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# Six Months in Exile:

## A New Life of Russian Emigrants

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## Executive Summary

In August-early September 2022, before the announcement of the "partial" mobilization, the research project OutRush in cooperation with the Noda (formerly OK Russians) conducted a second wave of the online panel survey of emigrants from Russia who are currently in more than 60 countries all over the globe. We surveyed the respondents in March 2022 and invited new participants by posting and disseminating a link to the survey. The link was distributed through online channels, social media groups, and internet influencers. The participation of those previously surveyed allowed us to draw conclusions about the dynamics of the respondents' movements, and changes in attitudes, plans, and expectations. Our panel data is the only<sup>1</sup> opportunity today to monitor changes within the Russian emigrants' communities who left the country after February 24. The survey data are complemented by a series of semi-structured interviews conducted in the summer of 2022 in Tbilisi.

- The overall economic conditions of Russian emigrants have worsened: emigration was a costly decision, and many lost their jobs in Russian organizations. The situation of Russian employees in international companies and freelancers appears to be the most stable.
- Despite the weakening of economic ties with the homeland, the vast majority of Russian emigrants are still immersed in Russian political discourse: they closely follow the news from Russia and maintain constant contact both with loved ones who have remained in Russia and with other Russian emigrants.
- We found no consistent evidence of an ongoing polarization between those who left and those who stayed in Russia: the level of trust between 'exiters' and 'remainers' has only increased over the six months of the study.
- Civic activism among Russian emigrants remains at high levels after six months of emigration. They continue to help each other, do charity work, and volunteer. The high level of trust between emigrants stimulates mutual support.
- Trust towards the citizens of the host communities has also remained very high. At the same time, there has been a decrease in trust in state institutions of the host countries, mainly due to difficulties with paperwork.
- During the first six months in exile, Russians have become much more optimistic about their own lives, but still do not see positive scenarios for Russia.
- According to our findings, about 16% of Russian emigrants who left after 24 February 2022 returned to Russia before September 2022. For most of them, this comeback is temporary: they plan to complete their business and leave again for good within a few months.

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<sup>1</sup> As far as we know, there are no other panel surveys of Russian emigrants available at the moment.

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## Acknowledgments

We express our deepest gratitude to all the survey participants who found the time and energy to complete the questionnaire, despite the turbulent events and challenges of life in emigration. We are especially grateful to those participants who distributed the questionnaire to relatives and friends and shared a link to it in their Telegram feeds.

We are very grateful to all the non-profit organizations, relocation communities, and their administrators who agreed to help distribute the link to the questionnaire.

We also thank our colleague Karolina Nugumanova, who volunteered to help us with data processing and visualizations.

## Introduction

### *About us*

The OutRush is a research project that consists of an international team of scholars from the European University Institute, and the Finnish Institute of International Affairs and focuses on Russian emigration after 24 February 2022. We conduct regular research on the lives of new Russian emigrants, based on surveys and interviews. The first and second waves of the survey were carried out with the information support of the Noda project (formerly OK Russians).

### *The structure of the report*

- In the first section, we describe the changes that have occurred with Russian emigrants<sup>2</sup> within the six months since the first survey in March 2022. We rely on the same questions that were asked in two waves of the panel (i.e. to the same survey participants) in March and September 2022.
- The second section focuses on new data from the second survey, including information on the psychological state of emigrants, their attempts to integrate into the new societies, and the nature of connections with friends and relatives that were left behind in Russia.
- In the third section, we provide an estimate of the proportion of emigrants who have returned to Russia and analyze the reasons for their decision.

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<sup>2</sup> There is a variety of terms aiming to describe people who have recently left Russia (*relokanty*, emigrants, refugees to name just a few), and those who have left Russia themselves may not associate themselves with any of them. For the purposes of this report, we use the term 'emigrants', although we recognize that people's actual experiences and trajectories are so diverse that using a single term is problematic.

## Methodology

The survey was conducted from 23 August to 25 September 2022. For the first two weeks, the survey was available only to participants of the first wave of the survey (panel study), conducted at the end of March 2022, to whom we sent links to the survey. This part is the second wave of the panel survey, launched in March 2022. From September 5, the survey link was accessible to new participants.

The focus of this report is on Russian emigrants who left Russia after 24 February 2022<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, we focus on this group of respondents, excluding emigrants who left earlier, as well as those who are still in Russia but plan to leave the country. This report excludes respondents who left after the announcement of "partial" mobilization in September 2022.

Three datasets are used in the report:

1. The panel sample is regular respondents, i.e. those who participated in two waves of the survey (March 2022 and September 2022). Among those who left contacts during the first wave of the survey, 60% completed the questionnaire in full in the second wave of the survey in September 2022<sup>4</sup>. A total of 611 respondents participated in both waves of the survey. When we describe changes in the lives of recent emigrants over the past six months, we rely on the answers of precisely these respondents.
2. Combined sample encompasses both regular (or panel) respondents and new respondents who completed the survey in September 2022. In describing the new data on the lives of Russian emigrants, we rely on an analysis of the responses of all respondents who completed the survey in September, whether they participate in the panel survey or not. The size of this sample is 2,176 respondents.
3. We also rely on the data from 15 in-depth interviews and field notes taken by us in Georgia in the summer of 2022. The informants were recruited from the participants in the first wave of the survey (March 2022) and who agreed to give an interview.

We cannot claim that our sample is representative of all emigrants who left Russia after 24 February 2022. [This is due to the lack of reliable information](#) about the parameters of the general population, and hence the impossibility of creating a probability sample. Some insight into the composition and geography of emigration could be provided by data from host societies, but these are still not available for most countries and should not be expected to be publicly available before spring 2023.

Nevertheless, we are making efforts to improve the quality of the sample and its diversity. We distribute the survey in dozens of Telegram channels, both political and non-political. We get rid of suspicious questionnaires — duplicate sets of answers and questionnaires filled out too quickly. When

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<sup>3</sup> Analysis of those just planning to leave Russia, as well as Russian emigrants who left before 24 February 2022 — in subsequent reports of the OutRush project and media publications.

<sup>4</sup> A further 10% partially completed the survey; only those who completed at least 50% of the questionnaire are included in the final analysis.

analyzing responses from regular respondents, we also test for possible sampling bias<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, the current way of recruiting respondents is likely to shift our sample toward younger and more active in internet emigrants.

## What has changed after six months in emigration<sup>6</sup>

Almost six months have passed between the two surveys, the first one was conducted in March 2022. This is not a sufficiently long time to jump to any conclusion about any substantial change. However, the shock of the war has passed and respondents have started to adapt to the new realities and new life. What has changed in their situation, trajectories, views, and attitudes over this time, from March to September 2022?

### *Economic Conditions: Money for Freedom*

The financial situation of emigrants as a whole has deteriorated. Figure 1 shows the dynamics of respondents' economic well-being. For the majority of emigrants, the move was associated with significant costs: **their incomes have dropped by one or two income categories as compared to the previous ones**. For every second respondent, who before the move did not have problems buying expensive home appliances, it has become difficult not only to buy appliances but also clothes. In some cases, Russian emigrants' income fell from the highest income category ("could not deny themselves buying anything") into three categories at once: now they cannot afford to buy large household appliances and in rare cases even clothes.

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<sup>5</sup> The bias in the sample of regular respondents may arise because not all respondents who left contacts are re-interviewed. We make sure that the difference in important social characteristics between the two groups (those who responded to the second wave and those who did not) is not statistically significant. The results of the sample bias test show no statistically significant difference in such variables as gender, age, income, plans to return to Russia, and uncertainty about future plans. In other words, respondents and non-respondents in the panel survey did not differ statistically on these variables.

<sup>6</sup> In this section, we rely on data from regular respondents, leaving aside responses from new survey participants.

