

# IISEPS NEWS

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

*Preface*

2

## Monitoring of public opinion in Belarus

### December–2015

<i>Time to reduce needs</i>	3
<i>Voting as a duty or a source of hope</i>	5
<i>Elections' results broken down by basic socio-demographic groups</i>	8
<i>Phenomenon of Korotkevich: the third Belarus</i>	11
<i>He advances slogans without doing anything</i>	14
<i>State returns affection, but not to everyone</i>	17
<i>Crisis cut down the number of change supporters</i>	18
<i>Men experience fright more often than women</i>	19
<i>Belarusians against increase of retirement age</i>	19
<i>Paradoxes of Belarusian love to Alexievich</i>	23
<i>As far as possible from the EU</i>	25
Some results of the opinion poll conducted in December, 2015	28

## Open Forum

<i>Time to save on food</i>	46
<i>Putin vs. Obama</i>	47
<i>Who do Russians appreciate?</i>	49
<i>Two views on the events in Ukraine</i>	49
<i>Higher education as key factor</i>	50

**Dear readers!**

*In the latest issue of the analytical bulletin "IISEPS News" we offer to your attention materials reflecting the most interesting results of the Institute researches in the fourth quarter of 2015.*

*Our researches demonstrate that in general financial well-being of Belarusians remains unstable. Thus, over half of respondents say that year 2015 was more difficult than year 2014, and only 5.8% think it was easier. Average per capita income (including salaries, pensions, social benefits and other incomes) decreased from \$ 200 in September down to \$ 195 in December (a year ago this figure amounted to \$ 285). Anxiety for the future is increasing: the number of respondents who expect that the situation in the country will worsen in the following years is twice as high as the number of those who expect an improvement. The number of market-friendly reforms supporters is twice as high as the number of opponents; over 35% of respondents think that "our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)". Almost 45% of respondents disagreed with the recent A. Lukashenko's statement that "in order to carry out reforms in Belarus, it is necessary to break the political system of the country, state structure of Belarus, divide and cut up the state property and give it away".*

*Belarusians' attitude to the state power gradually becomes worse. Indices of trust to almost all of state institutions decreased in comparison with December 2014. During the inauguration ceremony President A. Lukashenko said that "a stable, viable state was created in Belarus". Only 48.1% of respondents agreed with this. Even less respondents (45.2%) agreed that "Belarusian people need to be led, need a guideline". Over half of respondents think that the state of affairs in our country is developing in the wrong direction, while only 36.7% of respondents think that the direction is right. However, the readiness for changes in society is still quite low. One of the few events of the departing year that provoked positive emotions in Belarusians was the presentation of Nobel Prize in Literature to Svetlana Alexievich: 57% of respondents see this as "a source of pride, international recognition of Alexievich's talent".*

*Belarusians' attitude to the state power and its opponents was best reflected in the main political event of the year – presidential campaign. In total 70.2% of respondents voted during the elections in October, including 50% on the scheduled election day and 20% during the early voting. Only 4% of voters boycotted the elections on purpose, expressing their protest. The most important factors which influenced the vote were peace and stability, overall quality of life, and price hike. Real figures based on the number of voters are: 50.8% – for the present president, 22.3% – for the candidate from the civil campaign "People's Referendum" T. Korotkevich, 7.4% – for S. Gaydukevich, the leader of the Liberal Democrat Party; and 2.7% – for N. Ulakhovich, the ataman of Belarusian Cossacks. Present index of voting for A. Lukashenko is the lowest in the history of IISEPS monitoring. Belarusians are quite reserved about the results of presidential election. For example, only 35.6% of respondents said that the candidate they voted for became the President, while 22.7% gave a negative answer. 41.4% of respondents agree that presidential elections were free and just; 33% disagree.*

*Isolationist moods are increasing in foreign-policy orientations of Belarusians. Survey registered a record low share of "Euro-Belarusians", but also a slight decrease of the share of "Belo-Russians". Besides "Ukrainian factors" there are new factors that affect the decrease of pro-European orientations. Thus, answering the question whether Belarus should join the international struggle against terrorism after the recent events in Paris, only slightly more than a third of respondents agreed that "Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians", while over 57% of respondents think that "Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terrorist acts will start happening in Belarus". Number of Belarusians working abroad significantly dropped. The most significant drop was observed for shares of people working in Russia and Ukraine. The idea of the "Russian World" is regarded positively by almost each third Belarusian. However, the idea of the "Russian World" directly affect interests of Belarusians, especially the sphere of security, its support is less evident: today only 27% of respondents are positive about the idea of a Russian military airbase in Belarus, while every third respondent is against it.*

*As usual, those readers who are more interested in our figures than in our assessments can analyze the research results on their own. The results are presented as a plain count up according to the main socio-demographic characteristics.*

*In our "Open Forum" rubric we continue to present the most interesting results of the latest surveys of our colleagues from neighboring countries.*

*As usual, your feedback and comments are welcome!*

**IISEPS' Board**

## MONITORING OF PUBLIC OPINION IN BELARUS

*In December of 2015 independent sociologists have conducted the nation opinion poll (those face-to-face interviewed are 1.503 persons aged 18 and over, margin of error doesn't exceed 0.03).*

*The questionnaires, as usual, covered a wide range of problems related to the most pressing and most topical aspects of life in Belarus.*

*Below you will find commentaries to the most important findings of these and previous sociological procedures. "No answer" and "Find it difficult to answer" alternatives are not available in most points of the questionnaire. As usual, the tables are read down unless otherwise specified. In some tables, the total amount may be different from 100% since the interviewees could choose more than one alternative.*

### DECEMBER – 2015

#### Time to reduce needs

Belarusians' ability to perceive reality critically is defined by their personal resources. Elderly people with low level of education voluntarily agree to transfer the right of "reality definition" to the state, and that is why they can easily be manipulated by official propaganda.

Let us look at Table 1. Three years running the share of respondents, who evaluate the past year negatively in comparison with the previous year, is growing. It's not yet close to the level of negativity in 2011, but the new trend is quite clear.

of evaluations here is the same as the dynamics in Table 1 after 2011. It should be noted, that world financial crisis of 2009 wasn't noticed by Belarusians personally.

Belarus is a country where success first of all attends people with low level of education (primary – 64.5%, higher – 38.6%) and women (women – 46.2%, men – 36.6%). But the level of evaluations in young and old age groups turned out to be almost the same: 45.4% vs. 45.7%. It is understandable, that A. Lukashenko's supporters are more successful than his opponents – 51.3% vs. 31.3%.

During 2015 official statistics registered a constant decrease of real disposable household income

**Table 1**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Was the past year more difficult or easier for Belarus than the previous one?", %**

Variant of answer	12'08	12'09	12'11	12'12	12'13	12'14	12'15
More difficult	42.8	52.4	74.7	41.0	38.6	45.6	51.1
Same	44.6	38.3	21.6	41.8	50.4	43.1	41.0
Easier	7.7	7.6	2.5	14.0	10.1	9.9	5.8
DA/NA	4.9	1.7	1.2	3.2	0.9	1.4	2.1

**Table 2**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Was the past year successful or unsuccessful personally for you?", %**

Variant of answer	12'08	12'09	12'11	12'12	12'13	12'14	12'15
Successful	46.3	48.2	33.0	44.0	48.7	47.6	41.8
Unsuccessful	33.1	35.1	45.9	35.8	35.7	32.6	37.4
DA/NA	20.6	16.7	21.1	20.2	15.6	19.8	20.8

In December 2015 the variant "more difficult" was chosen by 54.5% of young people aged 18-29 and 46.6% of those who are older than 60; by 55.6% of Belarusians with higher education and by 29% of respondents with primary education. In the end, the negative evaluation of the past year turned out to be quite politically charged: A. Lukashenko's supporters – 41.2%, opponents – 63.9%.

Table 2 results permit us to pass from macro to micro level, i.e. to the level of an individual. Dynamics

(–5.4% over January-October) and real salary (–3.8% over the same period). According to the results of a spot check of standards of living of households, only 10.7% of them evaluated positively the changes of their financial position in comparison with the previous year; 55.7% of households underlined stability of their financial standing; and 33.6% noticed that their financial position became worse in the current year.

Above mentioned results correlate quite well with the ISEPS results (Table 3). In particular, the share

Table 3

**Dynamics of answering the question: "How has your personal financial standing changed for the last three months?", %**

Variant of answer	06'11	12'13	03'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
It has improved	1.6	12.6	10.1	8.6	9.0	9.8	10.5
It has not changed	23.2	58.1	63.3	44.0	51.3	44.4	45.9
It has become worse	73.4	28.4	25.2	46.3	37.2	42.5	42.4
FSI*	<b>-71.8</b>	-15.8	-15.1	-37.7	-28.2	-32.7	-31.9

\* Financial standing index (the difference between positive and negative answers)

Table 4

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you think the state of things is developing in our country in the right or in the wrong direction in general?", %**

Variant of answer	09'11	12'13	03'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
In the right direction	17.0	31.9	40.2	36.9	34.6	34.8	36.7
In the wrong direction	68.5	54.1	46.2	45.8	49.4	48.0	50.9
DA/NA	14.5	14.0	13.6	17.3	16.0	17.2	12.4
PCI*	<b>-51.5</b>	-22.2	-6.0	-8.9	-14.8	-13.2	-14.2

\* Policy correctness index

Table 5

**Dynamics of answering the question: "How is the socio-economic situation going to change in Belarus within the next few years?", %**

Variant of answer	06'11	12'13	03'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
It is going to improve	11.9	12.5	24.0	23.1	21.7	20.6	16.5
It is not going to change	20.3	46.1	45.0	36.1	36.0	37.2	40.2
It is going to become worse	55.5	35.9	26.1	33.6	36.5	36.2	36.4
EI*	<b>-43.6</b>	-23.1	-2.1	-10.5	-14.8	-15.6	-19.9

\* Expectation index

of Belarusians, who noticed an improvement of their financial position in 2015, is almost equal to the result of Belstat. The amateurs of blaming IISEPS sociologists for "fabricating the results" (there are enough of them both among opposition and personnel of state sociological services) should notice this coincidence.

Tables 3-5 demonstrate the dynamics of social indices. All three tables are constructed according to the same principle: the first column reflects the historical lows registered in 2011; the second column reflects the results of survey conducted in December 2013 (the last survey before Crimea annexation); the third column reflects the results of the survey conducted in March 2014 (the first survey after Crimea annexation); the next four columns reflect the results of quarterly surveys of 2015.

Financial standing index (FSI) is the only social index, value of which decreased below the value of December 2013. Nevertheless, its relative stabilization in the current year should be noted as well. This means that, despite alarmist forecasts of independent analysts, there was no increase in perception of worsening of financial standing in society.

Naturally, perception of one's own financial standing is politically charged. Thus, in December 60.1% of

A. Lukashenko's opponents and only 26.9% of his supporters noticed its worsening.

Policy correctness index (PCI) became more stable over the last three quarters, but, unlike FSI, it didn't return to the value of December 2013 (Table 4). This question is also politically charged, and this can be seen in the fact that the share of positive evaluations among A. Lukashenko's supporters is six times as high as among his opponents – 64.8% vs. 10.5%.

Paternalist systems are very flexible, mainly because they can be fared by people's expectations. Correctness of this political maxim is confirmed by the dynamics of expectation index (EI). In March 2014 it grew faster than PCI (21 vs. 16.2). This rise is a direct result of euphoria provoked by the annexation of Crimea. Judging by the EI, this euphoria still didn't disappear completely. Let us note that women were twice as full of expectations as men in December 2015 – 20% vs. 12.2%. Prevailing of A. Lukashenko's supporters over his opponents is even more impressive: it's almost 5-fold (27.3% vs. 5.7%).

Relative stabilization of social indices is confirmed by the dynamics of answers to the question "Do you

Table 6

Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you think that Belarusian economy is in crisis?", %

Variant of answer	09'11	12'13	03'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
Yes	87.6	68.6	54.6	67.5	72.0	75.1	66.9
No	8.0	22.2	34.5	20.0	16.9	16.2	17.9
DA/NA	4.4	9.2	10.9	12.5	11.1	8.7	15.2

Table 7

Dynamics of answering the question: "Are you going to vote in presidential election in October 2015?", %

Variant of answer	01'15	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15*
Sure yes/Rather yes	71	73	72	73	70.2
Sure no/Rather no	25	22	22	24	29.1
DA/NA	4	5	6	3	0.7

\* In December this question was asked as follows: "Did you vote in the last presidential election?"

Table 8

Dynamics of answering the question: "Which problems will you consider as the most important ones when taking a decision for whom you will vote in the next presidential elections?", %  
(more than one answer is possible)

Variant of answer	04'06	12'10	09'15	12'15
Peace and stability	—	—	47.6	34.1
Overall quality of life	43.9	24.5	37.0	27.0
Price hike	19.2	24.7	30.0	14.7
Jobs	19.9	15.0	20.3	10.1
Healthcare improvement	18.2	13.6	15.5	7.2
Democracy and independence of Belarus	21.5	17.5	15.0	9.9
Payout of pensions	16.3	12.0	8.0	7.9
Relations with the West	6.2	7.1	6.9	1.9
Relations with Russia	7.4	3.9	5.8	4.4
Corruption in society	8.6	4.7	4.4	3.2
Education	7.4	6.3	3.5	2.5
Freedom of belief	0.9	1.0	2.0	0.6
Criminality	5.2	4.2	1.9	1.2
Threat of terrorism	5.9	3.6	—	—
Demand for freedom in Belarus	9.0	9.7	—	—

think that Belarusian economy is in crisis?" (Table 6). As you can see, in December the share of Belarusians who agree that country's economy is in crisis dropped by 8.2 points – from 75.1% down to 66.9%.

Main conclusion that we can make based on the results of December survey is that Belarusian society actively adapts to the new (crisis) economic reality, and this happens due to the so called negative adaptation, i.e. at the expense of reduced needs. Typical representative of Belarusian majority wasn't distinguished by high economic needs even before the crisis. A person, completely dependent on the state (on the authority), is used to tightening the belt. This is what they are going to do right now.

### Voting as a duty or a source of hope

Main peculiarity of the voting during the fifth presidential elections is not the distribution of votes, but a low turnout. According to IISEPS data, in 2010 87% of voters took part in the election. In 2015 this share

amounted to 70.2%, i.e. it dropped by 16.8 points.

Trying to explain this significant drop by apathy, which suddenly gripped Belarusian society, would be wrong. In October 2010 (two months prior the election) 73.2% of respondents declared their readiness to take part in the voting. As it follows from Table 7, this level of declarative electoral activity is normal in absence of mobilization campaign. And there was no mobilization campaign in 2015, so it was reflected in the turnout.

All previous mobilization campaigns were traditionally based on self-reports of the power. Dynamics of salaries in dollar equivalent was used as the main indication of success of the Belarusian model: 2001 – \$ 100, 2006 – \$ 250, 2010 – \$ 500. According to the resolution of the IV All-Belarusian People's Assembly, planned salary for 2015 should have amounted to \$ 1000, but the real figure is less than \$ 400.

New reality made the power amend the electoral campaign. As a result, instead of another All-Belarusian People's Assembly there was "A Prayer

Table 9

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Did you vote on the scheduled election day or during the early voting?", %**

Variant of answer	04'06	12'10	12'15
During early voting	25.7	19.8	19.3
On the scheduled day of voting	65.8	67.8	49.6
NA	8.5	12.4	31.1

Table 10

**Dynamics of answering the question: "If you voted in the election, did you vote on the scheduled election day or during the early voting?", %**

Variant of answer	2010		2015	
	Trust A. Lukashenko	Don't trust A. Lukashenko	Trust A. Lukashenko	Don't trust A. Lukashenko
During early voting	25.1	12.8	23.5	15.1
On the scheduled day of voting	68.5	65.1	61.1	38.3
NA	6.4	22.1	15.4	46.6
All voters	93.6	77.9	84.6	43.4

Table 11

**Distribution of answers to the question: "What was the main reason for your participation in the last presidential election?" (more than one answer is possible)**

Variant of answer	%
This is my duty	35.1
I wanted changes	12.8
I wanted to maintain the current state of things	9.3
I liked candidate's program	6.6
My friends and family voted, so I voted too	6.3
My employer (administration of educational institution) demanded me	3.3
I was inspired by a political party	1.5
I earned a reward (from employer or administration of educational institution)	1.4
Other	1.4
Don't know	0.8

for Belarus". Official turnout wasn't affected by this innovation: 2010 – 90.65%, 2015 – 87.2%.

Coordinators of the electoral campaign used the "Prayer" as the final accord in intimidating people. Standing on the porch of the Church of All Saints, A. Lukashenko declared that he had recently seen various insinuations and manipulations coming from Belarusian citizens "trying to bring to Belarus what happens in Ukraine". "When there is no peace, nothing else matters", – said the head of state, – "neither foodstuff, nor clothes, nor its' prices".

Thus the power declined all responsibility for improvement of life standard of the population. When motherland is in jeopardy, only provokers and public enemies remind of price hike and decrease of salaries and pensions.

