimony recipients (14–15% in rural areas and small towns versus 5% in both capitals). The North Caucasus Federal District has the lowest proportion of alimony recipients among all Russians (4%) and the highest proportion of alimony payers (12%).

There is a public consensus on alimony in Russia: seven out of ten believe it should always be paid. At the same time, almost a third view this issue differently, allowing for non-payment. And the younger respondents are, the less categorical they are; among Zoomers, nearly half allow for non-payment. As expected, men—the ones who primarily pay alimony—are also less clear-cut.

Personal experience also differentiates opinions: among those receiving alimony, eight out of ten take a hard line, while among those paying it is six out of ten, and it is among them that the proportion of those who hold the opinion that paying alimony is «one's personal matter» is higher.

Most Russians (eight out of ten) acknowledge the problem of non-payment of child support as a serious one for the country. This assessment is directly related to experience and position on the issue. Those receiving child support perceive non-payment as a pressing issue (91%), while those paying it take a somewhat more relaxed approach (69%). The largest differences in responses depend on the position on payment in principle: among those who support unconditional payment, 85% consider the problem serious, compared to 70% of those who allow excuses, and about 60% of those who prefer individualism, with one in three in the latter group seeing no problem at all.

Public opinion views child support as a priori not the state's responsibility. Every second respondent believes that parents should resolve the issue through mutual agreements. This opinion is especially prevalent among men, alimony payers, and those who have never encountered child support evasion. Russians likely perceive child support as an extension of family relationships, a private matter, until it affects them in practice.

As soon as negative experiences arise, the picture changes: faith in the power of agreement weakens significantly. Among alimony recipients who have experienced non-payment, there is a

growing demand for intervention by the courts, bailiffs, and the state; combined, more than half of respondents in this group expressed this need. In other words, the state becomes responsible for non-payment of alimony not in advance, but when an agreement fails.

Most Russians support the introduction of a public registry of alimony debtors: seven in ten people overall approve of the idea, especially women (79%) and those who have experienced alimony evasion (84% each). Support for the registry is significantly lower among men overall (65%), those who have experienced alimony evasion themselves (69%), and among those who believe that alimony is a personal matter (51%).

The motivations for support and non-support reveal the difference in perceptions of this tool. Supporters cite pressure on debtors, incentives to pay, responsibility and child protection, as well as transparency and ease of monitoring. Opponents, on the other hand, almost always cite intrusion into privacy and confidentiality.

Expectations of the new registry's impact also vary: four in ten believe that debtors will pay more actively, but the same share of respondents believe the registry will have no impact or will even encourage debtors to go underground. Payers with a history of non-payment and those who view alimony as a personal matter are particularly skeptical: among them, the expectation of zero impact is most common, and this view is becoming the dominant one.

Another initiative being discussed but not yet implemented is a state alimony fund. The idea is simple: the state would use budget funds to pay off alimony arrears, then track down the debtors and collect the money from them, plus interest. Support for this idea is also high among Russians (seven out of ten are in favor).

## **RUSSIA IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY**

January 27–28, 2026

Sanctions and developments in international politics and economics in recent years have, among other things, impacted Russians' consumer habits and their everyday choices. And although the media has increasingly focused on domestic producers, most of our fellow citizens don't adhere to the strict logic of «home-made or foreign» in their everyday choices (perhaps this is secondary to other selection criteria, such as price, quality, and availability). Six in ten Russians say they use domestic and foreign goods roughly equally.

One in four people prefer domestic producers, more often women and older Russians; one in six prefers foreign producers, with men and young people being more represented. Overall, despite the economic and political events of recent years, Russians' everyday consumption remains predominantly hybrid.

Previous research by the VCIOM Analytical Center showed that Russians have a rational assessment of the Russian economy's ability to respond to sanctions<sup>1</sup>. According to the current survey,

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/tri-goda-bez-mcdonalds-i-ikea-monitoring>.

most Russians also have a reserved perception of Russia's role in the global economy: almost half of respondents believe the country competes successfully in a limited number of areas, while only one in five believes it is broadly competitive in many areas.

