OPINION MONITORING: MAY—JUNE 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MEDICINES: PREFERENCES OF RUSSIANS

EFFECTIVE JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

June 4—9, 2026

"Where to look for a job?" is a question that everyone asks when they find themselves in a situation of joblessness. Some rely on digital platforms; others rely on the help of relatives and acquaintances. According to statistics, from 40% to 50% of vacancies in Russia are successfully filled thanks to recommendations and networking before they are published anywhere. In the modern Russian labor market, specialized websites and personal connections compete for the status of the most popular job search channel (57% and 54% of those looking for hired work name these two options, respectively).

Some respondents prefer to contact companies directly, checking out job postings on the potential employer's official website (28% of the surveyed). Nearly as popular are classified ads, where job postings are combined with offers for goods and services (26%). Employment services (20%) round out the top five most popular job search channels. Just 17 years ago, at the end of the 2000s, job searches were organized quite differently: turning to the internet was the exception rather than the rule; job seekers relied primarily on personal connections, less frequently checking for job openings directly at companies or contacting employment services.

Today, finding a job through personal connections is popular regardless of the potential applicant's age, while modern employment channels highlight the digital divide between generations. Specifically, specialized job search websites are most popular among millennials, while traditional channels are more popular among older job seekers.

One of the features of the modern labor market is the asymmetry of information between job seekers and employers, particularly the lack of feedback from the latter. While candidates are expected to have a well-written CV, cover letters, and a willingness to promptly respond to recruiters' requests, employers often don't consider it necessary to provide feedback even after reviewing their CVs. According to the VCIOM population survey, more than half of respondents have experienced their responses to job postings being ignored, with one in nine facing this situation on a regular basis (Figure 1).

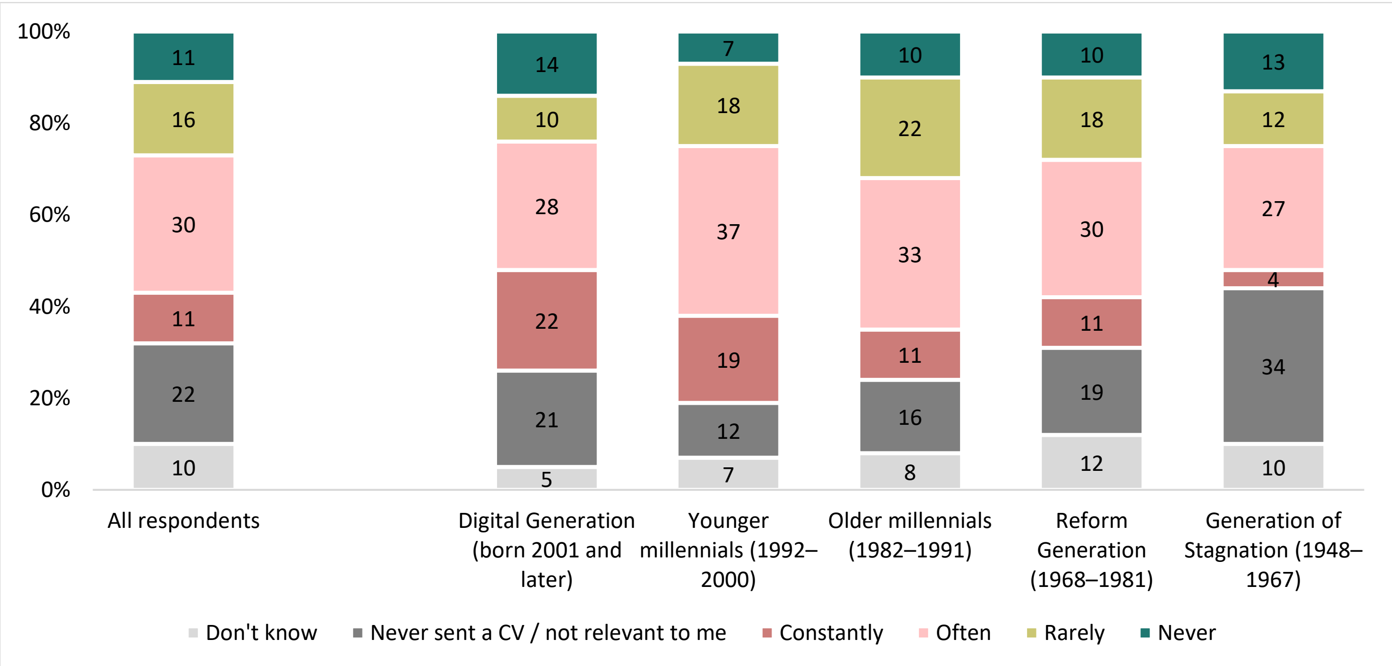
An equally pressing problem is the lack of feedback after a rejection; for most respondents who haven't heard back from a potential employer, this is also a regular situation. The lack of feedback from employers is particularly acute in the capital's labor markets: residents of Moscow and St. Petersburg are more likely than others to encounter unexplained rejections. As a result, job searching increasingly resembles a game with unknown rules: applicants receive no information about the reasons for the rejection or about their prospects for further consideration. This heightens the feeling of uncertainty and increases the appeal of informal job search options (such as help from acquaintances).