As it follows from Table 8, policy of intimidation justified itself. Variant of answer "Peace and stability" is beyond competition. Naturally, if there had been no preconditioning of Belarusians by Russian TV channels since March 2014, this result would have never been achieved.

Two months after the voting topicality of most problems, influencing voters' decision, has naturally

decreased.

Giving up electoral mobilization did not mean giving up forcing people to vote early. But mobilization effect can be achieved by propaganda, while forcing needs administrative pressure upon social groups, depending on the state (state employees, students and so on). Efficiency of this pressure is illustrated by the results of Table 9. Despite the significant turnout drop, the share of early voters remained at the same level as in 2010.

A. Lukashenko's supporters make the main input into the turnout, and this is not only due to the Soviet tradition of "discharging civic duty". The head of state supporters vote for a real candidate, and they perceive this candidate as *theirs*.

According to the results of Table 10, electoral activity of A. Lukashenko's supporters was twice as big in 2015 as of his opponents – 84.6% vs. 43.4%. In 2010 "coefficient of electoral advantage" amounted to 1.2. It's easy to notice that in absence of electoral mobilization decrease of total turnout happened at the expense of A. Lukashenko's opponents. Their passive behavior was also influenced by the campaign aimed at discrediting T. Korotkevich, organized

**Table 12**

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Why didn't you vote in the last presidential election?"**  
*(more than one answer is possible)*

Variant of answer	%
Voting will not change Belarus, that is why I didn't vote	7.7
I was too busy	7.6
I wasn't impressed by any of the candidates	7.3
I've decided to protests by boycotting elections	4.0
No one who I know voted, so I didn't vote too	1.6
I forgot to vote	1.5
Other	1.6
Don't know	0.7

**Table 13**

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Which of the following words describe best your feelings after the last presidential election?"** *(more than one answer is possible)*

Variant of answer	%
Hope	36.3
Uncertainty	14.5
Resignation	11.3
Pessimism	11.2
Despondency	10.5
Anger	10.2
Enthusiasm	8.6
Confusion	5.6
Inspiration	5.1
Don't know	8.7

**Table 14**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Did the candidate you voted for become the President?", %**

Variant of answer	10'01	04'06	12'10	12'15
Yes	50.4	61.4	49.6	35.6
No	35.4	30.5	32.8	22.7
NA	14.2	8.1	17.6	41.7

by several oppositional structures.

Total turnout decrease also happened at the expense of low activity of voters on the scheduled day of voting, and this is another confirmation of administrative resource efficiency in organizing early voting.

"Homo sovieticus" in his post-Soviet variation continues to perceive voting as a duty. 56% of A. Lukashenko's supporters, 12.6% of his opponents, and 35.1% of respondents, who hadn't determined their attitude to the head of state, think so. The result is that 35.1% of respondents perceive participation in elections as their civic duty (Table 11).

As for respondents, who voted hoping for changes, their attitude to A. Lukashenko is inverse: 3.2% – trust, 23.1% – don't trust, 13.6% – don't know (12.8% of all respondents).

Table 12 results demonstrate the reasons why 29.8 potential electors didn't take part in the voting. Respondents could choose more than one reason, but few of them did it, because the total of answers exceeded the share of those who didn't vote by 2.2% only. Boycott was mentioned by 4%. Such is opposition's ability to influence directly electors' behavior.

The sum of positive feelings after the election (expressed with such words as "hope", "enthusiasm" and "inspiration") amounts to 50% (Table 13). The word "hope" is beyond competition – 36.3%. It coincides with the share of those who voted for A. Lukashenko, and this is quite logical. The victory of the candidate you voted for should bring you hope.

The range of words offered to respondents expressed a wide range of negative feelings too – from uncertainty to anger. The sum of negative feeling amounted to 63.3%. Among the most popular words were "uncertainty", "resignation", "pessimism" and "despondency". There is no better illustration for the state of Belarusian oppositional society after, as A. Lukashenko said: "Our people once again demonstrated to the world extraordinary political culture, unity in front of external threats, and independence of opinion".

Answering the question "Who did you vote for in the last elections of President of Republic of Belarus?", 35.6% of respondents chose A. Lukashenko. This is exactly the same share of respondents that answered positively the question of Table 14. This

Table 15

Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you think that presidential elections were free and just?", %

Variant of answer	04'06	12'10	12'15	Attitude to A. Lukashenko	
				Trust	Don't trust
Yes	57.9	54.4	41.4	77.9	6.0
No	32.9	32.3	33.0	4.5	66.8
NA	9.2	13.3	25.6	17.2	27.2

Table 16

Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you think that the results of the presidential elections, published by the Central Election Commission" are valid or faked?", %

Variant of answer	04'06	12'10	12'15
Completely valid	38.1	32.7	24.6
Rather valid	25.6	29.9	27.5
Rather faked	14.1	16.2	25.2
Completely faked	14.9	13.2	9.2
DA/NA	7.3	8.0	13.5

Table 17

Results of voting in the presidential elections of 2015, %

Variant of answer	IISEPS, 12'15	Official results	
		By turnout	By headcount
A. Lukashenko	35.6	83.5	72.8
T. Korotkevich	15.7	4.4	3.8
S. Gaydukevich	5.2	3.3	2.9
N. Ulakhovich	1.9	1.7	1.5
None of the above	8.9	6.3	5.5
NA	32.7	0.8*	13.5**

\* Invalid ballot papers

\*\* Abstention and invalid ballot papers

testifies on the high level of respondents' sincerity while answering the questions of the survey.

It looks like nothing can split Belarusian society as much as the attitude to the official results of election. In December 2015 the share of respondents, who considered that last presidential election was free and just, exceeded the share of those who disagreed with this by factor of 13 – 77.9% vs. 6% (Table 15). Peculiarity of the last election is a high share of respondents who didn't answer our questions. On average it amounted to 25.6%. From our point of view this is a result of conducting electoral campaign in the "soft" mode. The power is interested in making up with the West, so they tried to carry out the electoral campaign according to international norms. Of course we are talking about form and not about contents.

The same question formulated in a "softer" form increased the number of positive answers ("completely/rather valid") up to 52.1%. At the same time the sum of negative answers ("rather/completely faked") didn't change and amounted to 34.4% (Table 16). This happened at the expense of double-fold decrease of respondents who didn't give an answer.

Such a significant dependency between positive answers and formulation of questions testifies on the fact that respondents are not sure of their evaluations.

L. Gudkov, director of Levada-Center, says: "Under the condition of a social split "electoral democracy" per se (without corresponding cultural, moral, human basics and institutional frames) can only bring to the surface the most popular and widespread (and thus the most conservative and dark) layers, develop and fix the simplest of their perceptions and interests".

As December survey demonstrated it, 58.8% of voters think that the candidate they voted for expresses their interests. Interests of Belarusian "majority" are interests of poor people depending on state's crumbs. Third decade running these interests join with the interests of authoritarian power, and together they prevent Belarus from entering the world of civilized countries.

#### Elections' results broken down by basic socio-demographic groups

Results of December IISEPS survey give us an opportunity to study the results of presidential elections 2015 from the socio-demographic and regional aspects. General results are presented in Table 17. The Central Election Commission presents official results of voting based on the turnout of voters. Ac-



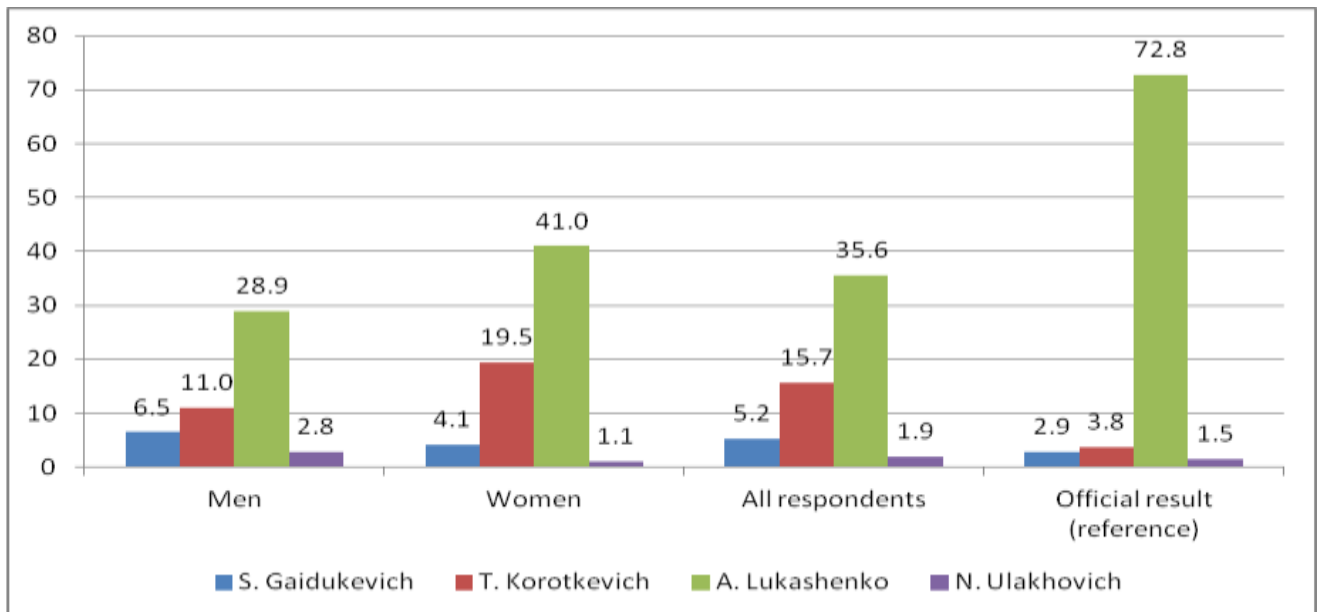


Figure 1. Voting results depending on gender (%)

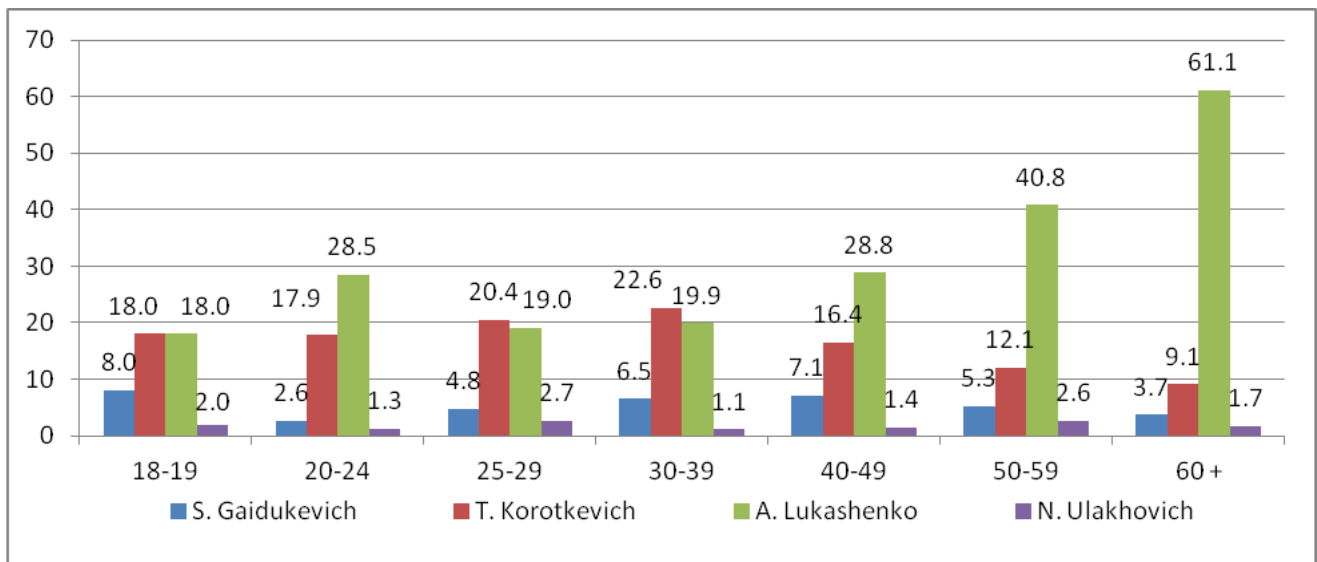


Figure 2. Voting results depending on age (%)

According to official results the turnout amounted to 87.22%. To compare official results to the results of our survey let us recalculate the official results according to the headcount.

As you can see the difference between the results of the survey and the official results is quite significant. Taking into account the non-transparency of vote count in Belarusian electoral system, from our point of view, results of the survey are more reliable than official results. In particular, according to survey results, A. Lukashenko won twice as little votes as it was declared by the CEC.

As bar chart on Figure 1 demonstrates it, 41% of women and only 28.9% of men voted for A. Lukashenko. T. Korotkevich also earned more votes from female voters – 19.5% vs. 11%. Other contenders, on the contrary, won more votes from men than from women: S. Gaydukevich – 6.5% vs. 4.1%, N. Ulakhovich – 2.8% vs. 1.1%.

If we take into account that women constitute the majority of Belarusian electorate, it is clear that A. Lukashenko's election is mainly a decision of female part of Belarusian society.

Bar chart on Figure 2 demonstrates that A. Lukashenko won the election well ahead of his contenders in older age groups (over 40 years old). It should also be noted that he also had a significant advantage in 20-24 years old group. As for middle age groups (25-40 years old), T. Korotkevich won the majority of votes here.

As for education level, Figure 3 demonstrates that A. Lukashenko won in all groups. However, it is well noticeable, that the higher the level of education is the lower the share of votes for him is. And vice versa, with the growth of education level grows the popularity of T. Korotkevich.

Distribution of votes depending on social status of voters looks quite interesting (Figure 4). As you can

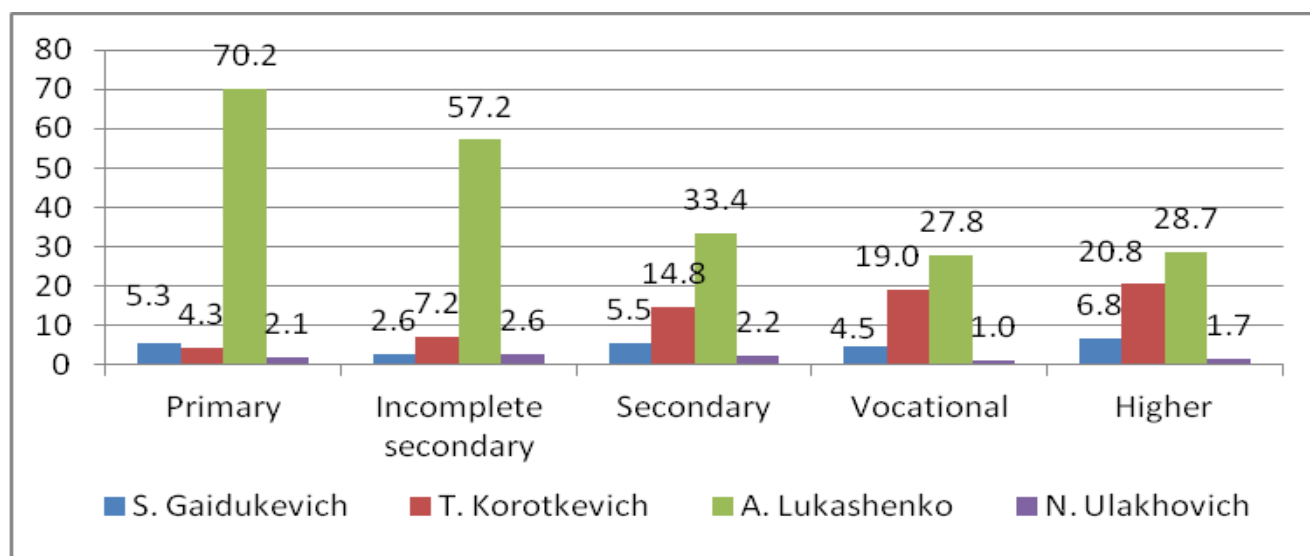


Figure 3. Voting results depending on education (%)