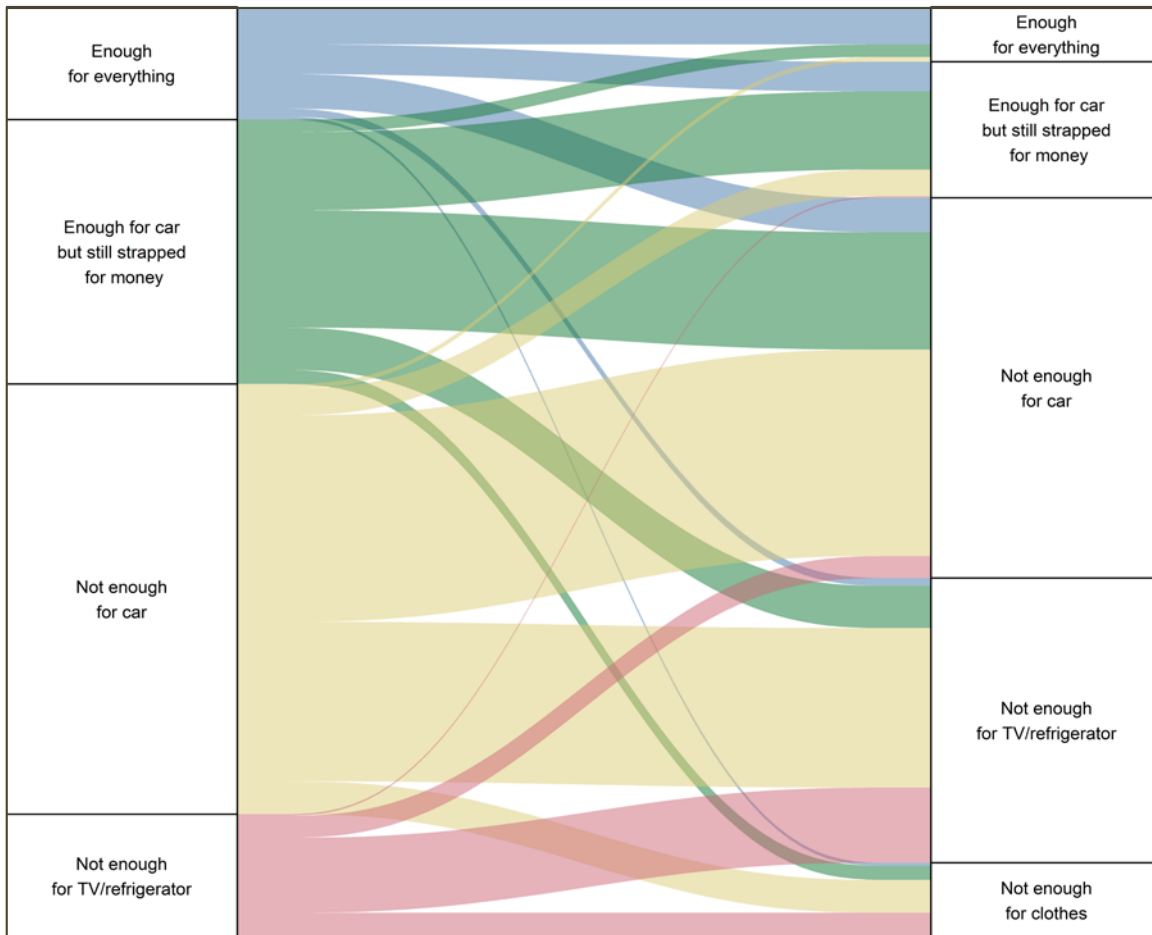


Figure 1. Six-month change in the economic well-being of emigrants

The employment situation of emigrants has also changed during the six months. In the first months of their stay abroad, many kept their jobs in Russia, moving to remote work. Now we see a shift to working for international and local companies, freelancing, or trying to start their own business. Only 2% of those who used to work have become unemployed, and 5% of respondents started to study. All in all, the economic link to Russia is gradually weakening.

The employment situation of those employed in international companies and self-employed freelancers appeared to be the most stable. It is likely that employers' reluctance to retain employees in remote work has contributed to the outflow of employees from Russian companies.

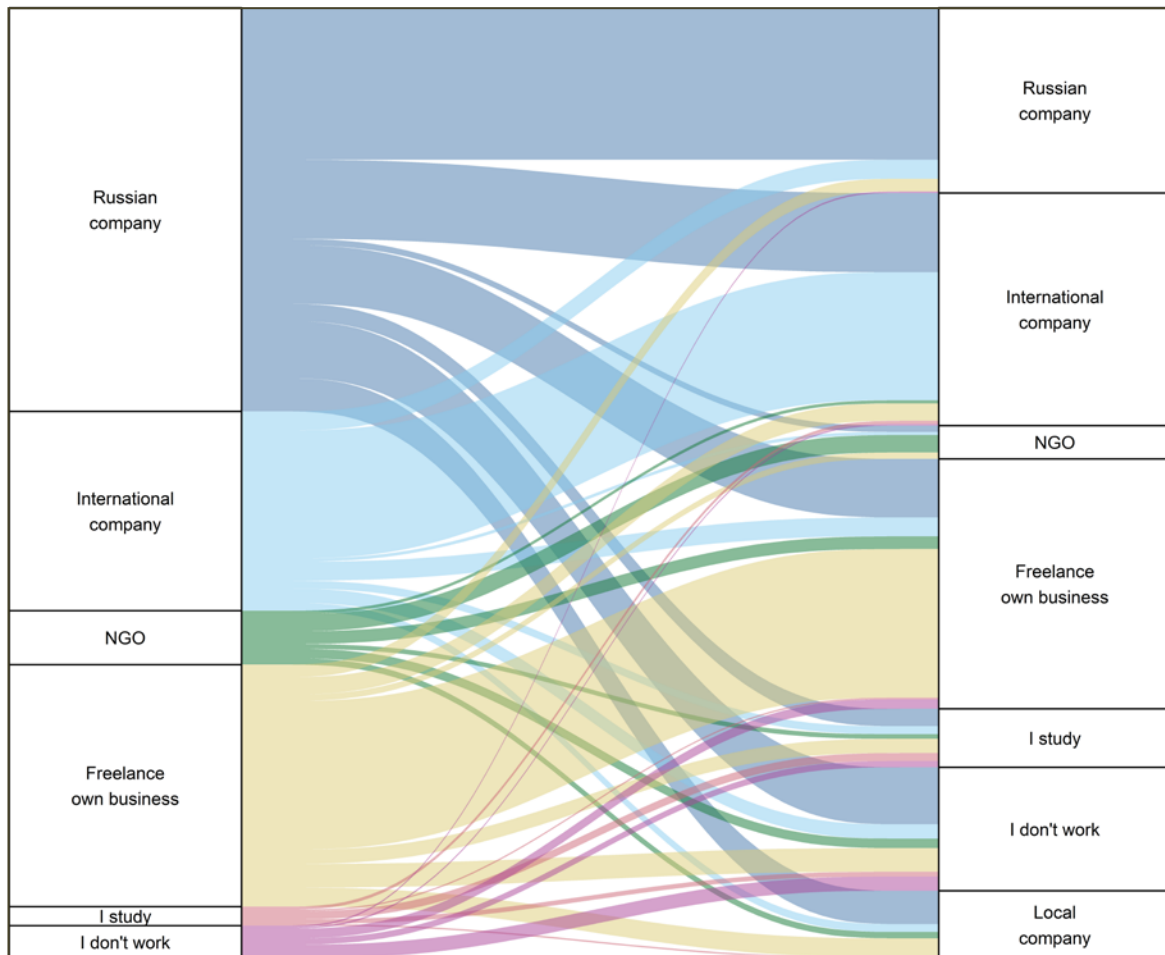


Figure 2. The outflow of employees from Russian companies over from March to September 2022

## Trust and Perceived Discrimination

The degree of trust in others is an important indicator of social change in the lives of Russians abroad. Trust is seen as the basis of solidarity and successful social relationships between people; it is associated with [physical security](#), [economic success](#), and levels [of happiness and life satisfaction](#). In communities with high levels of trust, people [are](#) more politically [active](#) and more likely to engage in charity and volunteering.

Trust is a stable characteristic, over short periods of time the level of trust does not usually change. However, some changes are noticeable in the results of the first and second surveys.

In March 2022, the level of trust among Russian emigrants toward people in general<sup>7</sup> was 46%, which is **much higher than the average trust level in Russia (28%)**<sup>8</sup>. A high level of trust indicates a

<sup>7</sup> Trust in people in general (answering the question "Generally speaking, do you think most people can be trusted or should you be very careful when dealing with people?" with two options).

<sup>8</sup> Based on 2014 data. [World Values Survey](#) (2014).



positive attitude towards people in general. After six months, the level of trust has increased by 14% (up to 61%), which is comparable to the level of trust in the EU countries, e.g., [Germany](#).

Perhaps the positive experience stemming from the interactions with the local communities and with other Russians who had left had an impact on the level of trust in people in general. Other possible reasons could be a result of ongoing adaptation to life in new countries and under new political conditions, new social ties, and overall reduction of the amount of stress.