Young professionals are the most vulnerable in this situation. Representatives of Generation Z and younger millennials are significantly more likely than others to experience both a lack of response to their resumes and unexplained rejections. As a result, young professionals are deprived of the opportunity to learn from experience and adjust their job search strategy. A lack of professional experience coupled with a dearth of feedback from employers creates a vicious cycle that perpetuates inequality of starting opportunities between younger and more experienced participants in the labor market.

Fighting for employers' attention, respondents are recruiting a new ally—artificial intelligence. About a quarter of Russian internet users use AI when searching for a job, most often when preparing resumes and cover letters. It appears that language models are primarily used to present professional experience and skills in the most effective way, while job searching, interview preparation, and career decision-making remain the responsibility of humans.

Young people are more likely than others to use AI in their job searches. For digital generations, AI has already become a familiar tool for solving everyday problems, so its use in interview preparation and CV writing seems quite expected. Highly educated online users, particularly those with two or more higher education degrees or an advanced degree, are more actively embracing the potential of AI in their job searches. This is likely due not only to access to technology but also to the possession of certain competencies (the ability to formulate queries, critically evaluate results, etc.). In this sense, modern technologies are more likely to enhance the return on existing human capital than to compensate for its deficiency.

*Fig. 1. How often, when looking for a job, do you encounter the fact that employers do not react in any way to your responses or sent CV?**
(closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)



* The Thaw generation (born before 1947) is excluded from the figure due to the small sample size (N=7).

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MEDICINES: PREFERENCES OF RUSSIANS

June 12, 2026

The Russian pharmaceutical market has undergone significant changes in recent years, yet the structure of Russians' preferences regarding the origin of medications remains stable. As of 2023, today, 54% of Russians, given the choice and the necessary funds, would prefer Russian-made medications. This likely reflects an established pattern of consumer behavior that is not solely dependent on current market conditions or external circumstances.