Another third is skeptical, believing that the country has not yet become a serious competitor in the global economy. Skepticism is higher among men and young people, who are also more likely to prefer foreign goods. Meanwhile, women and older age groups, who are more likely to purchase domestic goods, tend to see Russia as more competitive.

Russians perceive Russia's role in various sectors of the global economy in mixed ways: public opinion identifies both areas of confident success and areas viewed more as areas of growth and development. The Export-Import Perception Index<sup>2</sup> shows that the most pronounced export identity is associated with raw materials, energy, agriculture, and culture. In these sectors, Russia is traditionally perceived as a supplier of goods, services, and technology.

A separate group consists of sectors with indices close to zero: food, sports, aviation and high-tech engineering, tourism, e-commerce, logistics, and financial services. In these sectors, Russians see neither clear export dominance nor a pronounced dependence on borrowing.

Some sectors are perceived negatively, reflecting the perception that they are borrowed from, and that this is precisely where public demand for development and increased competitiveness for the future resonates. The negative index here may be due not only to public dissatisfaction but also to established negative stereotypes. Primarily, this applies to pharmaceuticals, medical technology, and healthcare—socially sensitive sectors that directly impact quality of life.

Next come IT, transportation, industry, science and innovation, and construction. These sectors experience intense international exchange, and borrowing is generally considered a natural stage of development, not a sign of backwardness. Cinema also fell into the negative category. Unlike medicine or technology, the negative index value here is more likely related to cultural expectations, especially after Hollywood films withdrew from wide distribution.

Overall, the negative zones can be interpreted as priority markers—areas where society sees the greatest growth potential, and where modernization will have the greatest impact on improving Russia's perception in the global economy. The index maps public demand for investment, modernization, and development rather than simply identifies weaknesses.

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<sup>2</sup> The Russia Export-Import Perception Index is calculated as the difference between the proportion of respondents who consider Russia attractive to other countries as a source of goods, services, and technologies and the proportion of respondents who consider Russia interested in borrowing relevant solutions from other countries.

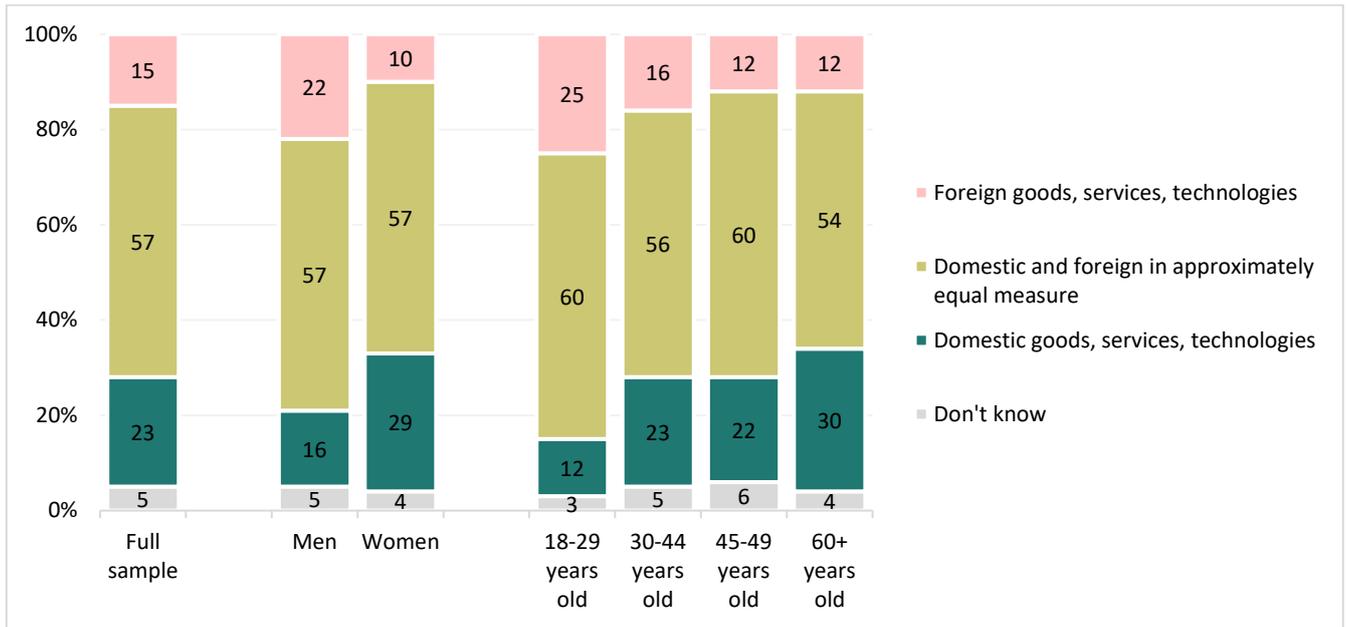
Index values are expressed as percentage points and range from -100 to 100.

