

KEY MESSAGES

THE IDEAL IS FADING – DEMARCATION FROM WESTERN EUROPE

Only 52% of young people believe that relations between Russia and the West can ever really be friendly. Only 20% of respondents consider their identity to have been shaped by what they perceive as Western culture, only 20% identify themselves as Europeans, and only 36% consider Russia a European country. The alienation between Russian youth and Western Europe cannot be denied. However, the results of the study also reveal the key levers for bridging this gap: individual freedom, economic success, democracy and the rule of law – all of these values are perceived by most as being more often realized in Europe than in Russia. Two of the three most popular destinations for Russian emigrants, Germany and France, are in Europe; and the more a person travels, the more likely this individual is to establish a European identity. An in-depth exchange in both directions can therefore help young people to understand Europe as a common cultural space where all countries have their place, which in turn could assist in promoting greater enthusiasm for the European idea.

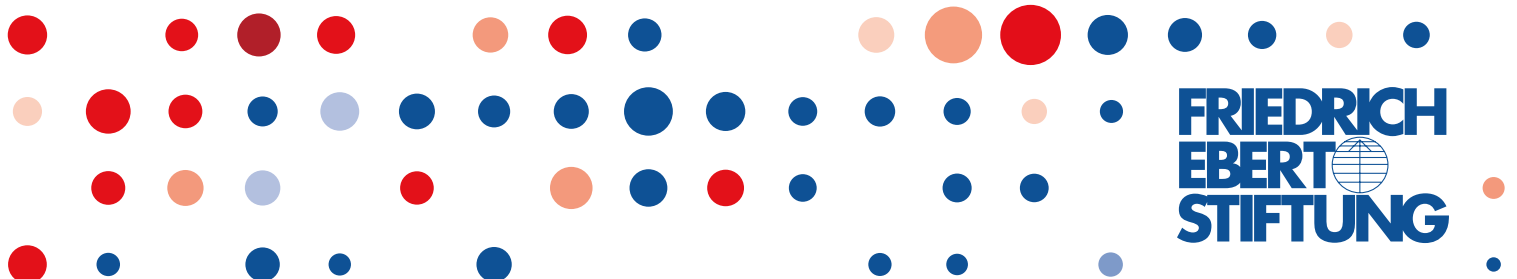
THE POST-POST-SOVIET GENERATION?

The age groups that were interviewed grew up in a very different political system from that in which their parents were raised. Accordingly, the breakdown and evaluation of the political system of the Soviet Union are becoming less and

less interesting for young Russians. 50% have no opinion on, or are indifferent to the dissolution of the USSR. The break with the Soviet generation can also be seen in the fact that despite mostly good relationships with their parents, 38% of young people would raise their own children differently. The youth are slowly moving away from the past, but it is unclear where the new path is leading to.

LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN – INTEREST IN POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES IS INCREASING SLIGHTLY

There is little interest in politics - almost 60% of respondents are not or not at all interested in politics. There is hardly any trust in the national institutions. Only 26% trust the government, 16% political parties and 24% the State Duma. Nevertheless, trust in the president is comparatively high at 42%. At the same time, the youth themselves are hardly involved in politics. But there are also trends in the opposite direction. There is hardly any support for autocratic behavior, and approval of democracy is slightly higher among young people as compared to the general population. At least 2/3 agree that young people should have more opportunities to express themselves in politics. There seems to be an interest in political participation, but this is not expressed in specific political demands.



IS MOSCOW AT THE AVANT-GARDE AND A TRENDSETTER FOR RUSSIA'S YOUTH?

This study also shows that “Moscow is not Russia”, because Muscovites have a different mindset. Nevertheless, Moscow’s young people make up a considerable part of the whole: 7.52% of young people between the ages of 14 and 29 live in the capital of Russia, and a large proportion of them are among the most privileged. They have the potential to become trendsetters for developments across the country. They are more politically engaged, have rather liberal attitudes, are more distrustful of state institutions and are more likely to see themselves as cosmopolitans and Europeans.

YES TO EMIGRATION, BUT NOT AT ANY PRICE

Russia risks losing a significant part of its youth to emigration, including many of the best educated. Just over half of the respondents do not rule out migration, and 16% have a strong or very strong desire to emigrate. The main motivation cited by young people with a strong desire to emigrate is improvement in living standards at 44%. However, a more important factor is the attitude of young people to the state of the country: those who see the country's future much more pessimistically and remain more suspicious of the state institutions have the strongest desire to emigrate. Russia risks losing a part of its youth who are ambitious to start a new and better life in another country. More than a quarter of respondents want to emigrate to earn higher wages, enjoy more political stability or more cultural diversity.

DESPITE GREAT DISTRUST IN STATE INSTITUTIONS – THE STATE SHOULD BE STRONG AND RESPONSIVE

The political views of young people hardly differ from those of the general population. The biggest difference is the higher proportion of those who agree with Russian nationalism (16%) and liberalism (12%), so the youth are slightly more polarised than average. However, Social Democracy with 28% received the most approval among those asked about political views. At the same time, 74% agree that the incomes of the poor and rich should be more equal and 86% agree that the government should take more responsibility for ensuring that

everyone receives proper care. More than 2/3 of young people want a state that cares about human rights, the environment, economic growth and development, fighting unemployment, crime and corruption, and social justice and security for all. Through their expectations from the state and strong support for social democracy, most young people demonstrate their desire for a strong and rules-based state that guarantees fundamental rights and social justice. At the same time, distrust of the state is a sign that the state faces challenges in matching these expectations. Meeting these expectations could be the best way to restore young people's trust in politics.