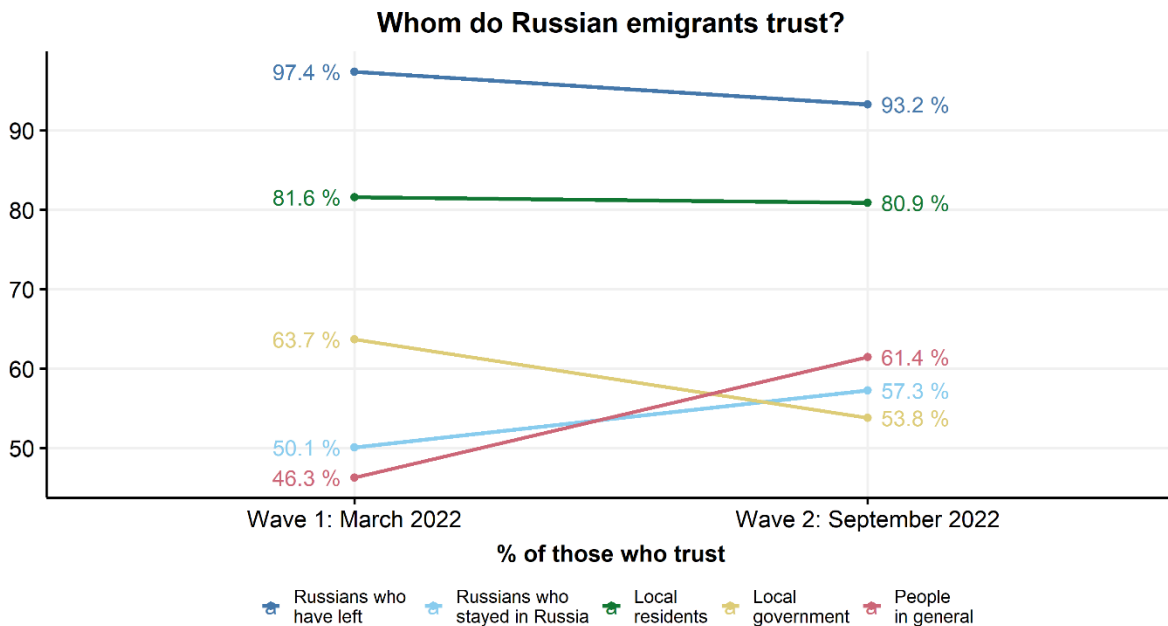


Figure 3. Changes in the level of trust among Russian emigrants

Our data do not support claims of increasing polarization between those who have left and those who stayed in Russia. The level of trust towards Russians remaining in the country was quite high and even increased by 7 percentage points (p.p.) – from 50% in March 2022 to 57% in September 2022. Perhaps the increase in trust is related to the fact that Russian emigrants remain in close contact with their loved ones: almost 50% of emigrants talk to family and friends in Russia every or almost every day (see Figure 10). We also assume that many Russian emigrants would like to continue supporting Russian activists, although this is becoming increasingly difficult due to [political risks](#) in Russia and limited access to Russian banks and financial instruments, most of which fall under international sanctions. This is how one of the informants describes her attitude towards Russian in Russia:

*"I certainly consider as heroes those people who stayed in Russia, who are doing something now. I know them by name, I follow them, and I see what they are doing. And it is probably not hopeless, someone had to stay there and continue at least some civic activity." (Coordinator of non-commercial projects, Tbilisi, summer 2022)*

Russian emigrants retained a high level of trust in other Russians who had left. Apparently, the experience of interaction with other emigrants is regarded as predominantly positive.

The level of trust in the host societies remained very high, despite a strong fear of discrimination based on citizenship, nationality or language and occasional reports of discrimination. The high level of trust in the host societies can be attributed to the fact that some Russian emigrants were able to develop a productive approach to communication involving understanding and dialogue.

*"Anyone who speaks Russian, with a Russian passport, should be ready to talk [in a sense to respond or to give their assessment on the war — Authors] anywhere all over the world. And there's nothing you can do about it now. And it's super weird now not to go anywhere, because like you'll be asked. Because you might get asked. You should definitely understand that. It is the case in Georgia, which actually suffered from Russia very seriously and is still suffering." (Top manager, Tbilisi, summer 2022)*

At the same time, **confidence in host governments decreased** by 10 p.p. The decrease can be attributed to [difficulties with opening bank accounts, obtaining visas](#), and other challenges faced by emigrants in dealing with public services and financial institutions, as well as a lack of institutional assistance from the states. Several respondents noted in comments to the survey that it was because of such difficulties that they decided to return to Russia.

**The level of perceived discrimination<sup>9</sup> has decreased:** in March 23% of respondents reported incidents of discrimination in the month of emigration, and in September 20% of respondents reported incidents of discrimination in the last three months<sup>10</sup>.

## Activism

Russian emigrants continue to help each other, and engage in charity and volunteer work. Half of the emigrants continued to help Russian independent NGOs and media financially. Another 40% of respondents helped other Russian emigrants in the last three months. The degree of solidarity remains high.

Emigrants continued to participate in volunteer activities and projects - about 22% reported having been involved in volunteer work in the last three months (against 16% in the first month of migration). The same can be said about assistance to Ukrainian refugees. While in the first month after February 24, 37% of emigrants reported support for Ukrainian refugees, in September, among the same respondents it stood at 47%.

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<sup>9</sup> Percentage of those who feel they have experienced discrimination.

<sup>10</sup> The difference between the two waves is not significant at the statistical significance level of 0.05, but the data rather indicate a decrease in discrimination, as respondents rated the events of the last one month in March and the events of the last three months in September.

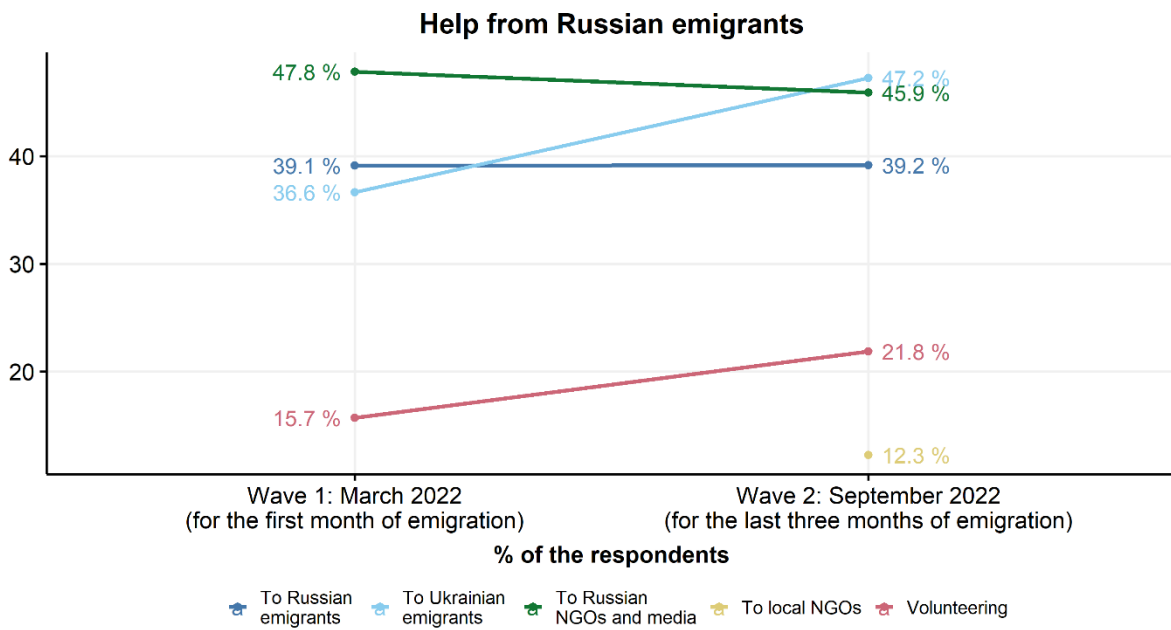


Figure 4. Support for civic initiatives by Russian emigrants from March to September 2022<sup>11</sup>

Finally, 12% of emigrants reported financially supporting local NGOs and media in the last three months.

Half of the surveyed emigrants published political posts on social media, signed petitions and open letters in the three months preceding the second survey, i.e. in the first month in emigration, 85% of the respondents did so. The number of participants in coordinated public events remained almost unchanged at 23%.