Positive index values indicate a predominance of perceptions of Russia as a primary supplier of goods, services, and technologies to other countries; the higher the index value, the more pronounced the export orientation in the perceptions of Russians.

Negative index values indicate a predominance of perceptions of Russia as a country more oriented toward borrowing, acquiring, and importing goods, services, and technologies; the lower the index value, the more pronounced the borrowing orientation.

Index values close to zero reflect a balanced or uncertain perception in the relevant area.

**Fig. 3. In your daily life, do you personally prefer goods, services and technologies produced in Russia or foreign ones?  
(closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)**



## LIFESTYLE

### NEW YEAR IN ECONOMY MODE

#### TELEMEDICINE: TODAY AND TOMORROW

### NEW YEAR IN ECONOMY MODE

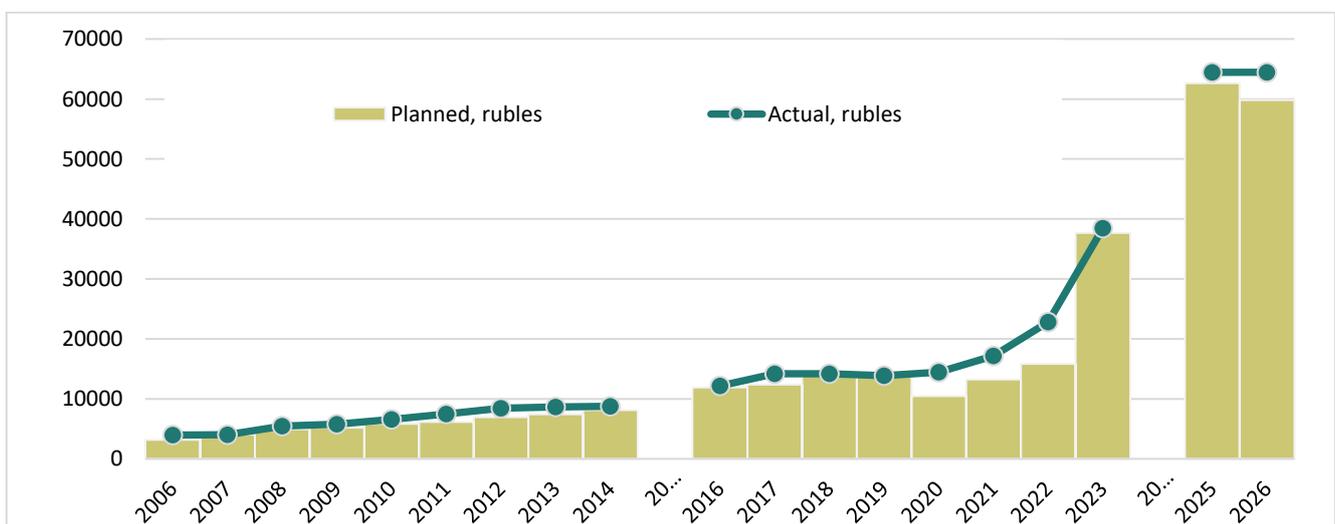
January 16, 2026

Russians' ambitious plans to save money on New Year's celebrations in 2026 were largely unsuccessful. On average this year Russian citizens spent a64,459 rubles, 8% more than planned. A long-term retrospective shows that budget overruns during the New Year holidays are common and even expected. However, overspending has become more moderate in recent years. Overall, over the entire observation period, Russians only managed to stay within their planned budget once (in 2007) and to save once (in 2018).