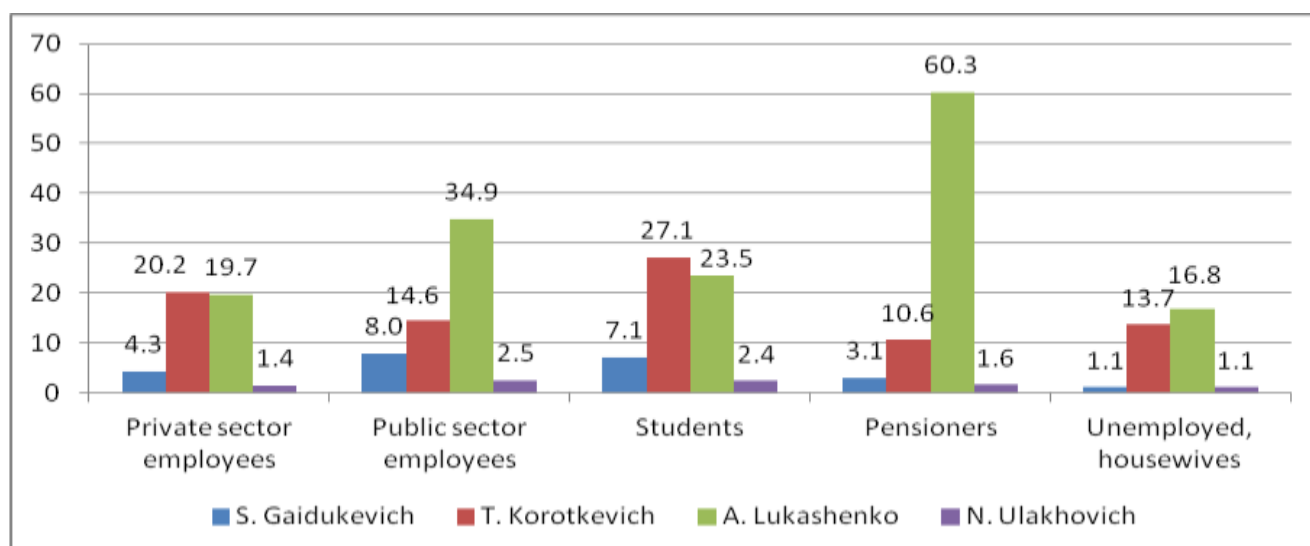


Figure 4. Voting results depending on social status (%)

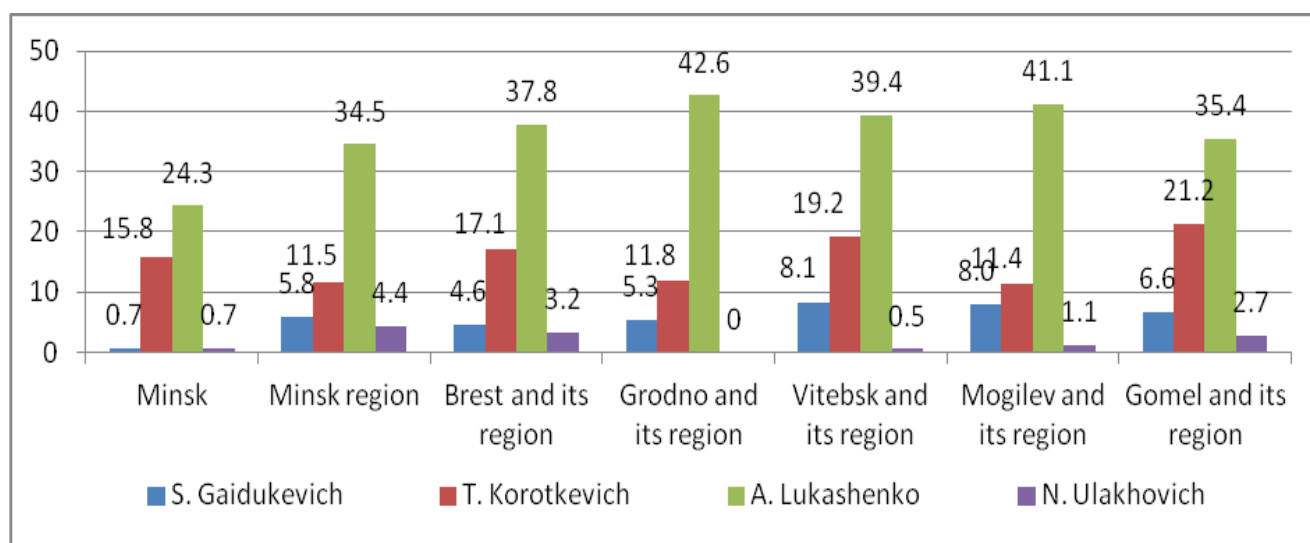


Figure 5. Voting results depending on region (%)

see, A. Lukashenko lost the competition (insignificantly but still) in two social groups: private sector employees and students. In other groups he won the

election. The biggest breakaway can be observed in the groups of retired people and public sector employees.

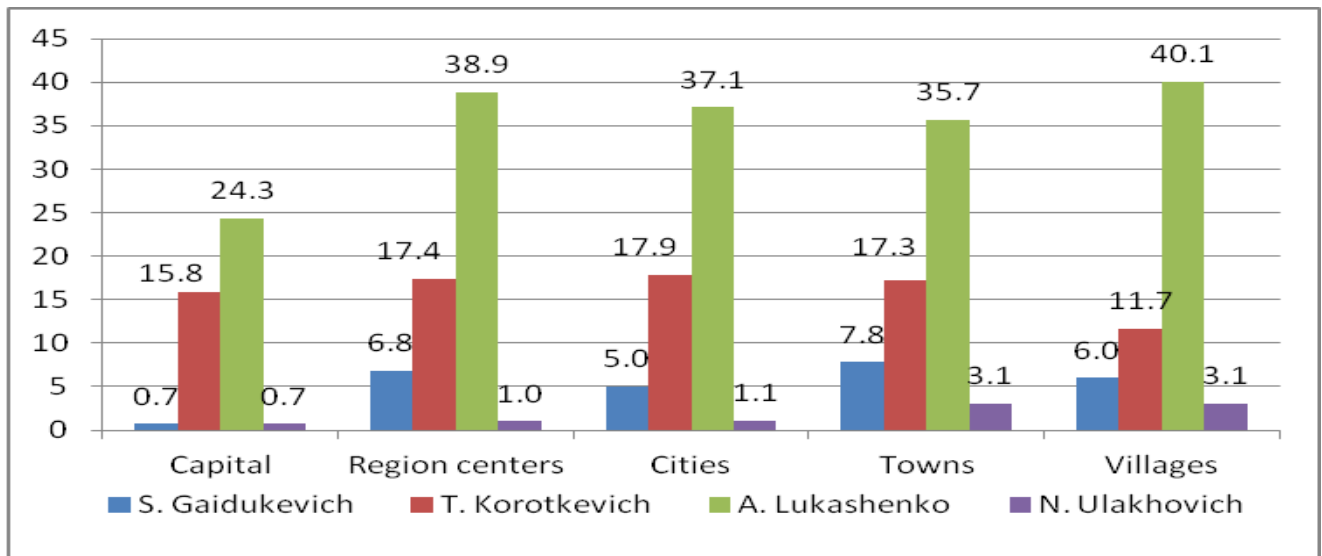


Figure 6. Voting results depending on settlement type (%)

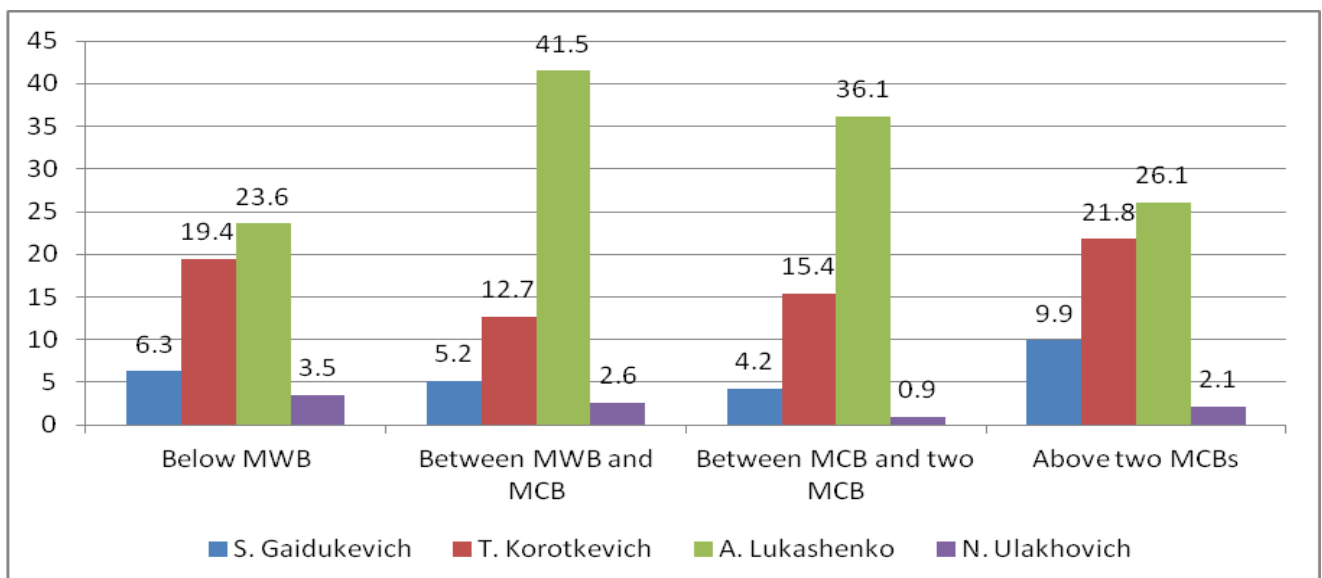


Figure 7. Voting results depending on per capita income (%)

As you can see in Figure 5, A. Lukashenko scored a victory in all the regions of the country. He earned the biggest amount of votes in Grodno, Mogilev, Vitebsk, and Brest regions. The smallest amount – in Minsk. T. Korotkevich won most of her votes among the voters of Gomel and Vitebsk region, and the least of votes were given to her in Mogilev, Minsk, and Grodno regions.

Figure 6 demonstrates that A. Lukashenko won majority of votes in settlements of all types. As usually, he is most popular in villages. The smallest amount of votes he won in Minsk. As for T. Korotkevich, she enjoys bigger support in cities and much smaller support in villages.

And finally, Figure 7 demonstrates that voters with average monthly per capita income between minimal wage budget (MWb, approximately \$ 90 in November) and two minimal consumer budgets (MCB, approximately \$ 140 in November) gave the biggest support to A. Lukashenko. It's interesting to note that in outermost groups (incomes below MWB or above

2 MCBs) A. Lukashenko's support is not that considerable: electors in these groups actively supported T. Korotkevich.

As for the other two contenders of elections 2015, their support in most of the cases didn't exceed representativeness error, thus there is no use to study their results at all.

#### Phenomenon of Korotkevich: the third Belarus

Although the present President dominated the electoral campaign politically, electorally he hardly received more than 50% of votes. At the same time, although T. Korotkevich's rating was comparable with the rating of, for example, A. Milinkevich in 2006, her electorate's structure was significantly different from other politicians'.

Before the elections of 2006 IISEPS published an analytical material dedicated to the pre-electoral "landscape" under the title "Another Alexander, another Belarus". It demonstrated that electorates of the

two leaders of the campaign (Alexander Milinkevich and Alexander Lukashenko) were opposite both by political setups and by socio-demographic characteristics. Among the supporters of A. Lukashenko prevailed pensioners, people with low level of education, rural citizens; among A. Milinkevich supporters were mostly young people, people with higher education and Minsk citizens. Supporters of the oppositional candidate mostly preferred Eurointegration for Belarus, while A. Lukashenko's supporters preferred integration with Russia.

the same time, 70% of respondents confirmed that they took part in the voting.

Similar post-election survey conducted in April 2006 demonstrated that 15.8% of respondents voted for A. Milinkevich. In this regard T. Korotkevich didn't break the record: according to our survey, the share of respondents, who voted for her, is equal to the share of respondents who voted for A. Milinkevich 9 years ago.

In order to compare T. Korotkevich's electorate to electorates of other politicians, we are using the

**Table 18**

**Socio-demographic characteristics of electorates, %**

Characteristics	All respondents	For A. Lukashenko (closed rating)	For T. Korotkevich (closed rating)	Opposition outside elections (open rating)
<i>Gender:</i>				
Male	45.3	36.9	31.9	56.2
Female	54.7	63.1	68.1	43.8
<i>Age:</i>				
18-29	23.1	14.8	27.7	23.6
30-59	53.6	45.1	58.7	67.4
60 +	23.3	40.1	13.6	9.0
<i>Education:</i>				
Primary	6.3	12.3	1.7	0
Incomplete secondary	10.1	16.3	4.7	3.5
Secondary	36.1	33.8	33.9	24.8
Vocational	28.0	21.9	33.9	32.7
Higher (incomplete higher)	19.5	15.7	25.8	39.0
<i>Social status:</i>				
Private sector employee	18.5	9.6	26.6	30.0
Public sector employee	25.9	26.9	21.5	29.8
Student	5.7	3.8	9.7	5.0
Pensioner	25.6	43.6	17.3	11.2
<i>Settlement type:</i>				
Capital	19.4	13.3	19.5	45.7
Region center	19.5	21.3	21.6	10.7
City	18.6	19.5	21.2	9.7
Town	17.0	17.0	18.6	10.4
Village	25.5	28.8	19.1	23.4

In September 2015 material of IISEPS (see "Comparison of electorates: phenomenon of Korotkevich", <http://www.iiseps.org/?p=3737>) we demonstrated, first, that T. Korotkevich managed to acquire support of a noticeable part of voters in a short period of time, and, second, that her electorate is significantly different from the traditional oppositional electorate.

December 2015 survey, conducted after the election, confirmed these theses. Returning to the name of decade old article, we may say that T. Korotkevich's campaign demonstrated that there is the "third Belarus", which is neither pro-Lukashenko, nor pro-opposition.

According to December survey (closed question) 35.6% of respondents voted for A. Lukashenko, 15.7% – for T. Korotkevich, 5.2% – for S. Gaydukevich, and 1.9% – for N. Ulakhovich. 8.9% of respondents declared that they voted against all candidates, and 32.5% didn't answer the question. At

answers to an open question on hypothetical voting in presidential elections. Answering it, 33.3% of respondents entered the name of A. Lukashenko, 9.9% – T. Korotkevich. Besides them, 16 other politicians were entered. We picked out democratically oriented politicians, and distinguish their united electorate, which we are calling "opposition outside elections". They are A. Kozulin, A. Milinkevich, Z. Poznyak, A. Lebedko, S. Shushkevich, Y. Romanchuk, G. Kostusyov, V. Neklyayev, A. Sannikov, N. Statkevich and D. Dashkevich. Their total electorate amounted to 8%.

Socio-demographic characteristics of electorates are presented in Table 18.

The biggest difference that hits the eye is the gender structure. T. Korotkevich's electorate is the most "feminine", while the electorate of "opposition outside elections" is distinctly "masculine". However, according to other parameters Korotkevich's elector is in-

intermediate between two electorates. The share of pensioners and people over 60 in T. Korotkevich electorate is bigger than in "opposition outside elections" electorate, but smaller than in A. Lukashenko's; as for the shares of people with higher education and Minsk citizens, the dependency is inverse. The difference by settlement type is especially striking: almost each second supporter of "opposition outside elections" lives in the capital, while T. Korotkevich's supporters are distributed equally from Minsk to villages.

Here are some stand outs as an example: the comparatively low share of Minsk citizens and high share of villagers in V. Neklyayev's electorate; significant share of pensioners among the supporters of A. Sannikov; high share of women among electors of A. Milinkevich. However, on the whole, Table 20 data corresponds to the distinctions of oppositional electorate, mentioned in the description of supporters of "opposition outside elections" in 2015 in Table 18: "masculinity", low share of elderly people, high shares

Table 19

**Socio-demographic characteristics of A. Lukashenko's electorate, %**

Characteristics	Voting for A. Lukashenko			
	08'01*	04'06	12'10	12'15
<i>Gender:</i>				
Male	43.1	41.5	36.4	36.9
Female	56.9	58.5	63.6	63.1
<i>Age:</i>				
18-29	11.5	14.9	14.1	14.8
30-59	46.3	52.7	50.8	45.1
60 +	42.2	32.4	35.1	40.1
<i>Education:</i>				
Primary	14.0	8.1	9.3	12.3
Incomplete secondary	22.9	22.4	18.7	16.3
Secondary	34.9	37.2	36.0	33.8
Vocational	18.1	22.3	23.1	21.9
Higher (incomplete higher)	10.2	10.1	13.0	15.7
<i>Social status:</i>				
Private sector employee	4.2	8.0	10.5	9.6
Public sector employee	41.2	41.0	36.5	26.9
Student	1.3	4.7	4.1	3.8
Pensioner	44.4	36.7	38.3	43.6
<i>Settlement type:</i>				
Capital	14.1	12.0	14.8	13.3
Region center	20.2	16.6	17.5	21.3
City	10.0	14.8	17.7	19.5
Town	16.1	18.6	17.9	17.0
Village	39.5	38.0	32.1	28.8

\* Pre-election survey, three others are post-election

Table 19 presents the dynamics of socio-demographic characteristics of A. Lukashenko's electorate in all four presidential elections in XXI century.

Table 19 data demonstrates that A. Lukashenko's electorate's structure doesn't change for 14 years. The shares of young people and people with higher education have slightly increased; the share of public sector employees and villagers has slightly decreased in the last elections, and these are the only noticeable changes. Distinct preponderance of women and pensioners, low share of people living in the capital – these are unchangeable distinctions of presidential electorate in all four elections.

Table 20 describes socio-demographic structure of electorates of the principal adversaries of A. Lukashenko in presidential elections since 2001.