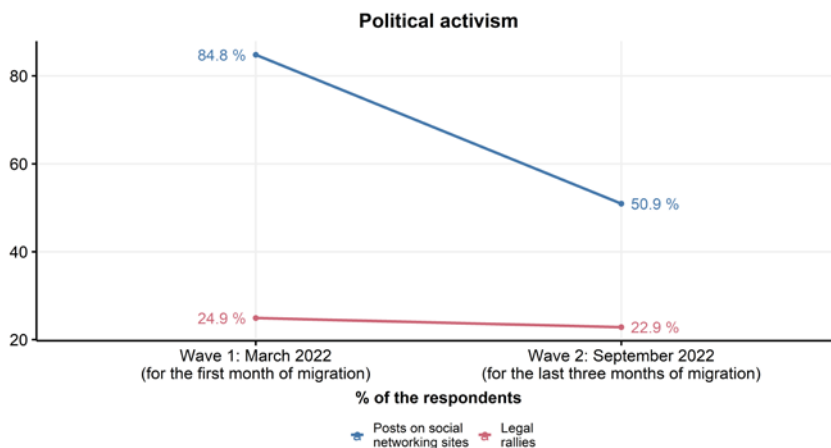


Figure 5. Political participation among Russian emigrants from March to September 2022

<sup>11</sup> The illustrated data should be interpreted with caution. Since the first wave of the survey took place in March, the actual period of social activity covered only the first month of migration. In the second wave, however, we asked about social activity in the last three months.

## No Future in Russia, a Future Abroad

In six months, Russian emigrants **have become more optimistic** about their own lives. 30% believe that their life will become a little or a lot better in the coming year compared to 12% of those who thought so in March 2022. The number expecting life to get a little or a lot worse has, in turn, fallen from 37% in March to 15% in September. The improved outlook for the coming year can be attributed to adapting to a new environment, finding employment, settling into a new place, and reducing stress levels.

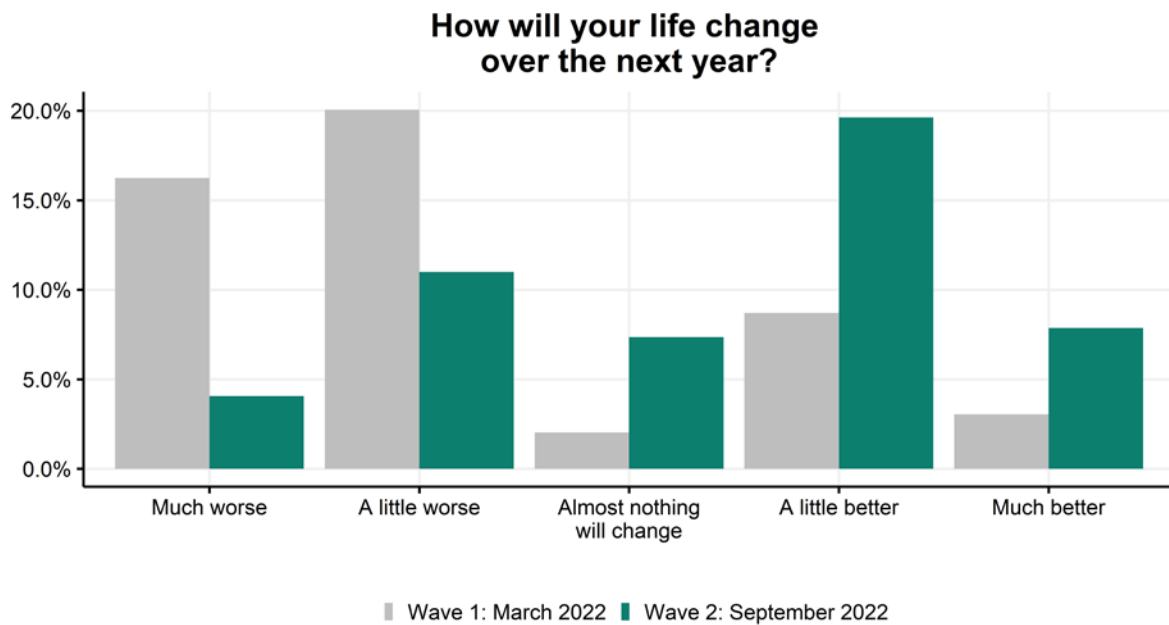


Figure 6. Perceptions of future by Russian emigrants from March to September 2022

At the same time, **perceptions of the situation in Russia remains largely unchanged**. Around 35% of those participating in the panel survey still assess the likelihood of positive change in Russia as nonexistent or low. Around 7% of participants believe in positive change compared with 6% in March 2022. This difference in perceptions of the future may indicate that respondents do not associate personal well-being with the state of affairs in Russia anymore.

## Staying in Tune with Russia, Integration Prospects and Quality of Life<sup>12</sup>

Russian emigrants still retain an interest in political life in Russia. More than 90% of respondents indicated that they are very interested or rather interested in the Russian political agenda (see Figure 7).

<sup>12</sup> This section is based on a pooled sample of the September 2022 survey.

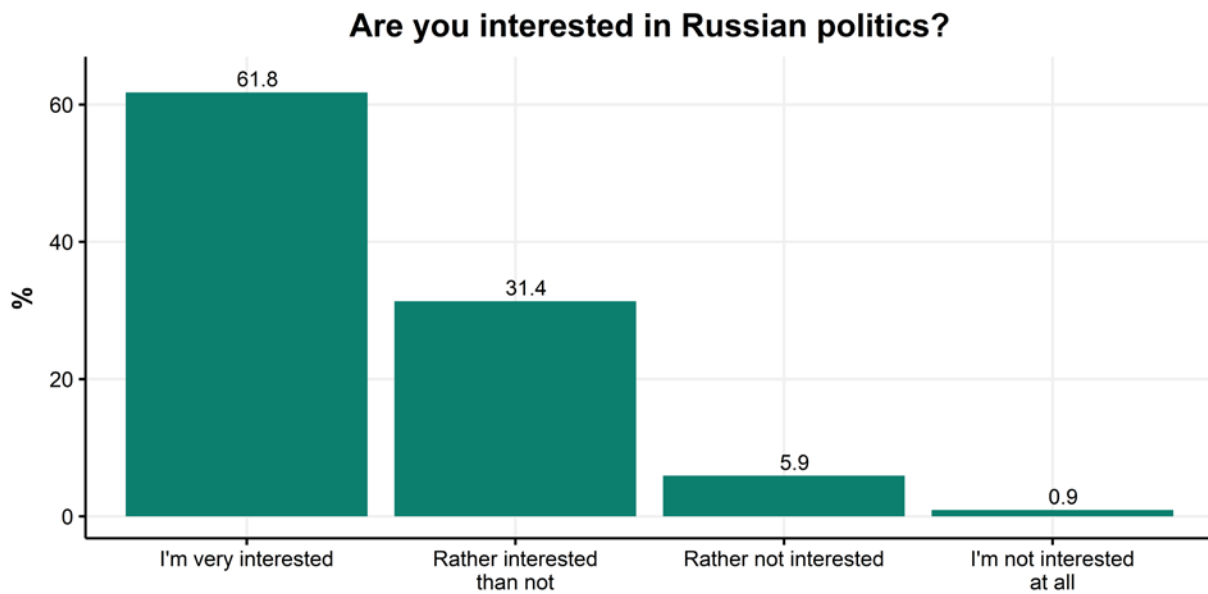


Figure 7. Interest in Russian politics

Earlier studies of migration demonstrate that emigrants interested in the political life of the country they have left are also [becoming interested in](#) the politics of the host country. More than half of our respondents are interested in the politics of the country where they reside at the time of the survey. Those who are not interested in local politics constitute 39% of respondents (see Figure 8).