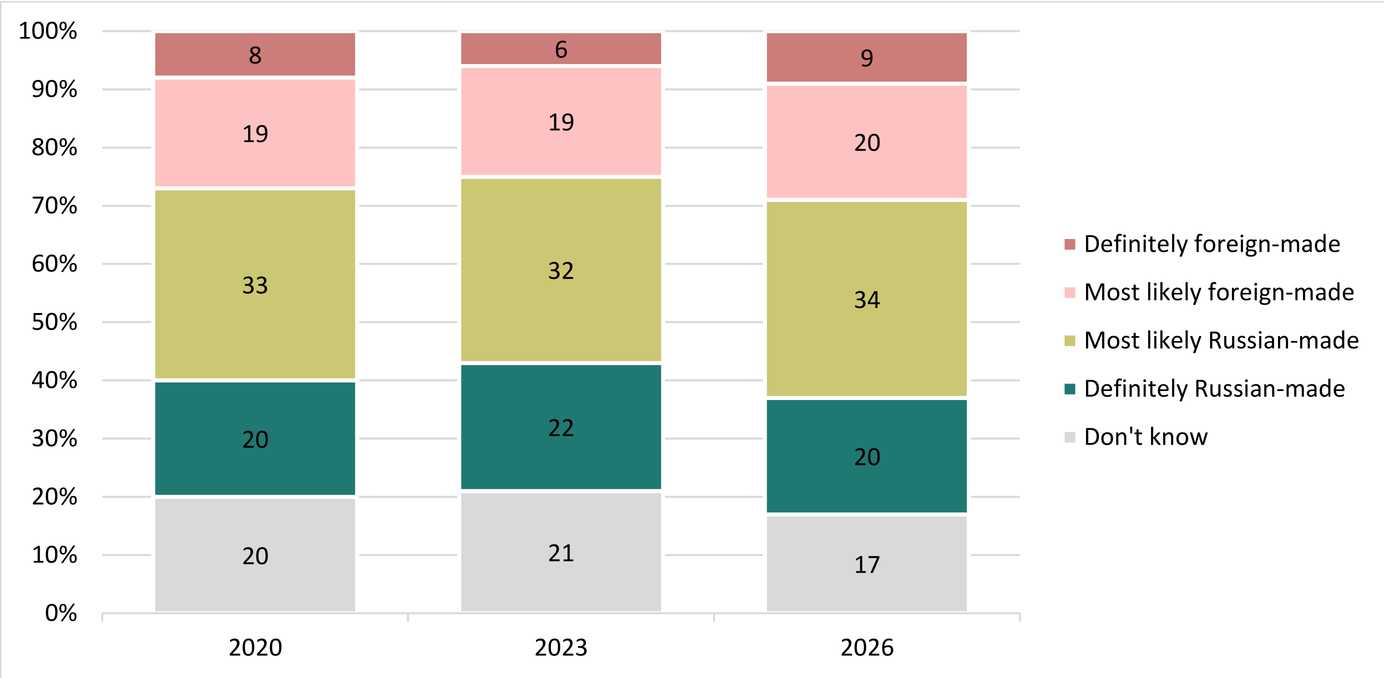
It's worth noting that the domestic pharmaceutical industry is equally capable of producing the most widely used and in-demand medications, while foreign products still dominate the global market for original-brand drugs. Russia accounts for approximately 2% of the global pharmaceutical market by value, yet the main investments in new drug development remain concentrated in the United States, Europe, and China. Therefore, the dominance of foreign companies in the most research-intensive segments seems logical. Globally, a significant number of new drugs represent not radical therapeutic breakthroughs, but rather incremental improvements on existing solutions, often supported by substantial marketing budgets.

The main reasons for choosing Russian medications are trust in domestic manufacturers (37%), more affordable prices (35%), and recommendations from doctors and pharmacists (31%). Respondents' stated trust in the manufacturer reflects their accumulated experience with domestic pharmaceutical products and the gradual strengthening of Russian companies' reputation in the domestic market. In 2023, among the arguments in favor of Russian medications, a significant factor was the desire of our citizens to support domestic manufacturers (32%). Today, this motive remains popular, however, it is no longer the determining factor (20%). Generally, issues of drug availability and predictability of supply remain important for broad segments of the population.

For those who favor imported products, two arguments remain crucial when choosing medications: a belief in their higher efficacy (44%) and stricter quality control standards (41%). The efficacy of foreign drugs no longer seems indisputable (in 2023, this figure would be 57%, a decrease of 13 percentage points). The difference is more evident in the perception of the technological level of manufacturers. Trust in products from the Russian pharmaceutical industry does not negate the fact that some Russians associate foreign companies with cutting-edge research, innovation, and high standards of drug development.

The Russian pharmaceutical industry is gradually increasing its expertise in developing complex drugs, including biotech drugs. This is reflected in public opinion: half of Russians (50%) believe that the quality of domestically produced drugs has improved over the past 25 years and that many high-quality Russian products have appeared on the market, while only 11% hold the opposite view. However, public consensus has yet to emerge. For some Russians, the industry's achievements remain insufficiently visible (21% noticed no changes, and 18% could not answer the question), indicating a persistent gap between actual changes in the industry and public perception.

Fig. 2. Let's imagine that you have choice and the necessary funds. What medications would you prefer to be treated with: Russian or foreign made?
(closed-ended question, one answer; % of all respondents)



LIFESTYLE

«FOOD WITH AND WITHOUT RULES»

ONLINE SHOPPING IN RUSSIA: EVERYTHING IS FOR SALE, BUT NOT EVERYTHING CAN BE BUYED?