There is no complete mirror-like symmetry with the electorate of A. Lukashenko; besides, certain parameters significantly vary for different candidates.

of people with higher education and Minsk citizens.

Let's go back to the elections 2015 and examine political preferences of electorates mentioned in Table 18: A. Lukashenko's, T. Korotkevich's and "opposition outside elections" (Table 21).

Table 21 demonstrates even more clearly than Table 18 the intermediate character of T. Korotkevich's electorate: political setups of her supporters are less radical, less critical towards the existing system, than the setups of classical oppositional electorate, but they are more critical than those of A. Lukashenko's supporters. Her elector is oppositional, but less oppositional than classic opposition.

Certain characteristics differ not only to some degree, but even in the "sign" of the evaluation. Thus, T. Korotkevich's elector supports market reforms, but this support is not as massive as "opposition outside elections" electors'. Her electorate also mostly trusts non-state mass media and distrusts state mass me-

dia. As for political opposition, balance of evaluations is different here: electorate of "opposition outside elections" trusts oppositional parties, while T. Korotkevich's electorate distrusts them more often. Not as often as A. Lukashenko's supporters, but still noticeably.

35.6% of respondents declared having voted for him in December.

However, by the look of things, "the third Belarus" cannot be reduced to these two groups. It existed before, but it wasn't seen amid the battles between the present President and classic opposition. Formerly,

**Table 20**

**Socio-demographic characteristics of electorates of principal adversaries of A. Lukashenko in the elections of 2001, 2006 and 2010, %**

Characteristics	Voting for:				
	V. Goncharik, 08'01*	A. Milinkevich, 04'06	A. Kozulin, 04'06	V. Neklyayev, 12'10	A. Sannikov, 12'10
<i>Gender:</i>					
Male	52.6	48.9	57.4	60.3	63.0
Female	47.4	51.1	42.6	39.7	37.0
<i>Age:</i>					
18-29	38.2	37.6	36.7	25.4	27.2
30-59	54.9	51.9	61.8	65.9	59.8
60 +	6.9	10.5	1.5	8.7	13.0
<i>Education:</i>					
Primary	1.7	2.9	0	0	3.2
Incomplete secondary	6.9	6.2	5.9	1.6	7.5
Secondary	44.0	37.3	35.3	44.0	38.7
Vocational	22.3	27.5	33.8	35.2	35.5
Higher (incomplete higher)	25.1	26.1	25.0	19.2	15.1
<i>Social status:</i>					
Private sector employee	10.9	25.7	25.0	19.2	16.0
Public sector employee	49.1	33.0	38.2	46.4	37.2
Student	12.0	9.8	8.8	8.0	6.4
Pensioner	11.4	11.2	2.9	10.4	13.8
<i>Settlement type:</i>					
Capital	25.7	21.0	23.5	11.1	18.5
Region center	15.4	17.4	33.8	12.7	18.5
City	21.1	16.3	17.6	20.6	23.9
Town	22.9	24.6	11.8	28.6	17.4
Village	14.9	20.7	13.2	27.0	21.7

\* Pre-election survey, two others are post-election

Same balance is observed regarding the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Electorate of "opposition outside elections" in its majority disapproves it, while T. Korotkevich's electorate's majority approves it. Supporters of "opposition outside elections" clearly choose Eurointegration, while T. Korotkevich's supporters are divided into two almost equal parts.

In short, T. Korotkevich's accomplishment consists of discovering "the third Belarus". Naturally, this division is quite relative; these entities are not impenetrable, not closed: a significant part of the classic oppositional electorate, "another Belarus" so to say, voted for T. Korotkevich. At the same time even a part of "hard" electorate of A. Lukashenko, of "the first Belarus", irritated with economic problems of 2014-2015, also may have given their votes to T. Korotkevich. It's worth reminding that according to September 2015 IISEPS survey, conducted one month prior to elections, only 45.7% of respondents were ready to vote for A. Lukashenko. And only

these people probably didn't participate in elections, or voted for A. Lukashenko in the last moment. T. Korotkevich offered them not just an alternative, but an alternative acceptable for them.

The point is not that T. Korotkevich found "the golden key" to the Belarusian politics or the high road to success. But at the least she demonstrated to Belarusian society something important about it, something that society didn't know about itself before.

### **He advances slogans without doing anything**

Over the fourth quarter of 2015 electoral rating of A. Lukashenko dropped by 12.4 points down to the lowest value of the last two years (Table 22). It's possible that this significant decrease is related to the "high foundation" of September. One month prior to the election the future five-time winner was actively playing the card of external threats, scaring the "red man" (we took this definition of a typical representative of Belarusian majority from S. Alexievich's Nobel

Table 21

**Political setups of electorates, %**

Variant of answer	All respondents	For A. Lukashenko (closed rating)	For T. Korotkevich (closed rating)	Opposition outside elections (open rating)
<i>Is Belarusian economy in crisis?</i>				
Yes	66.9	52.2	74.0	83.4
No	17.9	27.5	13.6	6.4
<i>How is the state of things in Belarus developing in general?</i>				
In the right direction	36.7	67.6	17.9	4.8
In the wrong direction	50.8	19.5	74.5	90.0
<i>Should there be market-friendly reforms in Belarus?</i>				
Yes	56.9	38.4	70.6	81.9
No	27.7	39.9	20.4	12.9
<i>Do you trust non-state mass media?</i>				
Yes	40.6	26.6	52.8	69.8
No	41.4	52.4	35.3	21.3
<i>Do you trust state mass media?</i>				
Yes	39.6	69.2	17.0	7.4
No	49.9	20.2	74.0	89.7
<i>Do you trust oppositional political parties?</i>				
Yes	12.6	9.0	15.7	36.7
No	64.8	78.5	54.7	32.7
<i>If you had to choose between integration with Russia and joining the European Union, what choice would you make?</i>				
Integration with the RF	53.5	72.8	35.4	22.0
Joining the EU	25.1	11.8	38.0	58.7
<i>How do you evaluate the annexation of Crimea by Russia?</i>				
It's an imperialistic usurpation and occupation	20.2	10.3	28.5	49.9
It's a restitution of Russian lands and reestablishment of historical justice	65.7	77.8	56.2	35.0

Table 22

**Dynamics of electoral rating of President A. Lukashenko\*, %**

Date	12'13	03'14	06'14	09'14	12'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
Rating	34.8	39.8	39.8	45.2	40.0	34.2	38.6	45.7	33.3

\* Electoral rating is the percentage of votes, which a politician received in answers to an open question "If presidential elections were held tomorrow, for whom would you vote?"

lecture) with the images of "cruel battles" for the re-distribution of world resources.

This pre-electoral tactics worked quite well. Additional portion of adrenalin helped the "red men" to realize the need to unite around the real guarantor of stability. As a result, A. Lukashenko's electoral rating gained 7.1 points in September (June – 38.6%, September – 45.7%). However, October 11 passed, the topic of "cruel battle" was eliminated from the agenda. A. Lukashenko transformed into a "talking head", discussing the need to raise the retirement age. There is a world of difference between voting for a fearless fighter against the world evil and for such a talking head.

Decrease of A. Lukashenko's electoral rating in December was not accompanied by a symmetric decrease of his trust rating (Table 23). As a result, the ratio of two ratings ended up being *normal*.

An explanation is required here. In absence of mobilization excitement trust rating usually exceeds electoral rating. This excess can reach 10 and more points. In particular, in June 2015 it amounted to 10.4 points, but in September values of the two ratings became almost equal. That is why December difference of 12.3 points should be considered as a symptom of decline of mobilization excitement.

Table 24 demonstrates the dynamics of trust ratings of state and public institutions. First column reflects results of the survey conducted three months prior to the annexation of Crimea. Annexation resulted in a growth of ratings of almost all state and "nearly state" institutions. Orthodox Church can be listed under the latter. State mass media were the leaders of popularity increase (+15.5 points), and there is nothing surprising about it when you think of the role of TV in pumping political euphoria. As for non-state

Table 23

**Dynamics of trust rating of President A. Lukashenko\*, %**

Variant of answer	12'13	03'14	06'14	09'14	12'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
Trust	37.7	45.9	49.6	53.5	49.9	48.8	49.0	47.0	45.4
Don't trust	47.5	44.1	39.0	33.3	35.6	39.7	39.1	37.1	41.9
DA	14.8	10.0	11.4	13.2	14.5	11.5	11.9	15.9	12.7

\* Trust rating is the percentage of support in the answers to the question "Do you trust the President?"

Table 24

**Dynamics of trust rating of state and public institutions\*, %**

Variant of answer	12'13	12'14	12'15
Orthodox Church	63.0	67.2	65.2
Army	44.1	52.1	47.2
President	37.7	49.9	45.4
Bar association	39.4	51.9	42.1
Militia	34.9	41.4	41.3
Non-state mass media	41.0	41.7	40.6
KGB	33.9	42.0	40.3
State mass media	31.6	47.1	39.6
State research institutes	31.5	46.6	38.6
Public Prosecutor's Office	34.5	42.3	38.5
Courts	34.9	44.4	37.2
Central Election Commission	32.0	40.4	36.1
Business associations	39.7	35.6	35.8
Government	29.4	41.4	35.6
Catholic Church	36.6	35.3	35.4
International organizations (UN, EU, OSCE, European Parliament, Council of Europe and others)	36.9	36.9	27.1
Independent research institutes	36.0	44.9	35.1
Trade-unions, members of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus	30.0	36.2	33.1
Free and independent trade-unions	31.9	33.8	32.4
Local Councils of Deputies	28.9	37.1	31.5
National Assembly	31.5	37.8	30.3
Local Executive Committees	28.6	36.4	30.3
Human rights groups (Belarusian Helsinki Committee and others)	28.7	37.4	27.3
Political parties supporting the present power	19.9	27.5	21.4
Opposition political parties	15.8	16.0	12.6
Protestant Church	10.9	9.9	9.5

\* The table is sorted by the last column

institutions, if "Crimeaisours" and the war in the East of Ukraine, which followed it, had influenced them, then the influence was negative.

Over the past year trust ratings of state institutions decreased insignificantly, but the "Crimeaisours" effect hadn't disappeared completely. It should be noted that the biggest decrease was observed for former leaders of growth. In particular, trust rating of state mass media lost 7.5 points and its rating is lower than the rating of non-state mass media, which hasn't changed over the last three years.

The last rows in the rating list are traditionally occupied by oppositional political parties and protestant church. "Crimeaisours" didn't influence oppositional parties' rating, but it decreased after presidential election. There is nothing surprising about it. Some of A. Lukashenko's opponents still perceive elections

as... elections, and their results – as a defeat of opposition.

First places of the rating list are invariably occupied by institutions which don't regulate everyday life – Orthodox Church and army. In particular, Belarusian army is not reserved for efficient war actions. Its function is symbolic: it provides integrity of social system.

President has a similar function. However, the fact that the head of state actively functions in informational space leads to a gradual devaluation of symbolic constituent of his legitimacy. Over 8 years (Table 25) the share of respondents, who perceive the President as a reformer, dropped from 38.9% down to 25.5%; and the share of those, who perceive him as a politician who "transforms reality qualitatively and revolutionarily", dropped from 11% down to 5%.



Table 25

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Which image of the present President do you have?", %**

Variant of answer	01'07	09'09	06'11	12'12	12'14	12'15
He slowly, but steadily pursues the aim by way of reforms	38.9	33.1	23.1	27.9	27.8	25.5
He simply aims at maintaining his power	22.8	30.8	35.8	29.1	26.6	22.9
He aims at maintaining current governance system	13.0	13.9	18.6	17.3	24.8	27.8
He advances slogans without doing anything	8.3	12.7	12.7	15.1	11.9	14.8
He transforms reality qualitatively and revolutionarily	11.0	7.8	9.2	10.2	8.9	5.0

Table 26

**Distribution of answers to the question: "What do you think about the following statements of the President A. Lukashenko, made on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November during the inauguration ceremony?", %**

Variant of answer	Agree	Disagree	DA/NA
A stable, viable state was created in Belarus	48.1	42.4	9.5
Belarusian people need to be led, need a guideline	45.2	44.6	10.2
This isn't my personal success, this is our national victory, victory of Belarusian people	42.2	35.5	22.3
Each Belarusian is protected by law	37.9	46.9	15.2
People in Belarus have all avenues: favorable conditions for working, studying, discovering talents, educating real experts in their field	32.0	51.5	16.5
Belarusian public health service is the best in the world	20.2	66.2	13.6

Table 27

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Are you ready to personally protect Alexander Lukashenko from some threat?", %**

Variant of answer	12'14	12'15	Attitude to A. Lukashenko	
			Trust	Don't trust
Yes	18.7	17.1	33.0	2.9
No	62.2	63.5	36.7	90.0
DA/NA	19.1	19.4	30.3	7.1

This is what the classic of political science M. Weber called "routinization of charisma". This is confirmed by the increase in popularity of answers "He aims at maintaining current governance system" (from 13% up to 27.8%) and "He advances slogans without doing anything" (from 8.3% up to 14.8%).

A. Lukashenko made a number of statements during the ceremony of inauguration on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. None of these statements was admitted by more than 50% of Belarusians (Table 26). It looks like the head of state, watching out of the window of his bullet-proof Mercedes, observes a life which is different from the life which Belarusians see out of the windows of their second-hand cars. The more mundane a statement was, the lower the level of agreement was. And to think that ability to be earth-bound was the main distinctive feature of the "people's president"!

Table 27 results permit us to complete the set of standard ratings (trust and electoral) with the rating of "selfless devotion". Looking at the impressive figures, reflecting the personal readiness to protect A. Lukashenko, one should not forget that readiness to take real actions is often significantly different from the declarative readiness, especially when this readiness is declared more often by women than men (18% vs. 16%) and by retired people than youth (30%

vs. 11.8%).

Analyzing dynamics of ratings of A. Lukashenko and state institutions, one should remember that there are two states of society, which almost never come into contact. First state is the state of a normal person, living everyday life and able to criticize the power. Second state is the "heroic mode". "Crimeaisours" helped A. Lukashenko to activate the second mode, which was very apropos amid the crisis of legitimacy. But judging by the results of December survey, resource of "heroic mode" is almost exhausted.

### State returns affection, but not to everyone

In the manner of Brezhnev's epoch the last year of the fourth five-year period could be logically named "final". However, using formal characteristic in this case would be precipitant, because in the manner of Stalin's epoch this year should be considered crucial. This year brought closure to the "fat" years of steady growth of people's incomes, and this made A. Lukashenko abandon the previous social contract which stipulated that loyalty was rewarded by incomes' growth. According to new social contract loyalty will be rewarded by security and survival.

Table 28

**Dynamics of answering the question: "According to you, to which extent does the state accomplish its obligations to the citizens of Belarus?", %**

Variant of answer	03'12	12'14	12'15
Accomplishes to the full extent	6.0	5.6	5.5
Accomplishes mostly	26.5	30.3	28.7
Equally does and doesn't accomplish	31.0	33.6	32.4
Doesn't accomplish mostly	26.4	22.4	21.8
Doesn't accomplish completely	8.8	6.8	9.7
DA/NA	1.3	1.3	1.9

Table 29

**Dynamics of answering the question: "According to you, to which extent do the citizens of Belarus accomplish their obligations to the state (observe the laws, pay the taxes and so on)?", %**

Variant of answer	03'12	12'14	12'15
Accomplish to the full extent	19.0	15.4	13.4
Accomplish mostly	49.1	46.0	46.4
Equally do and don't accomplish	23.1	30.2	32.3
Don't accomplish mostly	6.3	6.0	5.5
Don't accomplish completely	1.3	1.0	0.6
DA/NA	1.2	1.4	1.8

Table 30

**Dynamics of answering the question: "What's more important for you today: maintaining of the current situation in the country or changing it?", %**

Variant of answer	02'06	12'10	12'11	06'14	09'15	12'15
Changing of the situation is more important	53.4	49.7	18.0	38.3	33.3	36.7
Maintaining of the situation is more important	37.8	41.2	70.1	52.1	52.7	55.4
DA/NA	8.8	9.1	11.9	9.6	14.0	7.9

The new contract was made official in the New Year speech of the head of state in the last minutes of 2014. Here is the key quotation: "We saw for ourselves what internal feuding, hatred and intolerance lead to. The line between bright and loud slogans and society split is very thin. The line between this split and a war is even thinner. And if people forget about the value of peace and consent, they cross all these lines in a blink of an eye".

Judging by the results of Table 28, Belarusian society didn't notice the change of social contract. Despite the decrease of real incomes, the total of answers "Accomplishes to the full extent"/"Accomplishes mostly" didn't seriously change in 2015: 2012 – 32.5%, 2014 – 35.9% and 2015 – 34.2%. It is natural that A. Lukashenko's supporters assess state's ability to accomplish its obligations four times as high as his opponents – 55.2% vs. 13.8%. This "arithmetic" permits us to evaluate the slogan "State for the people". It is certainly true, but not equally for the "majority" and the "minority" of Belarusian society.