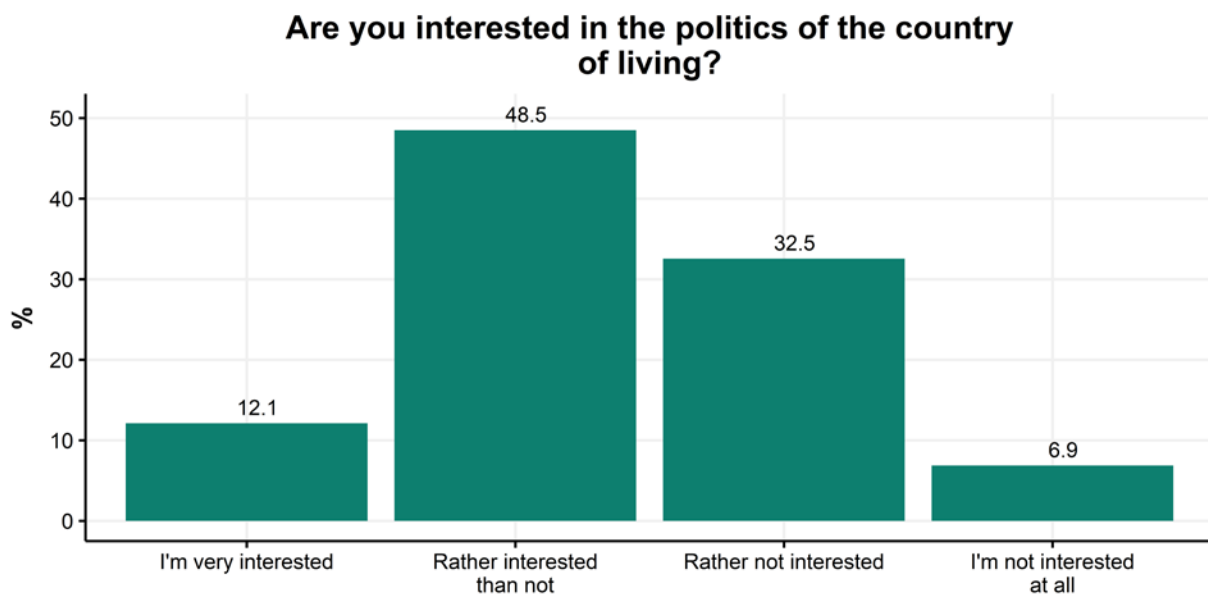


Figure 8. Interest in local politics among Russian emigrants

The development of attachment to a new country is often a [long and complex process](#). Emigrants' emotional attachment to the country they have left may persist throughout their lives, regardless of whether they have left for economic or political reasons. Respondents differ in their assessment of the degree of emotional attachment to Russia and to the countries of their current residence. Almost half of the respondents report strong attachment to Russia (4-5 on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is the absence of emotional attachment), one third assess attachment to Russia as rather low (see Figure 9).

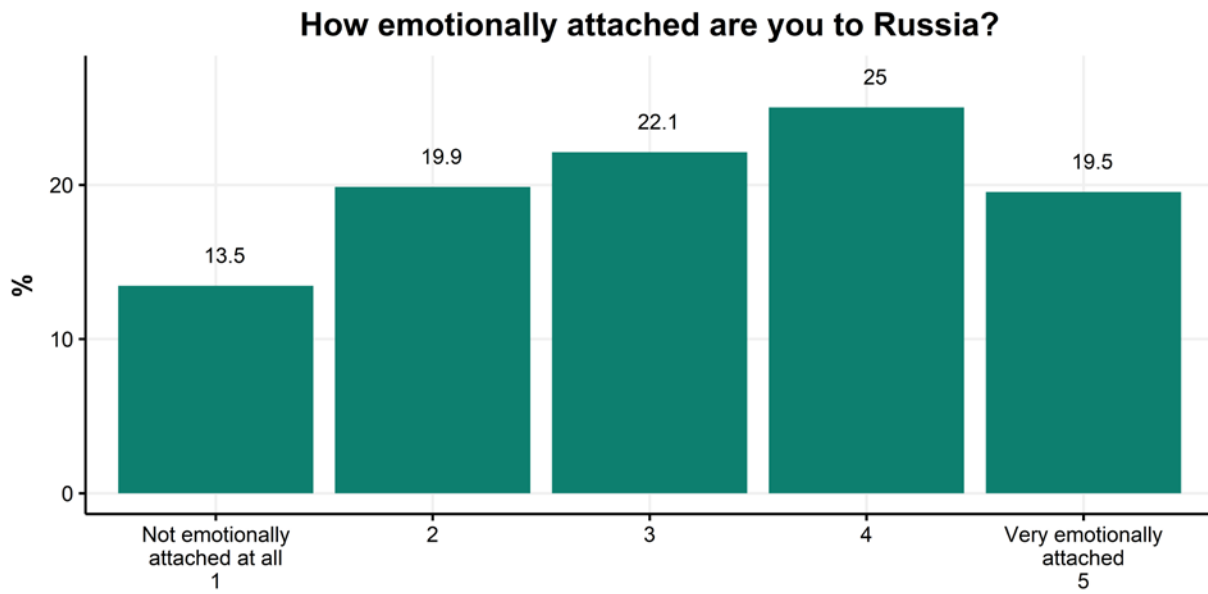


Figure 9. Emotional attachment to Russia

Russian emigrants **maintain close social connections with those who are in Russia**. Every second respondent talks to their relatives in Russia every or almost every day, 37% – several times a month. 55% of respondents discuss politics with them (see Fig. 10, 11).

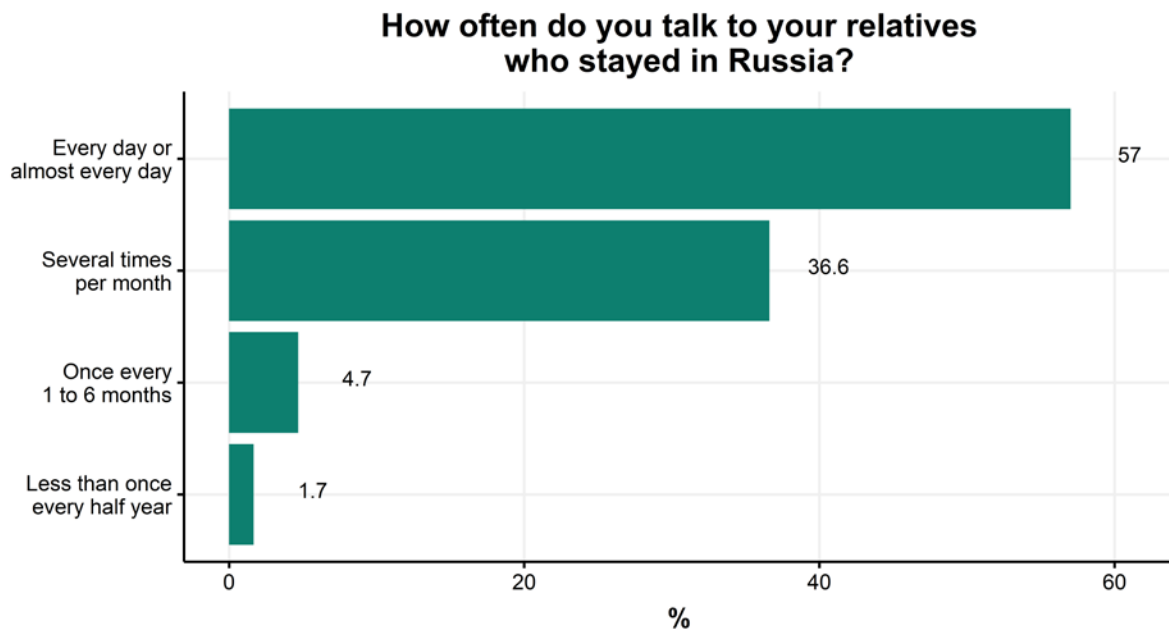


Figure 10. Talking to relatives in Russia

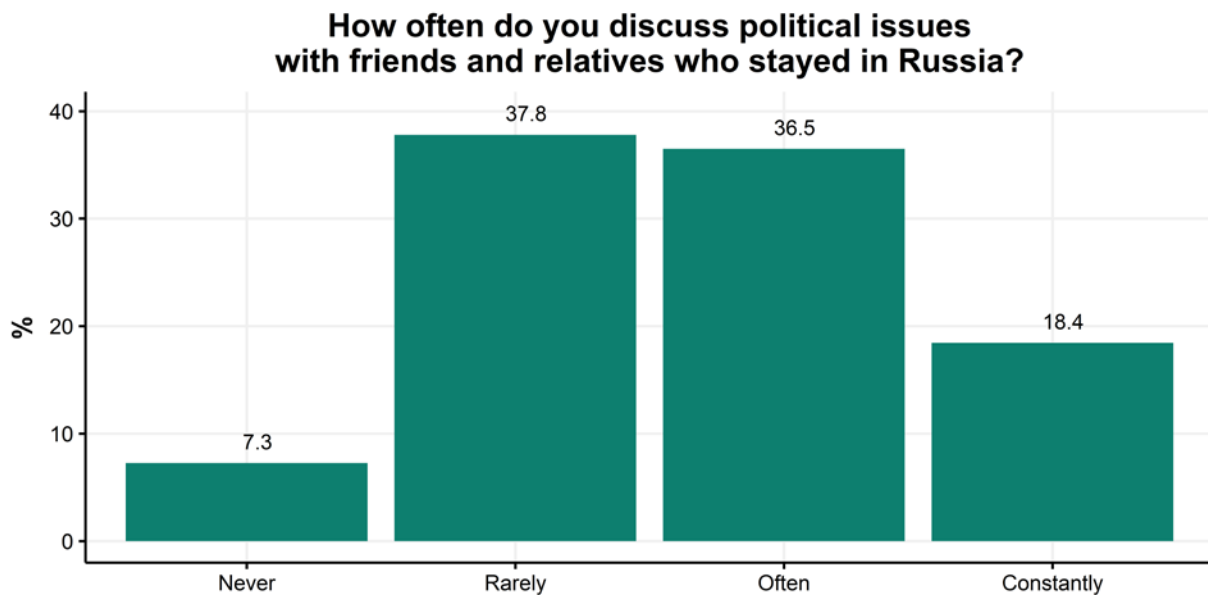


Figure 11. Discussing political issues with those in Russia

## Connecting with A New Home

Undoubtedly, emotional attachment to Russia is stronger for the majority of respondents than to their host country. 43% feel no attachment to the new country (1-2 on a five-point scale, where 1 reflects no attachment). Only a quarter of respondents (25%) rated the degree of attachment to the country of

residence as high. These figures can be explained both by the short time span since emigration and by the fact that many Russian emigrants keep close connections with their relatives and friends and are emotionally involved in political events related to Russia. It is likely that these indicators will change over time: the emotional connection with Russia will weaken, and attachment to the countries of emigration will be born.