SPORTS NEAR HOME — THE PATH TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

PRESTIGE AND STATUS IN MODERN RUSSIA

«FOOD WITH AND WITHOUT RULES»

May 8—10, 2026

In recent years, Analytical Center VCIOM has recorded a consistently high level of public engagement in healthy lifestyles, where proper nutrition (hereinafter, PN), along with physical activity and the absence of unhealthy habits, has become a fundamental element of behavior. Despite Russians' awareness of the components of a healthy lifestyle, and particularly the principles of proper nutrition, the prevalence of actual practices is low. Only 17% of Russians reported following a healthy diet. Most respondents (58%) try but admit they don't always succeed. Finally, one in four Russians doesn't adhere to proper nutrition principles but eats as best they can.

Barriers to a healthy diet fall into four interrelated groups. The first is economic barriers: limited consumer access to essential foods (61%). The second is the inertia of habits and attitudes: poor eating habits, inconsistent information about healthy eating, and the perception that it tastes bad (53%, 13%, and 10%, respectively). The third is lifestyle factors: eating out, stress, and lack of time (each ranging from 29% to 34%). Finally, the fourth group is environmental and perceptual factors: the difficulty of finding high-quality, natural foods (28%). A significant portion of these barriers are not simply individual choices but largely the product of family and cultural habits passed down from generation to generation. This means they can and should be addressed.

Russians note a significant discrepancy between the variety and quality of their diets. While 71% of respondents consider their diet varied, only 40% consider it balanced in terms of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. Almost the same percentage (39%) believe they consume enough fruits and vegetables, while the majority (57%) admit they don't meet the World Health Organization's recommended daily intake of 400 grams.

The basis of the daily diet is baked goods, vegetables, and solid dairy products (butter, cheese, cottage cheese). Most people consume cereals, eggs, poultry, fruits, greens, red meat, sausages, sauces, nuts, and processed foods at least once a week. Fish, seafood, organ meats, berries, and nuts appear in the diet occasionally or are absent altogether. The top three beverages are tea, coffee, and dairy or fermented milk products. Thus, a sense of variety is formed by a wide range of familiar foods, but it does not include regular consumption of fish, seafood, or enough fruits and vegetables.

Respondents quite clearly formulate the desired changes in their diet. For example, respondents would like to exclude simple carbohydrates — sugar, white bread, etc. (71%); trans fats — fast food, confectionery (65%), and salt (45%). At the same time, there is a request to add fiber (73%), vitamins and microelements (65%), unsaturated fats (fatty meat, oils — 50%), complex carbohydrates (46%), as well as animal and vegetable proteins (40% and 44%) to the diet. In other words, people don't just want to "eat less sweets," but imagine a meaningful ideal diet. But aspiration alone is not enough; it encounters a set of restrictions described above and therefore remains unrealized for the majority.

Even when they understand the desired dietary changes, many find that the information intended to help them is often confusing and alarming. While the volume of information is sufficient (61%), the content is not. Most citizens (67—80%) regularly encounter contradictory sources regarding the benefits and harms of the same foods, conflicting recommendations from specialists, and advice that is too complex to implement. Approximately 43% of respondents fall into the group with a high level of information overload on the topic of nutrition. This is likely why the idea of national nutrition standards resonates with most respondents (67% say they are definitely or somewhat needed, compared to 24% who believe such recommendations are unnecessary). Citizens advocating for their development would like to see dietary recommendations for various illnesses, healthy eating tips for different ages, information on the relationship between nutrition and disease prevention, and examples of replacing unhealthy foods with healthy ones. The demand for national dietary guidelines is not simply a response to information overload, but a desire for a reliable and understandable set of rules applicable to everyday life.

ONLINE SHOPPING IN RUSSIA: EVERYTHING IS FOR SALE, BUT NOT EVERYTHING CAN BE BUYED?

May 11, 2026

Over the past 15 years, the Russian online retail market has made impressive progress: the number of online orders has grown at least a hundredfold, and this doesn't include digital products and services. According to forecasts from the analytical agency *Data Insight*, by the end of 2026, the number of online orders for physical goods in our country will reach 10 billion rubles.

The scale of online shopping in Russia is demonstrated by the results of a nationwide survey conducted by the Analytical Center VCIOM. In 2011, approximately three out of ten Russian internet users reported online shopping experience; in 2021 — seven out of ten users; and in 2026 — nine out of ten Russian internet users.