Judging by the dynamics of answering question of Table 29, Belarus is inhabited not by population, but by Citizens (capital letter is appropriate here). More than half of them accomplish their obligations to the state fully or mostly. In December 2015 they evaluated their own level of responsibility before the state 1.8

times as high as the level of responsibility of the state itself.

Evaluations of people's responsibility are not politically charged, unlike the evaluations of state's responsibility. 58.1% of the head of state's supporters and 63% of his opponents positively evaluate their own responsibility. Therefore, A. Lukashenko's opponents consider their relations with the state asymmetric. And we cannot disagree with this. Belarusian state is a state of peripheral social groups, a state of the so called "majority". Economically and socially active groups in Belarus are considered marginal.

Majority of Belarusians don't have resources to independently solve everyday problems related to lodging, education and health. The only source of hope is the state. But statism and paternalism regarding the state should be interpreted as the perfectly rational form of adaptation to the situation where state bureaucracy is almighty and uncontrollable.

In the situation, where nothing depends on a person, he or she adopts the perfectly rational paradigm: "NO FUSSING".

### **Crisis cut down the number of change supporters**

Belarusians' ability to adapt to gradual worsening of their financial standing is illustrated by the results of Table 30. "Gradual" is the key word here. Over 11

Table 31

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you consider fundamental changes in internal and external policies of Belarus possible in the next five years?", %**

Variant of answer	09'08	06'10	12'11	09'13	12'14	12'15
Quite possible	31.8	30.4	37.1	25.5	34.4	27.5
Unlikely	46.6	49.0	43.4	56.1	45.9	51.6
Impossible	15.2	13.5	11.3	13.8	13.9	16.1
DA/NA	6.4	7.1	8.2	4.6	5.8	4.8

Table 32

**Dynamics of answering the question: "And would you like those changes to happen?", %**

Variant of answer	09'08	06'10	12'11	09'13	12'14	12'15
Yes	52.2	46.8	57.7	50.3	51.9	44.9
No	15.6	24.0	12.4	20.2	17.7	23.3
I don't care	14.7	17.3	16.5	21.1	19.9	21.1
DA/NA	17.5	11.9	13.4	8.4	10.5	10.7

Table 33

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Some people by fundamental changes in internal and external policies of Belarus mean a strengthening of state's role in social life, others on the contrary mean a diminution of this role. What do you mean by this?" depending on the attitude to A. Lukashenko, %**

Variant of answer	12'14	12'15	Attitude to A. Lukashenko	
			Trust	Don't trust
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	46.4	47.2	71.8	21.5
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	44.1	45.0	21.4	72.0
DA/NA	9.5	7.8	6.8	6.5

months of 2015 real disposable incomes of people dropped by 5.4%, but for 55.4% of respondents maintaining of the current situation in the country is more important than changing it. In 2011 incomes dropped by 1%, but 70.1% of respondents supported changes, i.e. by 14.7 points more.

This inconsistency can be easily explained. Over 2011 dollar rate jumped from 3.000 to 8.500 Belarusian rubles and inflation amounted to 108.7%. Slumping devaluation of the national currency in March-April 2011 provoked panic, and this led to a drop of social indices down to a historical low. Unfortunately, quarterly surveys are too rough of an instrument to register panic moods. That is why the ratio of answers to the question of Table 30 in December 2011 is quite mixed. It reflects social opinion during the decline of mood of panic.

A. Lukashenko's supporters are six times more inclined to maintain the current situation than his opponents – 61.8% vs. 11.3%. They are used to settle for less, so gradual decrease of real incomes doesn't provoke any protest among them and doesn't lead to distrust to the head of state.

Supporters of Belarusian stability undoubtedly should be satisfied with the dynamics of the answers to the question "Do you consider fundamental changes in internal and external policies of Belarus possible in the next five years?" (Table 31). Over the last year the share of those, who assume that fundamental

changes are possible, decreased by 6.9 points (from 34.4% to 27.5%), i.e. economic crisis in "post-Crimeaisours" conditions didn't increase the expectations of changes. This is one of important distinctions between the current crisis and the crisis of 2011.

There is a direct correlation between the belief in possibility of changes and desiring them to happen (Table 32), which is confirmed even mathematically: the share of positive answers dropped by 7 points (cf. the drop of 6.9 points in Table 30).

The share of change supporters in all age groups in the span of 18-49 years old exceeded 50%, but among Belarusians of 40-49 years old it amounts to 43.8%, and among those older than 60 years it amounts to only 25.5%.

Table 33 results permit us to evaluate the ratio of *statists* and *liberals* in Belarusian society. It is close to 1, and it hadn't changed over the last year. Therefore, the crisis didn't lead to a reevaluation of the role of the state in the life of society, and this can be seen as another illustration of Belarusians' adaptation ability.

Distribution of answers in the groups of supporters and opponents of A. Lukashenko is *mirror-like*. Amid the low level of trust to market institutions in the peripheral social groups (villagers, retired people, people with low level of education) all hopes on maintaining the current standard of life are laid upon the state. As for economically active social groups, they see

excessive care of the paternalist state as an obstacle for their personal aims.

State paternalism can successfully function only under the condition of maximal simplification of social reality perception, because paternalism is an archaic construct, which doesn't allow complex forms of exchange and communication. Presidential elections, which demonstrate the unity of people and their ability to make the "right decision" is one of the mechanisms of simplification.

**Table 34**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "What do you think about the readiness of people in Belarus to express their political views?", %**

Variant of answer	06'06	10'10	06'11	03'13	12'14	12'15
No one is afraid	18.6	18.3	10.6	14.0	16.9	18.9
Very few people are afraid	28.5	16.3	16.9	18.7	24.2	24.1
A lot of people are afraid	40.2	40.5	46.1	41.4	42.7	39.1
All people are afraid	7.9	18.8	22.3	19.3	11.5	13.3
DA	4.8	6.1	4.1	6.6	4.7	4.6
Positive answers total	<b>47.1</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>43.0</b>
Negative answers total	<b>48.1</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>52.4</b>

**Table 35**

**Dynamics of readiness to participate in public protests, %**

Variant of answer	08'01	04'06	12'10	06'11	12'14	12'15
Rallies, pickets	16.7	15.1	11.8	16.0	15.5	13.8
Strikes	12.9	12.5	8.6	13.6	11.4	13.3
Armed struggles	2.8	5.1	3.8	5.0	5.1	3.4
Hunger strikes	4.0	5.7	4.2	6.6	4.9	4.7

However, social unity is only demonstrated in state mass media, which don't want to notice the split social reality. But judging by the December survey of IISEPS, each part of the split Belarusian society keeps to their convictions, and this is the maximal effect which could be expected by the organizers of the Elections-2015 campaign amid the current situation. And they had achieved this maximum.

### **Men experience fright more often than women**

"Homo sovieticus" continues to dominate Belarusian society. His main characteristic is the ability to adapt to the repressive state; that is why he doesn't need to be reminded that it's dangerous to express his own political views. Any negative changes, whatever their nature is, increase the level of intimidation, while any positive changes make him relax. This is visually demonstrated by the dynamics of answering the question "What do you think about the readiness of people in Belarus to express their political views?" (Table 34).

The lowest level of fear (the last row) coincided with the "fat" year 2006, the year of the third presidential elections. The highest level was observed in 2011, the year of hand-made financial and economic crisis. "Crimeaisours" contributed to the growth of positive moods, and, as expected, it led to a decrease of the level of fear in society.

The total of negative answers depends on the age of respondents, but this dependency is not linear: 18-29 – 55.6%, 30-39 – 63%, 40-49 – 60.3%, 50-59 – 52.1%, and 60+ – 35.5%. The highest value is registered in the most active age group. Belarusian "state for the people" turns its repressive face to the active and independent citizens above all. That is why despite common perceptions men experience fright more often than women – 55.4% vs. 50.1%.

Over the last 15 years declarative readiness to

participate in public protests wasn't really changing (Table 35). It is a matter of declarative readiness, so the answers of respondents shouldn't be taken at its face value and shouldn't be used to calculate the number of participants of rallies and strikes.

When society is severely and centrally managed in a command way, then the basic type of personality becomes authoritarian too. This person is ready either to submit, or to manifest force to others. In the framework of Belarusian model the power is not the regulating organization, but the owner of the country. It doesn't establish rules of communication, but represses other-minded. All this recreates the authoritarian type of personality.

### **Belarusians against increase of retirement age**

Elections in Belarus are not a mechanism of correcting the course of development of the country, so there is nothing surprising about the absence of the word "reforms" in A. Lukashenko's electoral program. All that the future five-time winner could have proposed to the electorate was a set of good wishes. Let us limit ourselves to one example: "Rapidly moving forwards on the way of progress, we will be doing everything to bring Belarus to the group of the leading countries of the world".

The absence of the word "reforms" in the electoral program doesn't mean that this word is not a part of

Table 36

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you consider it important to carry out market-friendly reforms in Belarus?", %**

Variant of answer	05'11	12'13	12'14	09'15	12'15
Yes	66.6	59.7	63.2	57.5	56.9
No	15.6	27.8	22.0	27.3	27.8
DA/NA	17.8	12.5	14.8	15.2	15.3
Yes : No	4.3	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.0

Table 37

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Do you consider it important to carry out market-friendly reforms in Belarus?" depending on the attitude to A. Lukashenko, %**

Variant of answer	Attitude to A. Lukashenko			
	12'14		12'15	
	Trust	Don't trust	Trust	Don't trust
Yes	56.1	70.3	39.7	75.7
No	30.1	14.8	40.2	15.6
DA/NA	13.8	15.0	21.1	8.7

Table 38

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Which of the following statements corresponds to your opinion most?", %**

Variant of answer	07'14	03'15	12'15
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	38.4	39.9	35.3
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	34.2	42.2	41.6
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	19.4	14.4	22.1
DA/NA	8.0	3.5	1.0

the head of state's vocabulary, and this was demonstrated on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November during the inauguration ceremony: 28 mentions in a short speech is an answer to all those who strive "to break the political system of the country, and state structure of Belarus" and "to divide and cut up the state property".

December ISEPS survey permits to evaluate the reformatory potential of Belarusian society (Table 36). Formally, the "coefficient of prevalence" of reform supporters over the conservators never dropped below 2 over the last 5 years (see the last row of the Table 36). In 2011 after the crisis it amounted to 4.3, in December 2015 it amounted to 2, which is apparently its normal value.

It is natural that A. Lukashenko's opponents more often declare their need of reforms than his supporters. However, judging by the results of Table 37, over the past year there was a polarization of views on reforms inside politically charged groups of Belarusian society: among the head of state's supporters the need of reforms dropped by 16.4 points, while among his opponents it jumped by 5.4 points. You should also note the last row of Table 37, where two opposite trends are registered: the share of those who didn't answer the question jumped by 7.3 points among the supporters and dropped by 6.3 points among the opponents. Apparently, this polarization is the result of anti-reformatory statements of A. Lukashenko made after October 11.

This explanation is confirmed by the dynamics of

answering the question of Table 38. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of November the head of state equated system reforms to attempts to break the political system, and this was reflected in the answers of respondents: the share of supporters of system reforms dropped by 4.6 points comparatively to March, while the share of conservators, believing that society need protection against forces "which try to change current order", jumped by 7.7 points.

Let us note the high level of polarization in the answers of supporters and opponents of A. Lukashenko: 10.7% vs. 65.3% (the first variant of answer) and 36.5% vs. 7.8% (the third variant of answer).

Answers to the direct question on attitude to A. Lukashenko's statement "In order to carry out reforms in Belarus, it is necessary to break the political system of the country, state structure of Belarus, divide and cut up the state property and give it away" were split up. 43% of respondents agreed with the statement, 44.8% disagreed, and 12.2% didn't answer the question.

In this regard we need to understand what respondents mean by "reforms". In April 2013 the three most expected "reforms" were quite predictable for a paternalist society: "Increase minimal wages" – 61.7%, "Increase pensions" – 41.8%, "Improve relations with the West" – 33%.

In December 2015 we asked an open question (no variants of answers) on the reforms, which, ac-

Table 39

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Which of the following statements concerning retirement age do you agree with?", %**

Variant of answer	12'14	12'15
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	17.0	20.3
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	76.7	73.1
DA/NA	6.3	6.6

Table 40

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Belarus turned to the International Monetary Fund and the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development asking for credits. International financial organizations are ready to provide credits only upon condition of economic reforms in Belarus. How do you evaluate this?" depending on the attitude to A. Lukashenko, %**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Attitude to A. Lukashenko	
		Trust	Don't trust
It is fair	47.0	33.3	62.5
It is not fair	36.8	48.1	27.5
DA/NA	16.2	18.6	10.0

Table 41

**Distribution of answers to the question: "Several years ago President A. Lukashenko promised to accomplish a modernization of Belarusian economy. Some people think that this modernization was successfully accomplished, while others disagree. What is your opinion?" depending on the attitude to A. Lukashenko, %**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Attitude to A. Lukashenko	
		Trust	Don't trust
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	11.4	18.6	3.0
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	46.6	57.0	33.7
There was no modernization of economy at all	33.5	12.2	58.3
DA/NA	8.5	5.5	2.1

cording to the respondents, A. Lukashenko should carry out in the next 12 months. Individual variants receive as a rule a low percent of votes in the answers to an open question, so it would be incorrect to compare the results of an open and a closed question.

In December 2015 respondents formulated 57 directions for reforms, but only 9% of them received more than 3% of votes. Here is the top five: "Carry out economic reforms, modernize economy" – 15.1%, "Increase salaries" – 10.4%, "Improve medical services" – 10.3%, "Stop the price hike" – 8.3%, and "Increase pensions" – 7.9%. Thus, four out of five variants were in fact requests to enforce social security of population.

Pain spot of the reforms is rising the retirement age. On December 28 Vice Prime Minister N. Kochanova mentioned the inevitability of increasing the retirement age due to the fact that "current retirement age doesn't take into account either objective economic reality or the growth of average life expectancy". She also referred to the head of state's opinion that retirement age should be increased, but only if people are "for" it.

According to IISEPS survey, Belarusians are not "for" it yet (Table 39). There was, however, a slight shift in favor of rising the retirement age over the last

year. Main supporters on increasing the retirement age in Belarus are outmost age groups: 18-29 – 23.6%, 60+ – 27.1%. For the first group retirement is an abstraction, and it's hard to think about it yet; and there is no threat of any innovation for the second group. Respondents aged 40-49 were the least supportive, and this doesn't need any comment.

Rising of the retirement age is one of conditions of the International Monetary Fund. Belarus continues to negotiate a new program of expanded financing. \$ 3 billion are at the stakes. According to the Belarusian powers, these negotiations are close to the end, and the decision to allocate the credit may be taken before the end of the first quarter of 2016. The conditions for receiving the credit made the attitude to it politically charged (Table 40). One third of A. Lukashenko's supporters and two thirds of his opponents agreed that international creditors' requirements are fair.

Belarusian people's ability to demonstrate "extraordinary political culture", mentioned by A. Lukashenko on November 6, is not supported by an ability to demonstrate economic culture of the same level. In particular, 24.2% of respondents believe that forthcoming denomination will lead to a worsening of financial standing: 12.5% among A. Lukashenko's supporters, 37.5% among his oppo-

nents. Let us note that the level of negative expectations among respondents with higher education turned out to be higher than among respondents with primary education – 25.9% vs. 17%.

There is certain logic to it: despite the high level of education, oppositional Belarusians doesn't expect anything good to come out of any power's actions.

Skeptical attitude to the future reforms is partly based on the negative evaluations of modernization results (Table 41). In December only 11.4% of respondents agreed that modernization of economy was successfully accomplished. Among A. Lukashenko's opponents the share of optimists was equal to the statistical error level.

Opinions about the role of the power in reforms are quite split: 41.1% of respondents suppose that strengthening of the power's role will increase the efficiency of reforms; 43.1% of respondents share the opposite opinion. This ratio has not changed since July 2014.

The unfolding economic crisis reduces paternalistic options of the power, and this fact increases the demand for monopoly on state redistribution of resources. The requests to ensure the justice, declared by the state, increase as well, i.e. people want that crisis to be overcome not at the expense of people.

### Paradoxes of Belarusian love to Alexievich

As Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko once wrote, "a poet in Russia is more than a poet". And what about Belarus? And what about someone who was decorated by the most important literary award in the world? On the other hand, it looks like the epoch, when men of letters were "regents of our dreams" and their influence could be compared to the influence of people in power, is long gone.

Yes, Nobel Prize for Svetlana Alexievich caused sincere and heated joy. But publicly it was not displayed by millions or even hundreds of thousands of people. And what do millions think about this event?

During the December 2015 IISEPS survey we asked our respondents the question on attitude to the Nobel Prize received by their countrywoman. The distribution of answers to the closed question with three variants of answers was as follows: "a source of pride, international recognition of Alexievich's talent" – 57%; "an insignificant event, another international prize among many others" – 20%; "this is an attempt of the West to harm Belarus and Russia" – 10%; 13% of respondent's did not answer the question.