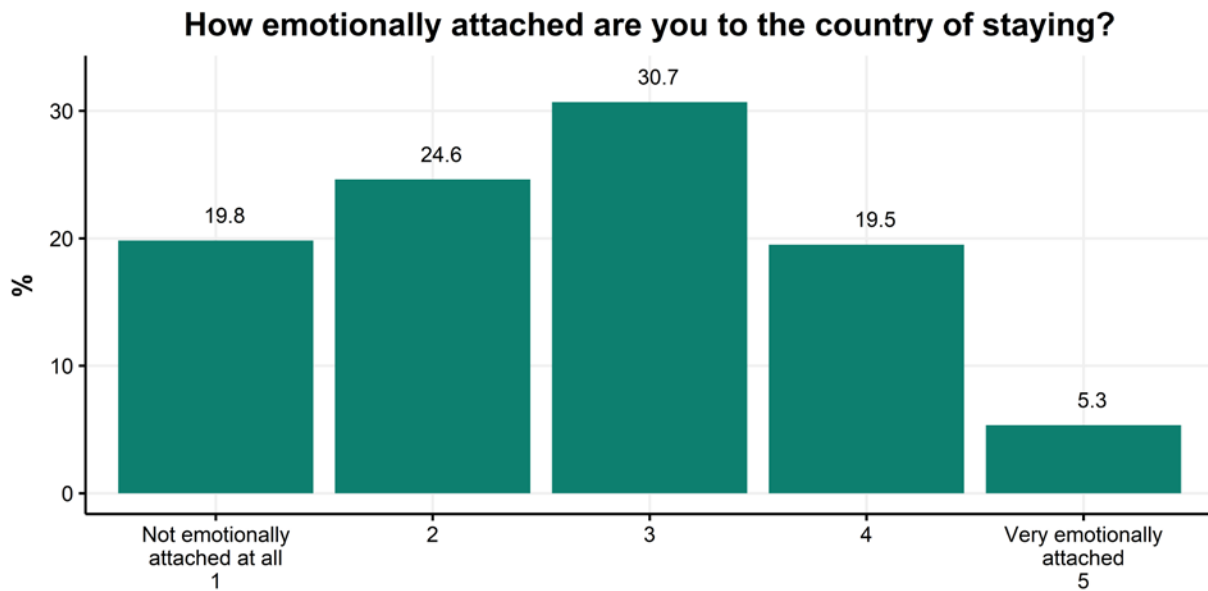


Figure 12. Emotional attachment to the country of residence

Despite close ties with Russia, **emigrants demonstrate a willingness to integrate into their host societies**. In March 2022, 60% of respondents reported a willingness to learn the local language. Many have started to implement this intention: in September 48% of the respondents reported that they are already learning the local language. Language learning may indicate a desire to stay in the country for a longer time and that the emigrants do not expect other people to speak Russian to them.

At the same time, the social life of recent Russian emigrants mostly takes place in the Russian-speaking environment. 58% of respondents have spent most or all of their time with other emigrants from Russia in the last three months. One in three respondents reported that they almost never spend time with locals. At the same time, some Russian emigrants often communicate with residents of the host countries. Every third respondent noted that she spends most or even all her time with the locals.

Uncertainty about plans is typical of any emigration, especially the one that was caused by a severe shock. New emigrants often find it difficult to believe that they are away for a long time; they think that their lives will soon get better and get back on track. It takes time, often considerable time, to come to terms with the new state of affairs. In September, 70% of participants rated the likelihood of remaining in host countries for the coming year as fairly high (4-5 on a five-point scale, with 5 representing a very high likelihood). In March, only 43% of participants estimated that they would stay in their host countries for the next three months.