Consumer interest grew across all product categories, while the list of the most popular categories remained virtually unchanged over the years. Clothing and footwear remained the main driver of sales on the Runet throughout the entire observation period. They were among the first to adapt to online shopping, largely due to the development of catalog sales, which prepared Russian shoppers for online clothing selection long before the advent of modern online stores. Airline and train tickets, electronics, and small appliances also consistently rank among the most popular online categories. The main shift in consumer preferences was the explosive demand for household goods, which in 2021 entered the top five online purchases, displacing books and media products (movie, music, and game discs).

As the online retail market develops, identifying the "typical consumer" in this segment is becoming increasingly difficult. Today, online purchases are made by representatives of all socio-demographic groups of the Russian internet audience. However, Muscovites and St. Petersburg residents remain the main adherents of online shopping; almost every internet user in the capital reported online shopping. Judging by the structure of purchases, the internet is successfully replacing supermarkets, bookstores, ticket offices, and even currency exchange offices.

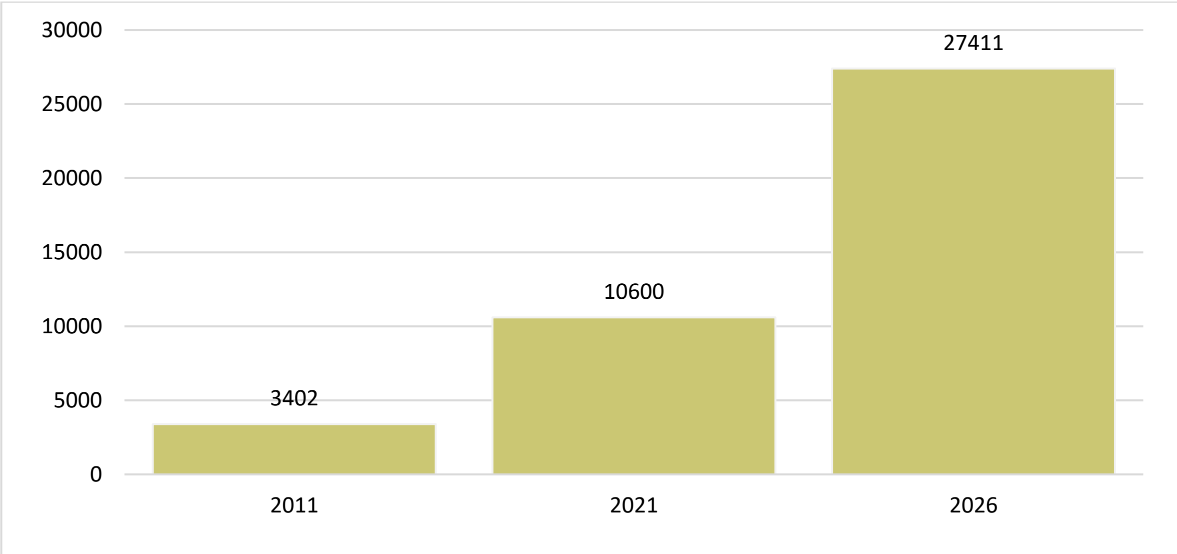
While in the early 2010s, online shopping was primarily associated with progressive youth, today these generational differences have noticeably narrowed: online shopping has been embraced by an older online audience—the Reform generation and the generation of Stagnation. Overall, the market is maturing along with its target audience. Yesterday's pioneers of online shopping (older millennials) have maintained their commitment to online shopping. As they started families and acquired their own homes, their consumer baskets expanded: in addition to online purchases of clothing and electronics, they now include many other categories (home appliances, furniture, home goods, and others).

The experience of online shopping is equally common among different income groups, and the differences between them are determined more by the contents of the virtual cart and the average spending amount. Wealthy Internet users monthly leave almost 2.5 times more money in online stores and marketplaces than respondents with more modest consumer capabilities (51 thousand rubles versus 21.1 thousand rubles).

Online shopping can easily be considered a significant expense item: over the past five years, average monthly spending by internet users on online purchases has increased 2.6-fold, from 10,600 to 27,400 rubles, and eight-fold compared to 2011. Spending has grown not only in absolute but also in relative terms: 15 years ago, 15% of the average monthly salary was spent on online shopping, five years ago it was 19%, and today it is more than a quarter (26%). These data indicate not so much an increase in spending overall as a shift in consumer spending: a significant portion of spending previously spent in traditional retail has shifted online.