57% of adult population equals to almost 4 million Belarusians. This is not just Facebook community "Celebrating Nobel together" participants, not just a narrow circle of connoisseurs of literature.

Though when it comes to mass display of emotions like this, one can always ask if people know something about the source of their pride. There is such thing as national solidarity. Belarusians is historically a nation which was not spoiled by victories, and here is one. Here is Darya Domracheva skiing faster than others and shooting better than others, and she

has won. Hooray! One of ours has won! Alexievich was writing and writing, and here she is, receiving a prize. Hooray! One of ours has won! And what was she writing? Whatever...

I haven't seen any data about Belarus, but Levada-Center conducted a survey in Russia right after the news about the prize were declared, and it turned out that nearly two thirds of Russian never heard of the Belarusian author, and 17% heard about her, but never read her books. It's difficult to extrapolate these results on Belarus because of several "but's". First, Svetlana Alexievich is a Belarusian author, and people usually know better their kinsfolk. Second, for many years running Alexievich is not published in Belarus, although she is published in Russia. If Belarusian reader wants to get her books, they will get it from Russia or from internet. Third, Russia is big, and the fact that her books are published in Moscow doesn't mean that they are known somewhere near Chelyabinsk.

However, it's possible to extrapolate and recognize that many Belarusians are proud of Alexievich's Nobel Prize only because they are proud of success of their compatriot. But certain peculiarities of the situation don't let us explain everything by this simple mechanism.

Russian mass media never wrote that Domracheva is Russophobe, or that she is not really a sportswoman, or that she was decorated with a medal only to do a bad turn to Putin. All of the above was written about Alexievich. It was written both by propagandists and by not the least authors like Z. Prilepin, E. Limonov, T. Tolstaya. Certainly, this wasn't comparable to bullying campaign against Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn after they received their Nobel Prizes, but these voices sounded louder than those that were expressing the opposite opinion. However, Muscovite "ew" didn't influence Belarusians' opinion.

One should also remember public joy of President A. Lukashenko caused by Domracheva's victories. Regarding Alexievich he was much more restrained, to put it mildly. His reactions varied from kind ascertaining of Prize to a criticism that it doesn't befit to trash one's own Motherland. President's opinion is likely important for many Belarusians. However, not in this case.

If we look into arguments on Bynet, the Belarusian segment of internet, we'll see that the main line of polarization was purely political. There was another one, related to national identity, but the mainstream was: "are you for the white or for the red?" so to say. The author of pentology on "the red man" is likely against "red men", so the fights between "the whites" and "the reds", between those who are pro-West and pro-Russia, broke out.

Meanwhile, Bynet is luckily not all Belarus. And not only because all Belarus is much bigger, but because all Belarus is differently structured, it thinks and evaluates differently.

This is confirmed even by socio-demographic parameters of the group of those who declared them-

selves proud of Alexievich's prize answering the IISEPS' question. The fact that women are more proud than men (63% vs. 50%) is natural: the winner is not only a compatriot, but also a "sister". Less understandable are the age differences. The biggest share is registered among elderly people, 60 years old and older; the lowest share (53%) is registered among young people between 18 and 29. But elderly people are kind of "red men" themselves! For some of them she is a Soviet author from their youth. Even if she's anti-Soviet, she is Soviet. Or maybe it's because people grown wise with experience are better capable to understand horrifying books of Alexievich.

Another paradox is relation to education. The highest level of pride was registered among respondents with primary (61%) and higher (63%). The most simple and the most complex people are together here. The most simple are simply not educated enough to take into account attacks against Alexievich; as for people with higher education, they are educated enough to perceive these attacks critically.

When we look into the dependency between attitude to Alexievich's Nobel and political setups of respondents, paradoxes become "curiouser and curiouser", as Alice in Wonderland used to say. Do you support integration with Russia or with the EU? 59% of Belarusians who prefer Russia are proud of Alexievich. Among those who prefer the EU the share is lower – 54%. How can that be? In internet everything is different, converse, tougher. And here we almost can see no difference, and supporters of integration with Russia are even more proud of the "Rus-sophobe" than Eurointegration adepts. Because this is not internet. This is society.

Or here is another sacramental question oh the last two years – "Is Crimea ours?" 61% of those who assess annexation of Crimea as an imperialistic usurpation are proud of Alexievich's Prize; 57% of those who interpret this event as a restitution of Russian lands share this opinion. The difference here is quite understandable at least, but it is unexpectedly insignificant, taking into account the author's own position on this problem. "Crimeaisours" (i.e. Russians'), but Alexievich is our pride according to more than a half of Belarusian "crimeaisoursists".

And finally, the President, who gave his important opinion. 55% of those who trust and 59% of those who distrust him are proud of Alexievich. What's wrong with these people? Liters of virtual blood flow on virtual barricades in social networks and forums, and they are peaceful? And this works into both directions. Those who like Europe and the West must be proud of the Prize given by the West one and all. Nope, they are proud, but not one and all. And vice versa: how people, supporting Russia, can be proud of someone who "slanders" Russia? Well, they can. Maybe they don't consider her as a slanderer, maybe there is another reason. Nevertheless, some politically charged questions do influence the attitude to Alexievich's Nobel. Say, among supporters of a Russian airbase in Belarus only 51% of respondents are

proud of Alexievich, while this share among its opponents is much bigger – 69%. Attitude to Russian mass media also affects evaluations. But the dependency is quite paradoxical here too. 45% of those, who believe that Russian mass media news programs are completely objective, are proud of the author (this is actually quite a few). The share of people feeling proud of Alexievich among people, who think that Russian mass media are "mostly objective", amounts to 62%; "mostly biased" – 58%, "completely biased" – 60%. In fact the influence (a very relative one) can only be seen in the first group of people believing every word of Moscow. All other groups express the same attitude to Alexievich.

All these paradoxes need an explanation. It would be natural if level of pride was quite high among A. Lukashenko's supporters and those who are pro-Russian in any sense (at least because of the aforementioned mechanism of national solidarity), but was even higher among pro-Western part of Belarusian society. It seems that shared political views should push to a bigger sympathy towards the author and her success.

Why doesn't it happen? Why political antagonists are almost equally proud of Alexievich? By the look of things, it's due to additional counter-factors, factors that turn a part of "Euro-Belarusians" away from the winner and attract a part of "Belo-Russians" to her. For some of those, who see the West as Saint Graal, and our stamping grounds as gloomy horror, Alexievich is too Soviet, she herself is a "red man" that she damns and loves. And they only damn him. So what's to be proud of, according to them? "Soviet" exotics? Such perception of the author, her work and her outlook takes away a part of "votes" from pro-Western Belarus.

On the other hand a similar mechanism adds some "votes". "Red men" feel that she loves them too. Well, yes, according to them, when she talks politics, she says wrong things, but in general she's one of ours, ain't it? Yeah, she doesn't love us, she damns us, but do we love ourselves? Don't we damn ourselves?

Result of these oppositely directed political and psychological mechanisms is that political antagonists meet in the same point regarding the attitude to Alexievich.

However, one can see a deeper sense to this situation. Society and literature is not a "friend-or-foe" air defense system. A real author, a great author is always bigger and more complex than his or her political position, and cannot be reduced to it. And people, evaluating their authors and their winners, are ruled not only by political anger of the day.

Or maybe this happens only in case of Alexievich? Maybe she unites people above political barriers and barricades? Her Nobel could have just made it evident. Maybe this unity will last in time. Looks like in our land it's true that "a poet is more than a poet".

Yu. Drakokhrust,  
<http://news.tut.by/politics/478891.html>



## As far as possible from the EU

December ISIEPS survey recorded a record low share of EU integration supporters. Majority of respondents approve of the freeze on sanctions towards Belarusian officials. Regarding Russian airbase in Belarus, the opinions were divided with a slight advantage on the side of its supporters.

Over the quarter from September to December 2015 the share of "Euro-Belarusians" (i.e. the supporters of joining the EU) in Belarus has significantly dropped. In comparison with September the share of "Euro-Belarusians" dropped by 8 percentage points, holding a new record over many years (Table 42).

In fine, the ratio of supporters of European and Eurasian choice almost hasn't changed in the answers to the "either-or" question (Table 44).

It seems reasonable to suppose that the decrease of pro-European moods of Belarusians was caused by acute problems in the EU: migration crisis and the series of terroristic attacks in Paris.

Although the problem of migrants is not a problem for Belarus, absolute majority of respondents are against accepting them in Europe (Table 45). As long as the EU takes a different position in this regard, this stipulates for a drop of the share of "Euro-Belarusians".

An imposing majority of respondents also declared themselves against Belarus participating in the

**Table 42**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "If there was a referendum on Belarus joining the EU, how would you vote?", %**

Variant of answer	09'08	03'09	03'10	03'11	12'12	12'13	09'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
For	26.7	34.9	36.2	48.6	38.9	35.9	25.0	24.6	25.1	27.5	19.8
Against	51.9	36.3	37.2	30.5	37.6	34.6	50.3	45.0	51.0	51.9	56.1

**Table 43**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "If a referendum on the integration of Belarus and Russia was held today, what would be your choice?", %**

Variant of answer	12'08	03'09	03'10	12'11	12'12	12'13	12'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
For	35.7	33.1	32.1	29.0	28.7	23.9	23.9	26.3	28.3	32.6	29.7
Against	38.8	43.2	44.5	42.9	47.5	51.4	58.4	48.9	50.9	49.1	51.5

**Table 44**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "If you had to choose between integration with Russia and joining the European Union, what choice would you make?", %**

Variant of answer	12'08	12'09	12'10	12'11	12'12	12'13	03'14	12'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
Integration with the RF	46.0	42.3	38.1	41.4	37.7	36.6	51.5	44.9	46.5	51.4	52.7	53.5
Joining the EU	30.1	42.1	38.0	39.1	43.4	44.6	32.9	34.2	30.8	31.4	26.4	25.1
DA/NA	23.9	15.6	23.9	19.5	18.9	18.8	15.6	20.9	22.7	17.2	20.9	21.4

**Table 45**

**Distribution of answers to the question: "During the last months there is a crisis in the EU countries caused by a stream of migrants from African and Asian countries. What opinion do you share on this crisis?"**

Variant of answer	%
Refugees should be sent back and not allowed in, because they don't belong to Europe	52.2
These people should be accepted, because they flee wars and poverty and need help	32.6
DA/NA	15.2

However, the decrease of pro-European moods did not lead to a strengthening of pro-Russian moods: in the answers to the question on integration with Russia the share of its supporters has also dropped in comparison with September, although the decrease is not as noticeable as it is for the supporters of Eurointegration (Table 43).

struggle against international terrorism. Europe is not just the land of happiness and prosperity, but also a target for terroristic attacks of Islamists. Belarusians don't want to become their target too by expressing real practical solidarity with Europe under attack (Table 46).

Table 46

**Distribution of answers to the question: "On November 13 there was a series of terroristic attacks in Paris. Some people think that Belarus should support international struggle against terrorism, others disagree with this. What is your opinion?"**

Variant of answer	%
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	34.2
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	57.4
DA/NA	8.4

Table 47

**Distribution of answers to the question: "The EU temporary (for 4 months) lifted the visa ban for several hundreds of Belarusian officials, including President A. Lukashenko. What do you think about this decision?"**

Variant of answer	%
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	19.1
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	37.5
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	28.5
DA/NA	14.9

Table 48

**Dynamics of answering the question: "How do you evaluate the annexation of Crimea by Russia?", %**

Variant of answer	06'14	09'14	12'14	03'15	06'15	09'15	12'15
It's an imperialistic usurpation and occupation	26.9	27.2	31.6	22.0	21.5	26.5	20.2
It's a restitution of Russian lands and reestablishment of historical justice	62.2	59.9	56.8	58.5	62.3	57.4	65.7
DA/NA	10.9	12.9	11.6	19.5	16.2	16.1	14.1

Table 49

**Distribution of answers to the question: "In the end of September 2005 Russia started a military operation in Syria. What opinion on this campaign do you share?" (more than one answer is possible)**

Variant of answer	%
Once again Russia pokes her nose into other people's business demonstrating imperial ambitions	20.2
This campaign is a confrontation to the world domination of the West	29.9
It's a struggle against terrorism that threatens the world	48.7
DA	8.1

However, there is no mass "Westphobia" in Belarus. An impressive majority of respondents approved of relaxation of European sanctions towards the official Minsk (Table 47).

Geopolitical priorities of respondents didn't really change the hierarchy of answers to the question of table 6, although there was a certain influence. Among the supporters of integration with Russia, 14.2% were in favor of toughening the sanctions, 36.2% approved of their freeze, and 37.4% were in favor of cancelling them altogether. Among "Euro-Belarusians" 32.9% called out EU's decision as opportunistic, however 43.2% approved of it and 12.2% support full cancellation of sanctions.

On the other hand, Russian policy doesn't enjoy total approval among Belarusians too. Even when it enjoys quite a wide support, this doesn't lead to thin-

king that Belarus should follow Russia.

However, it should be noted that in December 2015 Belarusians were the most approving and the least denouncing of the annexation of Crimea (Table 48).

An imposing majority of Belarusians is also inclined to rather approve of Russian military campaign in Syria, or at least they seem to believe that the reasons for the intrusion were legitimate (Table 49).

Almost every second respondent believes that Russia struggles with the international terrorism in Syria. However, as it follows from Table 5, only one third of Belarusians think that Belarus should join this struggle too.

At the same time only each tenth respondent believes that interests of Belarus and Russia coincide completely (Table 50).

**Table 50****Distribution of answers: "Do interests of Belarus and Russia coincide?"**

<b>Variant of answer</b>	<b>%</b>
Coincide completely	11.7
Coincide for the most part	52.4
Don't coincide for the most part	22.7
They are opposite	4.7
DA/NA	8.5

**Table 51****Distribution of answers to the question: "Russia suggests that there should be a Russian military air-base in Belarus. What's your opinion on this?"**

<b>Variant of answer</b>	<b>%</b>
Positive	27.0
Indifferent	31.2
Negative	33.9
DA/NA	7.9

Opinions on the Russian military airbase in Belarus are divided, however there is a slight preponderance of negative evaluations (Table 51).

In fine it should be established that there is quite an impressive potential of pro-Russian moods in

Belarus. However, there is a certain distance from Russia, and approval of Russian policy doesn't cause certainty that Belarus should follow it, taking the same risks.

## Some results of the opinion poll conducted in December, 2015 (%)

### 1. "Was the past year more difficult or easier for Belarus than the previous one?"

Table 1.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
More difficult	51.1	52.0	47.0	63.7	54.0	51.6	49.8	46.6
The same	41.0	38.0	43.0	29.5	38.7	40.5	45.6	44.3
Easier	5.8	10.0	6.0	6.1	1.5.4	6.1	3.8	6.3
DA	2.1	0	4.0	0.7	1.9	1.8	0.8	2.9

Table 1.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
More difficult	29.0	48.4	51.1	53.9	55.6
The same	50.5	47.7	41.3	39.9	35.5
Easier	20.4	0.7	5.7	4.3	6.5
DA	0.1	3.2	1.9	1.9	2.4

Table 1.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
More difficult	54.2	52.3	43.5	45.5	62.8
The same	39.5	41.2	42.4	45.2	27.7
Easier	5.1	4.8	10.6	6.8	7.4
DA	1.2	1.7	3.5	2.5	2.1

Table 1.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
More difficult	64.4	42.7	51.4	40.8	62.3	52.6	38.8
The same	31.2	45.8	39.4	53.8	33.7	38.9	48.9
Easier	4.1	10.6	1.4	4.8	2.0	7.4	11.0
DA	0.3	0.9	7.8	0.6	2.0	1.1	1.3

Table 1.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
More difficult	64.4	47.3	55.4	42.0	46.9
The same	31.2	46.2	38.2	44.3	44.5
Easier	4.1	5.5	5.0	10.2	5.2
DA	0.3	1.0	1.4	3.5	3.4

### 2. "What's more important for you today: maintaining of the current situation in the country or changing it?"

Table 2.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Maintaining of the situation is more important	36.7	32.0	27.8	17.1	26.7	33.9	39.2	57.4
Changing of the situation is more important	55.4	58.0	62.3	75.3	64.5	58.2	53.6	36.0
DA/NA	7.9	10.0	9.9	7.6	8.8	7.9	7.2	6.6

**Table 2.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Maintaining of the situation is more important	66.7	51.0	36.9	32.5	25.6
Changing of the situation is more important	33.3	41.2	55.5	56.8	67.2
DA	0	7.8	7.6	10.7	7.2

**Table 2.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Maintaining of the situation is more important	25.0	36.4	29.4	53.9	26.6
Changing of the situation is more important	67.1	56.3	60.0	38.9	62.8
DA	7.9	7.3	10.6	7.2	10.6

**Table 2.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Maintaining of the situation is more important	37.0	29.6	43.1	33.1	38.4	42.9	33.9
Changing of the situation is more important	55.1	63.7	48.1	61.5	49.5	48.6	60.4
DA	7.9	6.6	8.8	5.4	12.1	8.5	5.7