### How likely are you to stay in your host country for the next year?

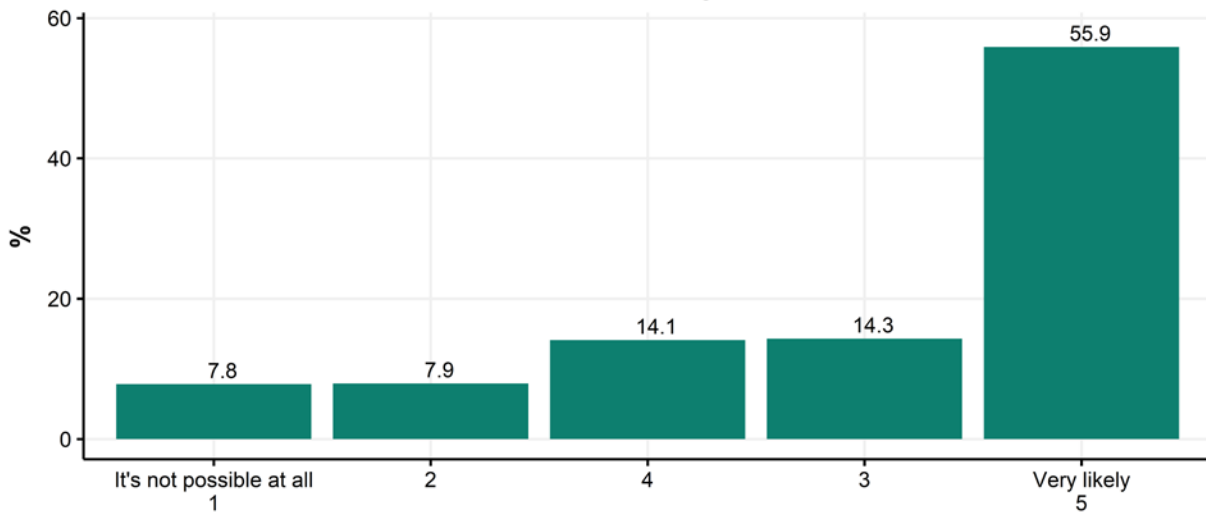


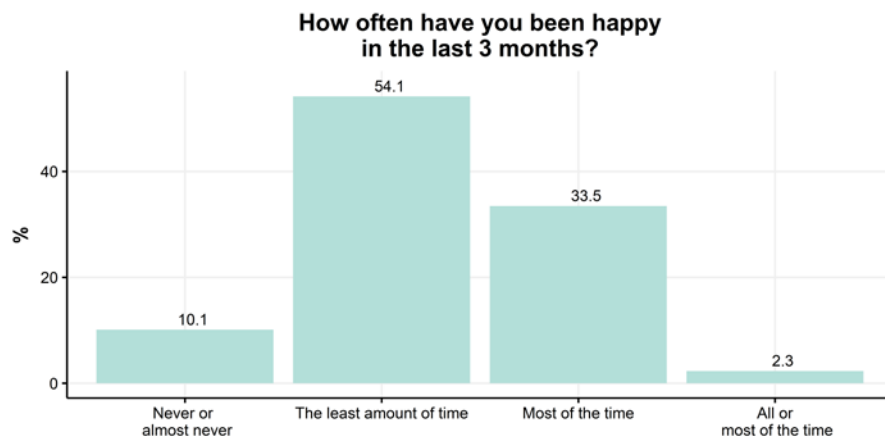
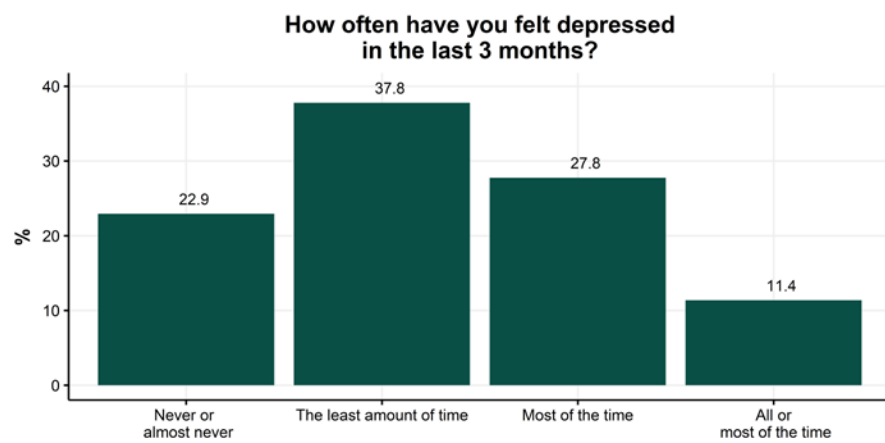
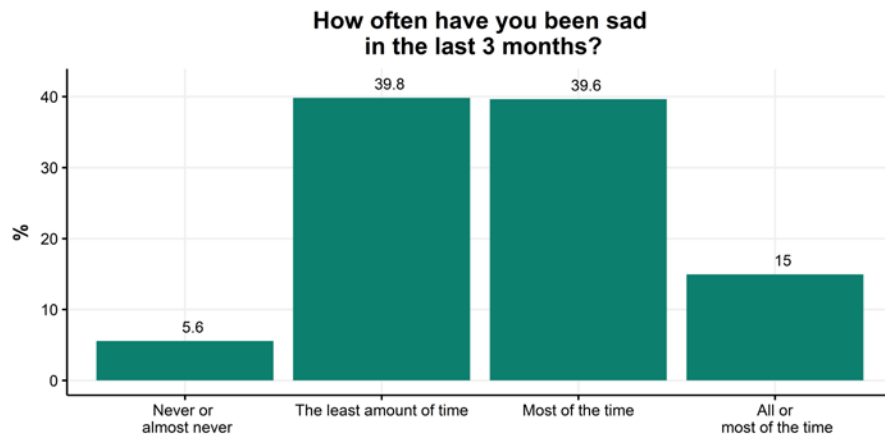
Figure 13. Plans to move further by Russian emigrants

## Satisfaction with Life

Emigration, especially sudden one, can cause depressed mood and acute emotional reactions, as the previous familiar life becomes inaccessible and the future uncertain. Added to this is the sense of responsibility for what is happening in Ukraine, acutely felt by some emigrants from Russia. Thus, 39% of respondents in September 2022 reported that they were depressed<sup>13</sup> most or all of the time over the past three months. In comparison, according to 2012 data, only 14% of Russians were depressed most of the time or almost all the time<sup>14</sup>. 55% of Russian emigrants also reported feeling sad most of the time or almost all of the time (in comparison, only 17% of Russians in 2012 answered the same way). 34% of respondents felt happy most of the time and only 2% felt happy all of the time in the last three months. The average for Russia in 2012 was 55% and 14% of Russians, respectively, with the same figures.

<sup>13</sup> This is not a clinical question, but a subjective assessment by respondents of their condition. The question was asked in this form in order to allow comparison with other studies in which the question was asked in the same formulation.

<sup>14</sup> Based on data from Wave 6 of the European Social Survey (ESS 6). The ESS asked about the frequency of feelings in the last week, not in the last three months. Respondents may be more likely to estimate the frequency of feelings in shorter time periods than in longer ones.



Figures 14-16. Emotional state of Russian emigrants

In contrast with overall emotional states, almost half of the respondents are rather satisfied with their lives. The average level of life satisfaction of respondents is 3.38 (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means

completely satisfied). This is quite high, given that the average level of life satisfaction in Russia in 2020 was 3.34<sup>15</sup>.

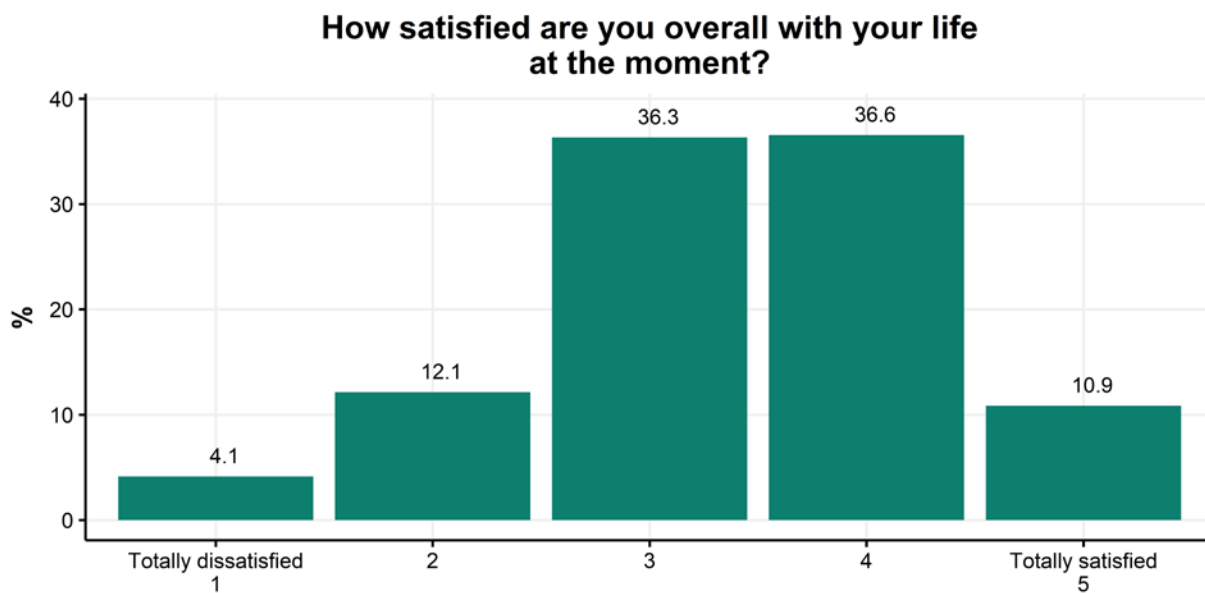


Figure 17. Life satisfaction of Russian emigrants

## Who is Back in Russia and Why?

How many Russian emigrants have returned, and why they made this decision? Relying on the data from two survey waves, we attempted to estimate the proportion and socio-demographic profile of returning Russians, as well as to find out the reasons for return. Previously, [it was reported](#), based on the data from mobile operators, that the majority of Russians who had left had returned back to Russia. Our data do not support this evidence. According to our data, **about 16% of Russian emigrants** who left in the first month after 24 February 2022 **returned to Russia** before September 2022<sup>16</sup>. What is crucial is that the majority (66%<sup>17</sup>) of returnees **do not plan to stay in Russia for long**. Return often results from pragmatic reasons such as selling or renting a flat, having the documents sorted out, and waiting

<sup>15</sup> [According to](#) the National Research University Higher School of Economics' Russian Economic and Health Monitoring in 2020.

<sup>16</sup> In estimating the number and composition of returnees, we rely on our panel sample. Unfortunately, we do not know the number of returnees to Russia in absolute numbers, but we can indicate the percentage of returnees. In the first wave of our survey, of the 1,680 new Russian emigrants who completed the survey, 1,032 left their contacts. Of those who left contacts, 60% completed the survey in the second wave (611 people). Respondents and non-respondents in the panel survey do not statistically differ from each other on a number of socio-demographic variables, so the presence of non-respondents is not likely to shift our estimate. There is also reason to believe that the unrepresentativeness of our sample relative to the general population does not significantly bias the estimated proportion of returnees, as this proportion is fairly stable across socio-demographic subgroups. For example, gender, age, education and marital status do not show any statistically significant relationship with the fact of return to Russia. Therefore, possible sampling bias in these categories relative to the general population should not lead to overestimation or underestimation of the rate of return.

<sup>17</sup> When asked about the reasons for the return, several options could be noted.

for a visa. For many people who have temporarily returned to Russia, emigration remains the most preferable option.