Over the past 15 years, the number of opponents of online shopping—those who refuse to allow any purchases online—has decreased threefold. However, resistance to digital expansion remains in some segments. This primarily applies to the purchase of pets, currency, and large appliances—that is, goods and services where the cost of error is high or where direct contact is essential. In 2011, groceries topped the list of undesirable online purchases. Consumer skepticism was largely due to the actual capabilities of delivery services at the time: delivery services were offered by isolated providers, required advance planning, and, as a result, lacked the key advantage—the ability to provide the goods right away.

Fig. 1. Please remember how many rubles per month on average you spent on online shopping over the last three months
(closed-ended question, one answer, the average amount in rubles, according to responses from those who use the internet and have purchased goods online)



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.

SPORTS NEAR HOME — THE PATH TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

May 15, 2026

In recent years, the development of sports infrastructure has become one of the priority areas of state policy in Russia. Efforts in this area are also reflected in public assessments: seven out of ten (70%) Russians believe that their region has created good conditions for practicing at least one or even any sports. At the same time, those who regularly train give higher ratings: among those training in the gym or sports hall, the figure increases to 84%, in open areas — up to 79%, at home — up to 75%. In other words, personal experience of regular physical activity improves the perception of the existing regional sports infrastructure.

The situation is assessed most favorably by young people, whose level of involvement in sports and physical education is traditionally higher. Good conditions for the development of any or at least one sport are noted by 86% of representatives of the Digital generation and 77% of younger millennials. In addition, residents of two capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg), where the figure is 76%, are also at the forefront.

According to Russians, the most favorable conditions exist for mass (or national) sports. Among spontaneously mentioned disciplines, football is the clear leader (26%), followed far behind by hockey (14%) and swimming (14%). Other mentioned sports include running and various types of walking, biathlon and skiing, track and field, volleyball, wrestling, basketball, boxing and Muay Thai, gymnastics, and cycling.

At the same time, the success of regions in promoting sports is largely due to their climatic characteristics: in warm southern places, things are best with football; in regions with moderately cool, cold or arctic climates — with hockey. A kind of calling card of the Russian North are winter sports, biathlon and skiing, as well as indoor swimming pools.

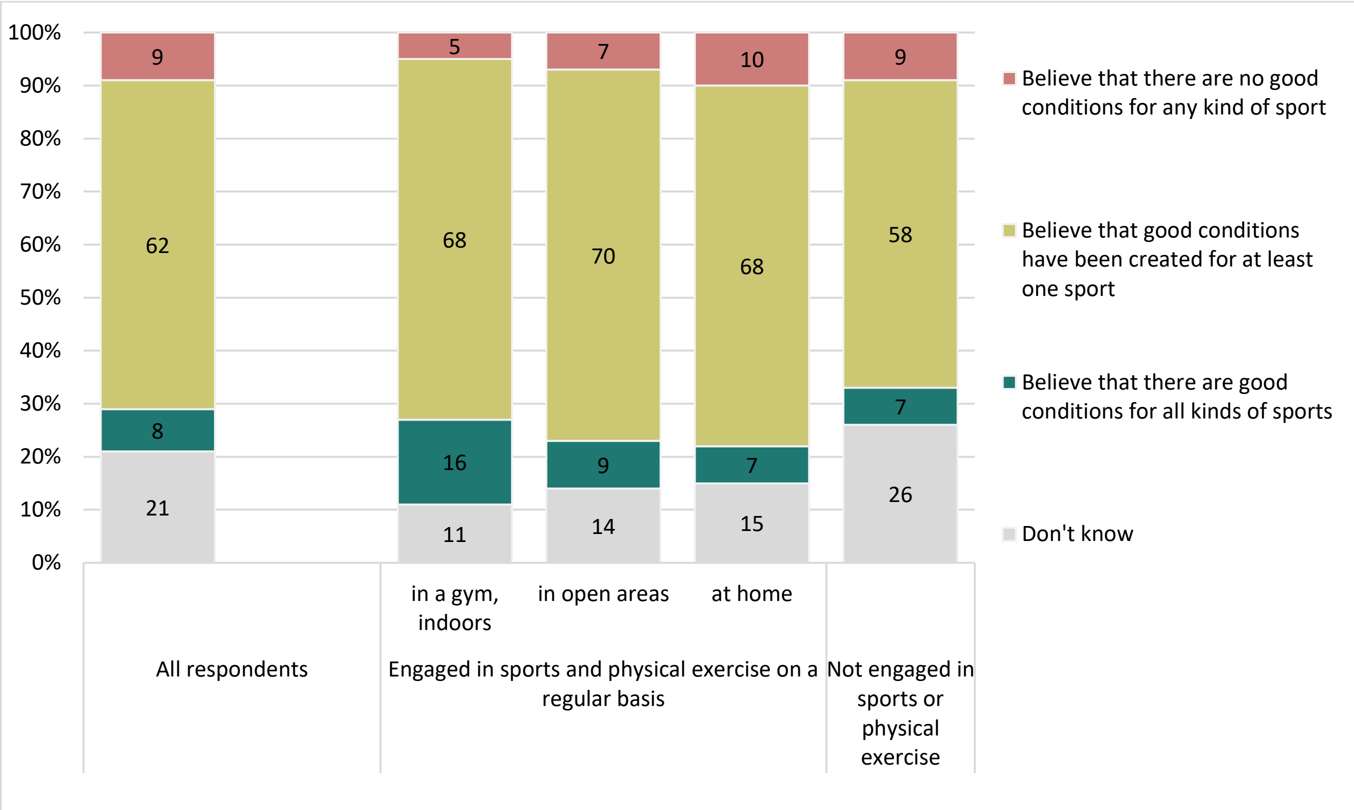
A youth trend is also evident: Digital generation and younger millennials rate running conditions significantly higher. This may largely be a result of the changing urban environment, which is adapting to current needs: parks, embankments, squares, and other landscaped public spaces are becoming fully-fledged venues for regular exercise.