**Table 2.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Maintaining of the situation is more important	37.0	37.9	30.7	39.2	38.5
Changing of the situation is more important	55.1	53.2	62.5	54.1	52.6
DA	7.9	8.9	6.8	6.7	8.9

### 3. "Do you consider it important to carry out market-friendly reforms in Belarus?"

**Table 3.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes	56.9	68.0	62.5	65.8	66.8	61.3	60.0	36.0
No	27.8	22.0	19.1	17.8	18.3	26.5	26.4	45.7
DA/NA	15.3	10.0	18.4	16.4	14.9	12.2	13.6	18.3

**Table 3.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes	31.9	35.9	56.5	60.3	71.7
No	57.4	39.9	27.5	23.0	19.1
DA/NA	10.7	24.2	16.0	16.7	9.2

Table 3.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes	68.3	60.5	64.7	37.2	61.3
No	20.4	23.8	18.8	43.4	25.8
DA/NA	11.3	15.7	16.5	19.4	12.9

Table 3.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes	62.7	63.7	56.2	29.0	64.6	61.7	53.5
No	29.5	24.4	17.5	54.4	15.2	17.7	38.1
DA/NA	7.8	11.9	26.3	16.6	20.2	20.6	8.4

Table 3.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes	62.7	55.1	55.9	60.0	52.5
No	29.5	30.5	28.3	27.8	23.9
DA/NA	7.8	14.4	15.8	12.2	23.6

#### 4. "Speaking about reforms, which way is more efficient according to you?"

Table 4.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
When the power participates in reforms more	41.1	28.0	38.8	26.7	31.7	34.6	47.2	57.4
When the power participates in reforms less	43.1	54.0	42.1	52.7	52.3	48.6	40.0	29.1
DA/NA	15.8	18.0	19.1	20.6	16.0	16.8	12.8	13.5

Table 4.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
When the power participates in reforms more	67.0	49.0	40.2	36.2	37.1
When the power participates in reforms less	26.6	30.7	44.5	45.2	49.7
DA/NA	6.4	20.3	15.3	18.6	13.2

Table 4.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
When the power participates in reforms more	31.8	42.2	27.4	56.7	23.4
When the power participates in reforms less	53.7	41.1	46.4	30.1	58.5
DA/NA	14.5	16.7	26.2	13.2	18.1

Table 4.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
When the power participates in reforms more	39.2	35.4	50.2	46.2	41.4	49.7	30.1
When the power participates in reforms less	50.5	43.4	31.2	43.2	44.4	29.7	54.0
DA/NA	10.3	21.2	18.6	10.6	14.1	20.6	15.9

Table 4.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
When the power participates in reforms more	39.2	41.4	41.4	39.8	42.9
When the power participates in reforms less	50.5	40.4	42.5	44.9	39.0
DA/NA	10.3	18.2	16.1	15.3	18.1

5. "Recently A. Lukashenko declared: "In order to carry out reforms in Belarus, it is necessary to break the political system of the country, state structure of Belarus, divide and cut up the state property and give it away". Do you agree with this?"

Table 5.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
I agree	43.0	32.7	34.2	37.0	39.8	45.0	40.4	53.1
I disagree	44.8	46.9	47.4	53.4	49.4	44.6	49.4	33.1
DA/NA	12.2	20.4	18.4	9.6	10.8	10.4	10.2	13.8

Table 5.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
I agree	74.5	39.9	39.5	41.4	43.2
I disagree	21.3	37.9	49.6	45.2	46.6
DA/NA	4.2	22.2	10.9	13.4	10.2

Table 5.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
I agree	42.7	44.2	20.2	49.4	32.2
I disagree	48.0	44.0	60.7	37.0	53.8
DA/NA	9.3	11.8	19.1	13.6	14.0

Table 5.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
I agree	44.7	57.1	43.1	39.6	37.9	30.7	43.6
I disagree	49.5	36.3	40.3	54.5	51.0	47.7	36.1
DA/NA	5.8	6.6	16.6	5.9	11.1	21.6	20.3

Table 5.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
I agree	44.7	42.3	31.5	47.7	47.7
I disagree	49.5	40.5	58.8	41.0	36.7
DA/NA	5.8	17.2	9.7	11.3	15.6

## 6. "Which of the following statements corresponds to your opinion most?"

Table 6.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	35.3	46.0	43.7	47.3	45.4	42.1	32.6	14.0
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	41.6	34.0	46.4	38.4	38.5	42.5	45.5	40.4
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	22.1	18.0	8.6	13.7	15.3	13.9	20.8	45.0
DA/NA	1.0	2.0	1.3	0.6	0.8	1.5	1.1	0.6

Table 6.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	7.5	16.3	35.1	39.2	49.5
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	30.1	44.4	44.6	44.9	33.4
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	62.4	37.9	19.3	14.5	16.7
DA/NA	0	1.4	1.0	1.4	0.4

Table 6.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	46.3	38.2	43.5	15.0	47.9
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	39.7	43.6	42.4	41.1	39.4
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	13.0	17.0	12.9	43.4	11.7
DA/NA	1.0	1.2	1.2	0.5	1.0

Table 6.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	38.4	42.7	35.2	30.2	31.2	39.4	28.3
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	37.7	30.4	48.1	45.6	47.7	36.6	47.3
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	22.6	25.6	16.7	22.5	20.1	23.4	23.5
DA/NA	1.3	1.3	0	1.7	1.0	0.6	0.9



**Table 6.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Our society needs serious reforms (structural and system changes)	38.4	33.3	41.4	34.9	30.4
Our society needs gradual reforms which would preserve current system	37.7	44.0	43.4	39.2	42.1
Our society needs protection against forces which try to change current order	22.6	20.6	13.2	25.9	27.0
DA/NA	1.3	2.1	1.0	0	0.5

**7. "Several years ago President A. Lukashenko promised to accomplish a modernization of Belarusian economy. Some people think that this modernization was successfully accomplished, while others disagree. What is your opinion?"**

**Table 7.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	11.4	8.0	9.2	7.5	5.0	9.3	11.7	20.6
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	46.6	38.0	41.4	50.7	44.4	43.7	54.7	46.6
There was no modernization of economy at all	33.5	42.0	40.1	36.3	43.3	42.6	25.7	20.3
DA	8.5	12.0	9.3	5.5	7.3	5.4	7.9	12.5

**Table 7.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	36.6	17.1	9.6	8.8	7.5
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	38.7	43.4	48.0	48.9	45.1
There was no modernization of economy at all	14.0	19.1	34.3	35.6	42.7
DA	10.7	20.4	8.1	6.7	4.7

**Table 7.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	7.5	9.9	9.4	18.7	8.5
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	47.8	46.8	40.0	48.8	37.2
There was no modernization of economy at all	40.6	35.6	40.0	20.0	39.4
DA	4.1	7.7	10.6	12.5	14.9

**Table 7.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	13.4	12.4	5.5	8.9	2.0	7.4	26.4
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	43.6	28.3	62.2	45.6	54.8	43.4	49.8
There was no modernization of economy at all	39.9	49.1	25.8	23.1	33.7	37.7	21.6
DA	3.1	10.2	6.5	22.4	9.5	11.5	2.2

Table 7.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Modernization of economy was accomplished successfully	13.4	11.3	3.6	19.1	10.2
Modernization of economy was accomplished partially	43.6	52.4	46.2	44.5	46.4
There was no modernization of economy at all	39.9	28.1	35.8	31.3	32.2
DA	3.1	8.2	14.4	5.1	11.2

## 8. "Which of the following statements concerning retirement age do you agree with?"

Table 8.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	20.3	18.0	23.7	25.3	17.9	13.2	17.0	27.1
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	73.1	70.0	68.4	69.2	74.8	79.6	78.1	66.9
DA/NA	6.6	12.0	7.9	5.5	7.3	7.2	4.9	6.0

Table 8.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	46.8	24.2	17.7	15.2	22.2
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	48.9	68.6	75.3	78.8	70.6
DA/NA	4.3	7.2	6.0	7.0	7.2

Table 8.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	18.6	17.0	21.4	26.9	18.1
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	74.7	77.4	67.9	65.5	77.7
DA/NA	6.7	5.6	10.7	7.6	4.2

Table 8.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	20.3	21.2	14.4	15.4	28.8	14.3	25.7
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	77.0	74.3	69.9	81.1	67.7	77.7	65.5
DA/NA	2.7	4.5	15.7	3.5	3.5	8.0	8.8

Table 8.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Retirement age should be raised in order to raise pensions	20.3	20.5	21.8	22.0	17.7
Retirement age shouldn't be raised, because many people won't live up to it	77.0	71.9	71.8	70.6	73.8
DA/NA	2.7	7.6	6.4	7.4	8.5

**9. "Do you consider fundamental changes in internal and external policies of Belarus possible in the next five years?"**

**Table 9.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Quite possible	27.5	34.7	27.6	23.8	23.0	20.4	26.1	38.3
Unlikely	51.6	42.9	48.0	61.9	57.5	56.8	51.1	42.0
Impossible	16.1	18.4	15.8	12.9	16.9	20.0	17.0	12.9
DA	4.8	4.0	8.6	1.4	2.6	2.8	5.8	6.8

**Table 9.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Quite possible	51.1	35.3	26.9	23.3	23.1
Unlikely	29.8	39.9	53.0	55.6	56.1
Impossible	17.0	11.1	16.4	16.6	17.0
DA	2.1	13.7	3.7	4.5	3.7

**Table 9.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Quite possible	21.2	25.0	27.9	38.1	25.5
Unlikely	55.8	55.4	45.3	41.2	58.5
Impossible	17.8	16.1	19.8	14.2	12.8
DA	5.2	3.5	7.0	6.5	3.2

**Table 9.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Quite possible	18.8	24.7	30.1	21.9	39.2	28.4	32.3
Unlikely	59.6	37.0	53.2	55.6	48.7	51.7	53.1
Impossible	19.2	31.7	8.8	18.9	7.0	14.8	10.6
DA	2.4	6.6	7.9	3.6	5.1	5.1	4.0

**Table 9.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Quite possible	18.8	29.0	25.8	35.5	28.9
Unlikely	59.6	54.1	53.4	44.9	46.9
Impossible	19.2	11.4	16.1	16.0	17.4
DA	2.4	5.5	4.7	3.6	6.8

**10. "And would you like those changes to happen?"**

**Table 10.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes	44.9	51.0	53.0	47.3	54.8	54.6	43.8	25.5
No	23.3	12.2	17.9	10.3	17.2	18.2	29.4	36.4
I don't care	21.1	30.6	21.2	30.8	14.9	15.7	15.1	29.5
DA/NA	10.7	6.2	7.9	11.6	13.1	11.5	11.7	8.6

Table 10.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes	19.4	23.0	44.9	47.7	60.4
No	33.3	37.5	23.8	18.5	18.8
I don't care	47.3	22.4	21.7	21.6	10.2
DA/NA	0	17.1	9.6	12.2	10.6

Table 10.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes	54.3	48.2	52.9	27.3	50.0
No	18.3	22.8	15.3	32.5	18.1
I don't care	17.3	16.6	24.7	30.4	22.3
DA/NA	10.1	12.4	7.1	9.8	9.6

Table 10.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes	41.1	53.1	42.6	30.4	51.3	42.5	51.5
No	27.1	15.9	15.7	36.9	15.1	26.4	27.3
I don't care	21.6	25.2	24.1	28.0	14.6	20.7	14.5
DA/NA	10.2	5.8	17.6	4.7	19.0	10.3	6.7

Table 10.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes	41.1	36.8	51.1	49.0	46.8
No	27.1	30.2	17.1	24.3	19.2
I don't care	21.6	21.3	20.0	19.6	22.6
DA/NA	10.2	11.7	11.8	7.1	11.4

11. "Some people by fundamental changes in internal and external policies of Belarus mean a strengthening of state's role in social life, others on the contrary mean a diminution of this role. What do you mean by this?"

Table 11.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	47.2	22.0	49.0	34.7	38.3	39.1	53.6	63.4
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	45.0	68.0	44.4	58.5	54.8	52.7	38.5	28.0
DA/NA	7.8	10.0	6.6	6.8	6.9	8.2	7.9	8.6

Table 11.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	67.0	58.2	46.6	42.1	43.3
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	22.3	28.1	47.1	49.5	50.9
DA/NA	10.7	13.7	6.3	8.4	5.8

**Table 11.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	37.5	49.0	30.6	61.7	36.2
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	56.0	42.7	61.2	29.5	58.5
DA/NA	6.5	8.3	8.2	8.8	5.3

**Table 11.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	43.7	49.3	52.3	48.5	47.5	51.4	39.6
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	52.6	46.7	38.9	44.4	46.5	38.3	44.5
DA/NA	3.7	4.0	8.8	7.1	6.0	10.3	15.9

**Table 11.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
The state should strengthen its role in society and give more support to its citizens	43.7	50.7	45.4	46.7	48.8
The state should diminish its role in society and let people act more freely	52.6	43.5	47.5	43.5	39.7
DA/NA	3.7	5.8	7.1	9.8	11.5

**12. "Who did you vote for in the last elections of President of Republic of Belarus?"****Table 12.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Sergey Gaidukevich	5.2	8.0	2.6	4.8	6.5	7.1	5.3	3.7
Tatiana Korotkevich	15.7	18.0	17.9	20.4	22.6	16.4	12.1	9.1
Alexander Lukashenko	35.6	18.0	28.5	19.0	19.9	28.8	40.8	61.1
Nikolay Ulakhovich	1.9	2.0	1.3	2.7	1.1	1.4	2.6	1.7
None of the above	8.9	6.0	12.6	7.5	10.7	11.7	9.8	4.0
I don't remember	0.2	2.0	0	0.7	0.4	0	0	0
Refused to answer/NA	32.5	46.0	37.1	44.9	38.8	34.6	29.4	20.4

**Table 12.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Sergey Gaidukevich	5.3	2.6	5.5	4.5	6.8
Tatiana Korotkevich	4.3	7.2	14.8	19.0	20.8
Alexander Lukashenko	70.2	57.2	33.4	27.8	28.7
Nikolay Ulakhovich	2.1	2.6	2.2	1.0	1.7
None of the above	0	7.2	8.9	9.5	11.6
I don't remember	2.1	0.7	1.0	2.9	3.4
Refused to answer/NA	18.0	22.5	35.2	38.3	30.0

Table 12.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Sergey Gaidukevich	4.3	8.0	7.1	3.1	1.1
Tatiana Korotkevich	20.0	14.5	27.1	10.6	3.7
Alexander Lukashenko	20.0	34.9	23.5	60.3	16.8
Nikolay Ulakhovich	1.2	2.7	2.4	1.6	1.1
None of the above	10.6	12.2	7.1	3.6	6.3
I don't remember	0.2	0.2	1.2	0	0
Refused to answer/NA	43.7	27.5	31.6	20.8	61.0

Table 12.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Sergey Gaidukevich	0.7	5.8	4.6	5.3	8.1	8.0	6.6
Tatiana Korotkevich	15.8	11.5	17.1	11.8	19.2	11.4	21.2
Alexander Lukashenko	24.3	34.5	37.8	42.6	39.4	41.1	35.4
Nikolay Ulakhovich	0.7	4.4	3.2	0	0.5	1.1	2.7
None of the above	7.2	14.6	11.5	3.0	8.1	5.1	11.5
I don't remember	0	0.4	0	0	0	1.1	0
Refused to answer/NA	51.3	28.8	25.8	37.3	24.7	32.2	22.6

Table 12.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Sergey Gaidukevich	0.7	6.8	5.0	7.8	6.0
Tatiana Korotkevich	15.8	17.4	17.9	17.3	15.7
Alexander Lukashenko	24.3	38.9	37.1	35.7	40.1
Nikolay Ulakhovich	0.7	1.0	1.1	3.1	3.1
None of the above	7.2	9.6	8.9	10.2	8.9
I don't remember	0	0	0	0.8	0.3
Refused to answer/NA	51.3	26.3	30.0	25.1	29.9

## 13. "Does the candidate you voted for express interests of people like you?"

Table 13.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes, to the full extent	28.2	16.3	27.8	15.6	16.4	23.3	26.8	47.8
Yes, partly	30.3	28.6	21.9	32.7	33.2	28.7	34.3	28.9
No	3.2	4.1	4.6	2.7	4.2	3.2	4.9	1.1
NA	38.3	51.0	45.7	49.0	46.2	44.8	34.0	21.2

Table 13.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes, to the full extent	58.5	46.1	23.4	22.6	25.9
Yes, partly	25.5	23.7	32.2	29.3	33.3
No	2.1	2.0	2.8	5.2	2.4
NA	13.9	28.2	41.6	42.9	38.4

Table 13.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes, to the full extent	16.1	26.0	27.9	47.8	12.8
Yes, partly	29.6	32.7	34.9	29.6	18.1
No	1.9	5.9	2.3	1.6	3.1
NA	52.4	35.4	34.9	21.0	66.0