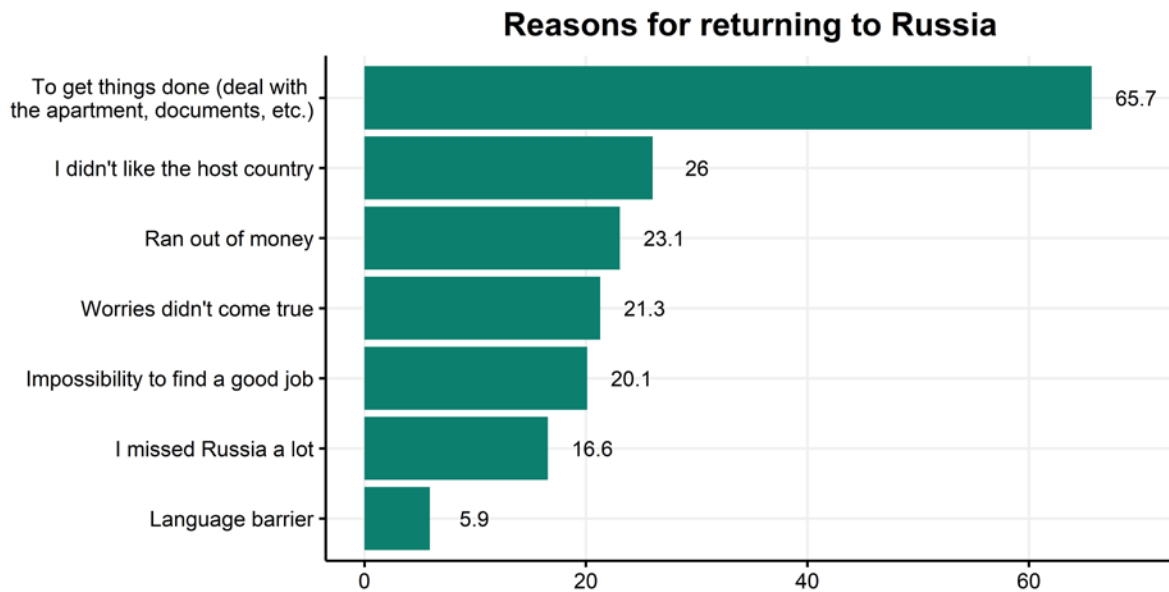


Figure 18. Reasons for returning to Russia

Among the people who have temporarily returned to Russia, there are those who try to combine life in several countries (as a rule, their source of income allows them to do so) and are in Russia "visiting".

*"I work remotely, so I decided to live sometimes in Russia, sometimes elsewhere." (Comments to the survey, September 2022)*

*"I plan to visit Russia from time to time as long as part of my family is here and as long as it is not dangerous. Plus, when it comes to working life, it is important to see my colleagues in person." (Comments to the survey, September 2022)*

Importantly, 26% of respondents attributed their return to the fact that they did not like it in their new country:

*"Blocked bank cards, inability to use one's money, vulnerable refugee situation without a home and with children." (Comments to the survey, September 2022)*

*"The children were uncomfortable in the new country. A lot of business and work was left behind in Russia. We didn't like the country (Georgia) that much. No experience of emigration and life abroad, psychologically I was not ready." (Comments to the survey, September 2022)*

20% of respondents stated that the reason for returning was financial difficulties and the inability to find a good job. Another 20% mentioned unjustified fears about developments in Russia as a reason for return. 17% of returning respondents missed Russia very much, for 6% the language barrier was an obstacle.

Do people who have returned to Russia differ from other emigrants? Indeed, returnees are more financially secure than those who stayed in emigration<sup>18</sup>. Perhaps their return is dictated by fears for their property and a desire to redistribute or re-allocate assets before their final departure.

**The financial situation among those who have returned to Russia and stayed abroad**

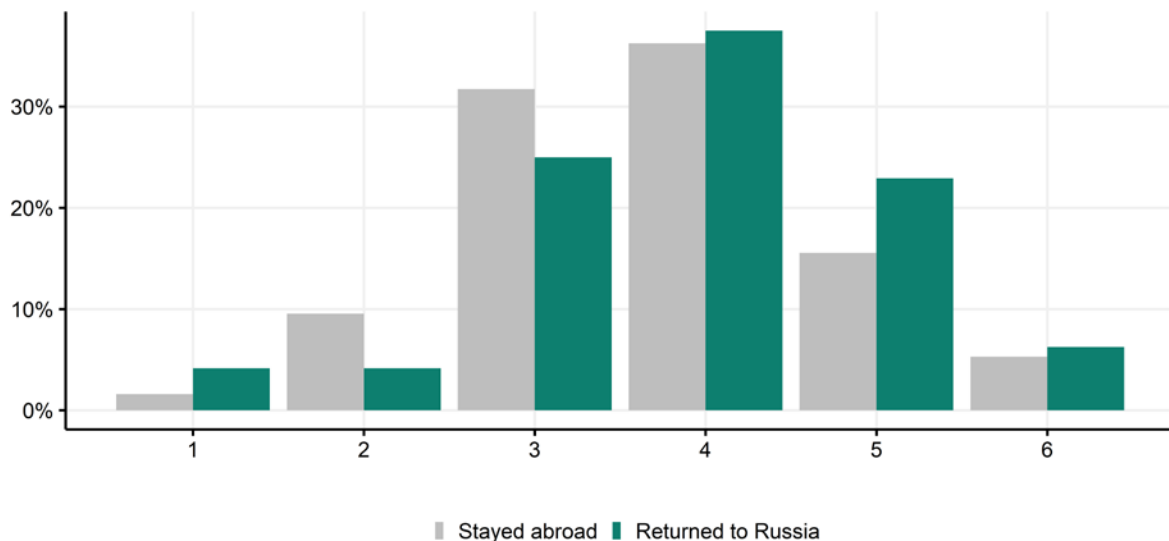


Figure 19. Income of returnees and other emigrants.  
 1 (minimum value) = "We did not have enough money even for food",  
 6 (maximum value) = "We could not deny ourselves buying anything"

Predictably, returnees are more emotionally attached to Russia. The average value of the level of attachment to Russia among those who stayed abroad is 3.15 on a five-point scale, while among returnees it is 3.42<sup>19</sup>. It should be noted that those who returned were in Russia at the time of the survey, which may have affected their level of attachment to the country. We found no significant differences in the gender composition of those who returned and those who stayed in emigration<sup>20</sup>. Returnees are also not statistically different in terms of marital status<sup>21</sup>. Several respondents mentioned that the reason for their return to Russia was the restrictions imposed on Russians in host countries. However, returnees did not indicate in their answers a higher level of experienced discrimination or fear of it than those who stayed in emigration<sup>22</sup>. In other words, real or perceived discrimination is not a reason for returning to Russia. For the most part, it is a result of economic decisions.

<sup>18</sup> The difference is statistically significant at p-value < 0.001.

<sup>19</sup> The difference is statistically significant at p-value < 0.01.

<sup>20</sup> The difference is statistically insignificant at p-value 0.05.

<sup>21</sup> The difference is statistically insignificant at p-value 0.05.

<sup>22</sup> The difference is statistically insignificant at p-value 0.05.

## Conclusion

We conducted a second survey of emigrants from Russia before the start of "partial" mobilization in late August-early September 2022, supplementing it with a small qualitative part, i.e. 15 semi-structured interviews. Some respondents had already participated in the March wave of our study, while others were interviewed for the first time. We were able to identify several trends that were relevant at the end of summer/beginning of autumn 2022. We are convinced that the "partial" mobilization changed a lot, but this report does not include data on those who left at the end of September 2022.

First, emigrants of the first wave do not plan to return to Russia, at least not until the end of hostilities. That 16% of our sample who returned did so temporarily, to handle issues with documents and property, to pick up their belongings, and to see their relatives. While in most cases the financial situation of emigrants worsened (except for those who kept a remote job for Russian or foreign companies or were re-located by an employer), emigrants are more optimistic about their future.

Secondly, emigrants retain close emotional and personal ties with Russian society; they are involved in the political agenda, continue to read the news, discuss what is happening with friends and relatives, and donate money to activists, independent media, and human rights projects. We have seen an increase in trust in those remaining in Russia. There is no reason to believe that there is a polarization of opinions and values between Russians who stayed and those who left, despite the social difference between the two groups<sup>23</sup>.

Thirdly, emigrants use their various resources to maintain ties with other emigrants. Horizontal networks of friendship and support, and the intensification of weak ties lead to the formation of a new type of Russian emigration. This type can be characterized as a network or *rhizome*. Social connections between new emigrants are strengthened by their similar attitudes to what is happening, their resourcefulness and willingness to be productive and in demand in their host countries, and the experience of organizing and maintaining communities in emigration.

The network is still very mobile, with few links to new locations. At the same time, the process of integration into the host societies has already started and is proceeding successfully. This is confirmed by the decreasing expectations of discrimination and the fact that emigrants in half of the cases have started to learn the languages of the host countries. The high level of trust in other emigrants and in people in the host societies, growing optimism as well as a high level of political and social activism show that many emigrants are beginning to recover from their rapid move and are again becoming agents of change in their own and public life.

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<sup>23</sup> As we [found out in a survey in March](#), those who left are, *on average*, much more resourceful than those who stayed: they are younger, more educated, more well-off and more urbanized.