A significant part of the sports infrastructure are open sports grounds within walking distance. Entire clusters are being created that can combine areas for football and volleyball, workout zones, play areas, children's playgrounds, walking paths, and more. These facilities are typically free of charge, accessible to people of all ages, and allow for independent exercise using a variety of equipment. Six in ten Russians surveyed (62%) have seen such facilities near their homes, with one in two (51%) rating their equipment and overall condition positively.

Approximately a third of respondents (34%) say there are no sports facilities within walking distance of their homes, which poses a serious challenge for the regions. The lack of outdoor sports facilities within walking distance is relatively more often mentioned by members of the Thaw generation, as well as residents of northern and, somewhat paradoxically, southern Russian regions. Furthermore, those living in rural areas, where the density of social infrastructure is traditionally lower than in cities, remain somewhat excluded.

Perceptions of existing conditions for sports and physical education at outdoor sports facilities are overwhelmingly positive: 45% have noticed improvements in their region over the past one to two years, while only 5% report negative results. However, four in ten respondents (40%) see no significant changes, indicating that sports infrastructure is developing unevenly and is not always visible in people's everyday experiences.

Fig. 2. In your opinion, what sports conditions are good for practicing in your region? You can give several answers
(open-ended question, grouping, % of all respondents)



PRESTIGE AND STATUS IN MODERN RUSSIA

May 23, 2026

Every era has its own hallmarks of the good life. In Soviet times, prestige was associated with a separate apartment, a long-awaited *Moskvich*, and scarce imported goods. In the 2000s, these were replaced by capitalist values: European-style renovations, vacations abroad, expensive phones, leisure time in restaurants; social success became more ostentatious and luxurious.

Today, this system is changing again, this time toward social security. Status is becoming more pragmatic, less ostentatious, and more focused on long-term quality of life. Many former symbols of consumption have become more accessible and familiar, and therefore no longer "work." While twenty years ago, a wealthy person could be identified by a nice apartment or the ability to buy one, a car, international travel, or expensive furniture, today, opportunities that provide family stability are taking center stage: high-quality education for children and high-quality healthcare, which outweigh even personal property. At the same time, the perception of housing as a status symbol has also changed significantly: previously, the focus was on good housing, today it's on the ability to acquire one's own square footage. In other words, it's not "what kind of home" that matters, but that it’s one's own.