Year after year, New Year's gifts and leisure compete for the title of largest expenditure category. This year, the latter turned out to be higher: during the extended New Year's holiday, Russians spent an average of 27,509 rubles on cultural and entertainment events, tourist trips, and other expenses, exceeding their planned budget by 2,267 rubles. Leisure, however, remains a rather optional expense: four out of ten Russians were willing to spend on entertainment this year (compared to seven out of ten for the other two spending categories). Gifts for family and friends averaged 24,636 rubles this year, 3,001 rubles more than planned. New Year's meals were the only category where actual spending was lower than expected; the average bill for culinary delights for the main family holiday this year was 12,314 rubles.

Despite a slight budget overrun, there is cause for optimism: total actual spending remained at last year's level (2025 – 64,439 rubles). The fact that the final bill hasn't increased in line with inflation suggests that the holiday has ceased to be an excuse for reckless and unrestrained spending and has become an area for more controlled and conscious consumption.

**Fig. 1. How much money did you spend on New Year's celebrations?\*** \*\* (open-ended question, one answer, average expenditure amount, in rubles, based on responses from those who made the corresponding expenditures, projected and actual New Year's spending)



\* No data for 2015 and 2024.

\*\* 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.

## **TELEMEDICINE: TODAY AND TOMORROW**

February 14, 2026

The 2020 pandemic gave impetus to the development of telemedicine, after which it existed in a test mode, under limited regulatory control. The situation changed in 2025–2026: uniform requirements for remote consultations were approved, and the regulatory framework for their further implementation was created within the compulsory medical insurance system.

Patients often review new developments in healthcare with sensitivity and caution, so the role of doctors as potential intermediaries and trusted advisors in helping patients navigate telemedicine technologies is difficult to overestimate. In Russia, remote patient consultations are only possible through a special service (application), using a verified patient account (via national service Gosuslugi) and an electronic medical record. Given these circumstances, every second Russian (49%) would be more likely to agree to a follow-up appointment remotely if the doctor offered this option after an initial in-person visit. The main reasons cited are time savings and the convenience of the format: «you don't waste extra time, it's faster» (33% of respondents agreed), «more convenient» (28%), «no lines» (18%), and «no need to leave home, no need to travel» (17%). The proportion of those who support a follow-up online consultation is higher among citizens aged 18–44, active internet users, and residents of cities with a population of over 500,000.

The proportion of those who would rather reject the new format is comparable to those who accept it—44% of respondents. Arguments against it are primarily related to traditional notions of the quality and comprehensiveness of medical care: 19–20% of those who refused cite «the importance of face-to-face communication» and «the importance of the doctor seeing the patient,» 13% consider remote consultations to be of lower quality, and 12% state that online consultations are unacceptable and lack trust. Technical difficulties («it's difficult to make an appointment,» «Gosuslugi isn't working,» and «I don't use the internet») were cited by 13% of those who refused. Every second respondent over 60 and every second resident of rural areas opposed the initiative. Another 6% of respondents were unsure and requested more information.

Thus, a loyal audience of young urban patients sees telemedicine technologies as a convenient tool complementing traditional medical practice (which is precisely what they should be). However, wary critics see this as a risk of replacing traditional medicine, reducing the quality of services, and making them less accessible (including digital inaccessibility). Therefore, the expansion of telemedicine in the compulsory health insurance system inevitably raises the issue of digital inequality and the need for some citizens to not only receive medical care but also receive organizational and informational support.

Regarding the existing request for remote consultations, 30% of respondents indicated that they had already received such consultations in the past year or would like to receive them. Moreover, the demand for specific types of remote assistance within this group is distributed relatively evenly: interpretation of test results or examination results (8% of all respondents), clarification of medication questions, and consultations regarding minor ailments in adults and children (6% each, respectively). Another 5% each reported receiving a second opinion and closure of a sick leave certificate. However, most citizens (70%) have not yet formed such a request; traditional communication with a doctor remains a familiar and unwavering standard.

**Fig. 2. Tell me, if after an in-person appointment your doctor suggests replacing the next scheduled visit with a remote one – through a special app or online service, would you be more likely to agree or refuse?**

*(closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)*