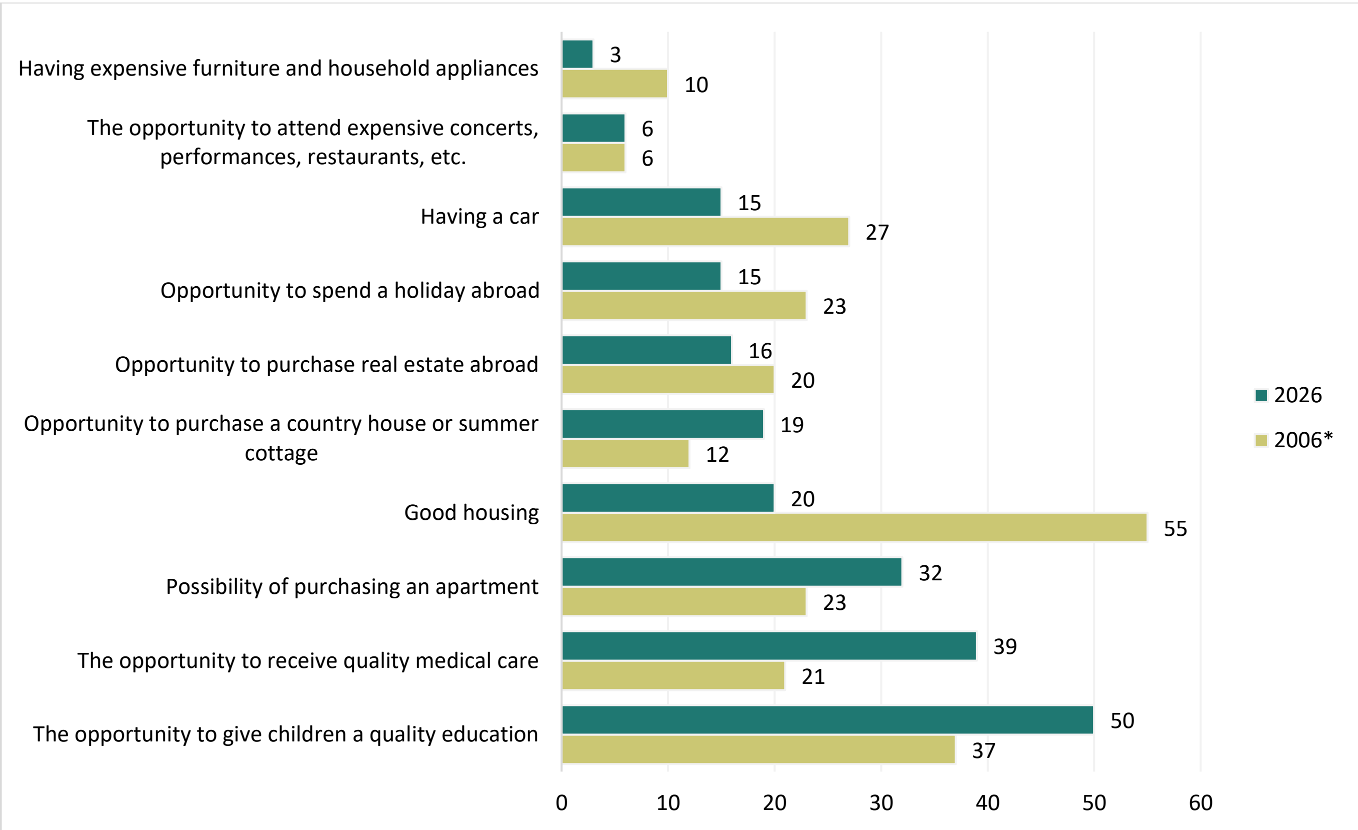
Good education for children is a universal status marker for Russians of all ages. Men are slightly more likely to associate prestige with a car, while women associate it with their children's education, healthcare, and housing quality. For younger generations, status symbols center around the ability to acquire real estate: an apartment, a country house, and even property abroad. This is one of the key goals of their life stage, and its fulfillment determines a great deal, from starting a family to long-term financial commitments. A personal car is also a key component of young people's prestige.

Older generations present a different picture. Social security becomes more important to them—children's education is becoming a clear priority, followed by healthcare and housing, not as a matter of personal property, but as a marker of comfort—good housing.

Financial status hardly changes the hierarchy of responses, leading to the conclusion that a prestigious lifestyle is quite universal, practically independent of personal means. However, the region of residence does influence the needs.

In large cities, status is more often associated with real estate, mobility, opportunities abroad, leisure, and an expanded living space. In rural areas and small towns, the image of success is more concentrated and it embraces education, healthcare, and housing.

Fig. 3. What, in your opinion, is a sign of prestige and status in Russia today? (closed-ended question, up to 3 answers; % of all respondents)



* 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.