Table 13.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes, to the full extent	16.4	27.4	27.0	32.1	30.3	37.9	32.6
Yes, partly	25.3	30.5	33.5	28.6	35.4	29.9	30.8
No	2.4	4.0	4.7	1.8	3.0	1.1	4.8
NA	55.9	38.1	34.8	37.5	31.3	31.1	31.8

Table 13.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes, to the full extent	16.4	30.6	31.4	32.9	29.7
Yes, partly	25.3	35.1	29.1	29.4	31.5
No	2.4	2.1	1.4	6.3	4.2
NA	55.9	32.2	38.1	31.4	34.6

## 14. "Did the candidate you voted for become the President?"

Table 14.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes	35.6	18.0	28.5	19.2	19.8	28.9	40.9	61.1
No	22.7	28.0	21.9	28.1	30.5	25.0	20.1	14.6
NA	41.7	54.0	49.6	52.7	49.7	46.1	39.0	24.3

Table 14.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes	70.2	57.2	33.3	27.8	28.6
No	11.7	12.5	22.5	24.5	29.3
NA	18.1	30.3	44.2	47.7	42.1

Table 14.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes	20.0	35.1	23.8	60.1	17.0
No	25.5	25.1	36.9	15.5	14.9
NA	54.5	39.8	39.3	24.4	68.1

Table 14.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes	24.3	34.5	38.1	42.6	39.4	41.1	35.4
No	17.1	22.1	24.7	17.2	27.8	20.6	30.5
NA	58.6	43.4	37.2	40.2	32.8	38.3	34.1

Table 14.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes	24.3	39.2	37.2	35.7	40.0
No	17.1	25.1	23.9	27.8	21.0
NA	58.6	35.7	38.9	36.5	39.0

## 15. "Do you think that presidential elections were free and fair?"

Table 15.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes	41.4	26.0	30.9	30.8	25.3	38.0	40.9	67.4
No	33.0	36.0	35.5	41.1	44.4	40.9	31.8	14.0
Don't know	24.3	36.0	30.9	28.1	28.7	20.1	25.8	17.4
NA	1.3	2.0	2.7	0	1.6	1.0	1.5	1.2

Table 15.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes	74.2	57.9	39.7	35.9	33.3
No	7.5	16.4	32.3	36.3	46.3
Don't know	16.1	23.7	27.1	26.6	18.7
NA	2.2	2.0	0.9	1.2	1.7

Table 15.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes	26.4	41.2	27.1	65.9	20.2
No	45.2	33.7	41.2	14.2	44.7
Don't know	26.5	24.3	30.6	18.6	33.0
NA	1.9	0.8	1.1	1.3	2.1

Table 15.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes	29.8	41.2	46.8	57.4	38.4	40.9	42.5
No	42.8	44.7	25.4	17.2	34.8	34.1	25.2
Don't know	27.4	13.3	26.9	21.3	26.3	23.9	30.1
NA	0	0.8	0.9	4.1	0.5	1.1	2.2

Table 15.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes	29.8	50.9	40.7	46.1	40.3
No	42.8	29.6	35.0	29.7	28.8
Don't know	27.4	18.5	21.8	22.2	29.6
NA	0	1.0	2.5	2.0	1.3

## 16. "Are you ready to personally protect Alexander Lukashenko from some threat?"

Table 16.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Yes	17.1	10.0	13.2	11.0	9.9	14.3	16.6	30.0
No	63.5	66.0	69.7	70.5	71.0	66.4	61.1	51.1
Don't know	19.3	24.0	17.1	18.5	19.1	18.9	21.9	18.6
NA	0.1	0	0	0	0	0.4	0.4	0.3



**Table 16.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Yes	41.5	20.3	14.8	15.9	13.3
No	52.1	50.3	64.0	65.3	70.6
Don't know	6.4	28.8	21.0	18.5	16.0
NA	0	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.1

**Table 16.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Yes	11.1	15.9	15.3	29.0	3.2
No	73.3	62.9	65.9	50.5	73.4
Don't know	15.4	21.2	18.8	19.9	23.4
NA	0.2	0	0	0.6	0

**Table 16.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Yes	12.0	11.9	22.8	24.3	14.6	17.6	19.5
No	79.8	77.1	53.0	43.2	68.2	59.1	53.1
Don't know	7.9	10.6	24.2	32.5	17.2	23.3	27.0
NA	0.3	0.4	0	0	0	0	0.4

**Table 16.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Yes	12.0	18.4	16.1	19.1	19.2
No	79.8	57.3	62.4	66.0	54.7
Don't know	7.9	24.2	21.5	14.8	25.6
NA	0.3	0	0	0.5	0.2

## 17. "Do interests of Belarus and Russia coincide?"

**Table 17.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Coincide completely	11.7	6.0	8.6	11.0	4.2	8.9	14.0	20.1
Coincide for the most part	52.4	56.0	46.1	46.6	52.7	58.9	48.1	54.7
Don't coincide for the most part	22.7	16.0	24.3	30.1	26.7	18.6	25.8	17.5
They are opposite	4.7	8.0	5.3	3.4	7.6	6.1	3.8	2.0
DA	8.5	14.0	15.7	8.9	8.8	7.5	8.3	5.7

**Table 17.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Coincide completely	36.2	16.4	10.7	8.6	7.2
Coincide for the most part	51.0	48.0	56.6	53.7	45.7
Don't coincide for the most part	12.8	18.4	19.6	23.3	33.1
They are opposite	0	4.6	5.4	4.0	5.8
DA	0	12.6	7.7	10.4	8.2

Table 17.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Coincide completely	6.3	11.3	7.1	19.2	10.8
Coincide for the most part	51.2	55.7	43.5	52.3	47.3
Don't coincide for the most part	28.1	21.3	24.7	19.2	19.4
They are opposite	5.5	3.3	10.6	2.8	10.8
DA	8.9	8.4	14.1	6.5	11.7

Table 17.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Coincide completely	13.7	19.4	3.2	21.3	6.0	5.7	11.8
Coincide for the most part	50.3	58.6	45.6	42.6	57.3	70.3	43.9
Don't coincide for the most part	27.4	11.9	32.3	28.4	24.1	11.4	21.5
They are opposite	3.4	4.8	7.4	4.7	2.0	1.7	8.3
DA	5.2	5.3	11.5	3.0	10.6	10.9	14.5

Table 17.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Coincide completely	13.7	12.0	7.5	12.1	12.5
Coincide for the most part	50.3	50.3	52.3	57.8	51.7
Don't coincide for the most part	27.4	22.3	27.6	17.6	19.2
They are opposite	3.4	4.4	7.6	3.5	4.7
DA	5.2	11.0	5.0	9.0	11.9

18. "Russia suggests that there should be a Russian military airbase in Belarus. What's your opinion on this?"

Table 18.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Positive	27.0	30.0	21.1	21.2	22.1	26.4	30.3	33.6
Indifferent	31.2	28.0	38.8	40.4	31.3	29.3	29.5	27.0
Negative	33.9	38.0	34.1	30.1	38.9	36.4	34.8	28.5
DA/NA	7.9	4.0	6.0	8.3	7.7	7.9	5.4	10.9

Table 18.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Positive	48.9	30.1	27.7	22.9	23.5
Indifferent	35.1	24.8	33.9	34.0	23.8
Negative	16.0	28.1	30.8	33.8	48.6
DA/NA	0	17.0	7.6	9.3	4.1

Table 18.3. Depending on status

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Positive	21.7	27.0	24.7	33.9	24.7
Indifferent	36.1	29.3	37.6	26.2	33.3
Negative	36.4	35.6	32.9	29.5	32.3
DA/NA	5.8	8.1	4.8	10.4	9.7

**Table 18.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Positive	21.8	28.9	27.3	32.0	19.7	30.3	31.4
Indifferent	37.2	22.4	22.7	46.7	23.7	28.0	38.1
Negative	38.6	44.3	38.4	19.5	39.9	34.9	17.7
DA/NA	2.4	4.4	11.6	1.8	16.7	6.8	12.8

**Table 18.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Positive	21.8	26.8	19.0	32.4	33.2
Indifferent	37.2	32.3	43.1	33.6	22.1
Negative	38.6	32.3	39.4	27.7	31.7
DA/NA	2.4	8.6	7.5	6.3	13.0

**19. "The EU temporary (for 4 months) lifted the visa ban for several hundreds of Belarusian officials, including President A. Lukashenko. What do you think about this decision?"**

**Table 19.1. Depending on age**

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	19.1	24.0	20.7	19.0	26.7	24.0	17.4	9.7
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	37.5	38.0	46.0	43.5	38.9	35.5	34.5	33.7
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	28.5	16.0	18.0	19.0	22.5	25.8	31.8	42.9
DA/NA	14.9	22.0	15.3	18.5	11.9	14.7	16.3	13.7

**Table 19.2. Depending on education**

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	3.2	12.4	18.5	20.2	27.6
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	30.9	28.8	38.6	38.0	41.5
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	61.7	32.7	26.8	27.1	20.4
DA/NA	4.1	26.1	16.1	14.7	10.5

**Table 19.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	29.1	15.7	27.4	10.6	21.5
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	40.4	38.4	39.3	31.6	41.9
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	19.5	28.9	15.5	42.7	20.4
DA/NA	11.0	17.0	17.8	15.1	16.1

Table 19.4. Depending on place of residence

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	31.5	30.1	10.2	9.5	15.6	13.6	15.5
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	40.1	31.0	43.5	36.1	42.7	32.4	35.4
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	23.6	28.3	33.3	40.8	29.6	31.8	17.3
DA/NA	4.8	10.6	13.0	13.6	12.1	22.2	31.8

Table 19.5. Depending on place of settlement type

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
It's a wrong decision: Belarusian regime has not changed, so the sanctions shouldn't have been lifted	31.5	17.1	17.5	16.5	14.3
It's a right decision: political prisoners in Belarus were set free, so the EU made a step forwards too	40.1	39.7	35.3	35.3	33.5
It's not sufficient: sanctions should be lifted completely and without any conditions	23.6	26.7	31.8	32.7	28.5
DA/NA	4.8	16.5	16.4	17.5	19.7

20. "On November 13 there was a series of terroristic attacks in Paris. Some people think that Belarus should support international struggle against terrorism, others disagree with this. What is your opinion?"

Table 20.1. Depending on age

Variant of answer	All respondents	Age, years						
		18-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 +
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	34.2	36.0	32.2	38.4	33.3	34.6	32.1	35.7
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	57.4	54.0	57.2	57.5	55.9	56.1	63.0	55.4
DA	8.4	10.0	10.6	4.1	10.8	9.3	4.9	8.9

Table 20.2. Depending on education

Variant of answer	Education				
	Primary	Incomplete secondary	Secondary	Vocational	Higher (including incomplete)
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	30.9	39.9	31.1	36.1	35.8
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	67.0	45.8	60.6	57.7	53.9
DA	2.1	14.3	8.3	6.2	10.3

**Table 20.3. Depending on status**

Variant of answer	Status				
	Private sector employees	Public sector employees	Students	Pensioners	Unemployed, housewives
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	30.0	36.3	29.8	37.0	35.5
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	63.2	55.3	59.5	54.3	53.8
DA	6.8	8.4	10.7	8.7	10.7

**Table 20.4. Depending on place of residence**

Variant of answer	Region						
	Minsk	Minsk region	Brest and its region	Grodno and its region	Vitebsk and its region	Mogilev and its region	Gomel and its region
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	14.7	26.9	36.6	50.3	33.3	51.1	40.5
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	80.8	65.2	50.4	46.2	57.6	43.1	45.4
DA/NA	4.5	7.9	13.0	3.5	9.1	5.8	14.1

**Table 20.5. Depending on place of settlement type**

Variant of answer	Settlement type				
	Capital	Region centers	Cities	Towns	Villages
Belarus should support international struggle against terrorists, because their actions are a threat to the whole civilized world, including Belarusians	14.7	41.6	31.2	37.8	43.6
Belarus should not participate in the international struggle with terrorists, otherwise terroristic acts will start happening in Belarus	80.8	48.4	61.6	58.3	42.9
DA/NA	4.5	10.0	7.2	3.9	13.5

## OPEN FORUM

*In this issue of the IISEPS analytical bulletin under the heading "Open Forum" we continue to publish a selection of data from sociological surveys conducted by our colleagues in foreign countries with our brief comments.*

*Despite purposeful efforts of the Belarusian leadership to design their own model of development, its uniqueness is relative. This conclusion applies to economic, political, social and other components of the Belarusian model. We believe that the comparative analysis of social processes in other countries will allow readers to better understand the results of researches on the Belarusian society.*

### TIME TO SAVE ON FOOD

The battle between TV and fridge has ended quite unexpectedly. The adversaries went into the opposite corners of the ring, and started living their own life. The simplest explanation of this final is schizophrenia (a mental disorder often characterized by abnormal social behavior and failure to recognize what is real). Otherwise, how can understanding of gathering economic disaster and high level of trust to the head of state get along together in one head?

Well, it turns out that they can. In one case people feel themselves as particular isolated entities; in the other case they feel that they are included in the mythology of historical events where protagonists are not people, but states, powers, geopolitics, great history, and where there is no place for small problems of simple people. This mechanism of compensation works on all levels.

world financial crisis) the ratio of negative and positive answers was 11% vs. 48%.

In the end of 2015 Russian people as particular isolated entities are obliged to buy cheaper durable goods (+19 points in comparison with 2014), save money on food and everyday expenses (+21 points) and so on (Table 1).

The third wave of social moods monitoring, conducted by The Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, demonstrated how a year in spent under the conditions of crisis and sanctions affected Russian people.

Over the past year (the survey was conducted before the terroristic attacks over Mt. Sinai and in Paris) the share of pessimists, agreeing that the state of affairs in the country became worse, jumped from 43% up to 64%. The share of optimists, believing that the situation improved or remained the same, dropped from 33% down to 23%. In May 2014 87% of respondents evaluated country's prospects positively

**Table 1**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Did you have to ... because of the current state of things in the country?", % (more than one answer is possible)**

Variant of answer	12'14	11'15	Difference
Buy cheaper durable goods or don't buy them at all	38	57	19
Save on food and everyday expenses	37	58	21
Reduce spending on entertainment and rest, or give them up altogether	22	36	14
Give up the idea to buy a car, real estate, out-of-town real estate	11	18	9
Spend your savings	7	9	2
Reduce spending on education, medical treatment, or give them up altogether	4	13	9
I didn't have to do anything of the above	27	6	-21

According to results of Levada-Center survey conducted in November, 80% of Russians agree that there is an economic crisis in Russia. Majority of people are convinced that this crisis will be long-lasting: 22% of respondents believe that "it will last at least two years", 21% – "it will last for a very long time". Every fifth respondent was not ready to make any forecast. Only one quarter of population believes that this crisis will end soon – less than in a year. Over a year the shares of Russians obliged to save money on food and durable goods jumped from 37% to 58% and from 38% to 57% accordingly.

38% of respondents noticed a backset in payout of salaries, pensions, scholarships and aids; 7% noticed an improvement. Truth comes through comparison. In November 2007 (before the beginning of

(13% evaluated them negatively); in October 2015 the ratio amounted to 31% vs. 35%.

Decrease of post-Crimean euphoria affected Russians' readiness to personally pay for the greatness of Russia. In May 2014 56% of respondents didn't want to sacrifice their own well-being, while 44% were ready to pull in the belts. 1.5 years later the share of former jumped up to 62%, and the share of latter dropped down to 38%. Young people are the least ready to make sacrifices: unlike the senior generation, that don't put state's interests over their own.

Russians don't connect the crisis with economic decisions of the power. 67% of respondents named foreign currency exchange rate growth as the main reason for life deterioration; 60% – oil price reduction; 32% – Western sanctions; 24% – response actions of Russia; 10% – annexation of Crimea. It's curious that

main reasons are forces of market nature. Indeed, how can one blame the power for it? Even more so, there is no stability in the world too.

Approximately one third of respondents are convinced that the whole world is on the brink of a crisis or even a catastrophe. Majority believes that threats to the well-being of the country are coming from the outer world. This also decreases the level of social tension. And the image of external enemy revives the motto "let there be no war".

It's possible that the absence of complaints against the power in this situation is also related to the traditional fatalism, only now fatalism formula integrates the market too. In this regard it is quite useful for the Russian power. But it is also useful for the active part of the society. Crisis continues to change the relations between the Russians and the state as the main protector of their interests. In 2011 66% of respondents supposed that they cannot survive without state's support, while 34% were relying on their own resources; in 2015 paternalists are still in majority, but the ratio is noticeably different – 55% vs. 45%.

Sociologist from Romir Research Holding has also registered another trend: economic constituent in state's job steadily decreases. In 2003 65% of respondents answered that state should provide development of economy above all; in 2015 this share dropped to 40%. At the same time, this answer is still the most popular one.

The second by popularity answer is "development of social aid to the population" (the share dropped from 45% to 29%), the third answer is "people's well-being growth" (dropped from 32% to 29%). The share of those, who think that top priority task of state is enhancement of Russia's prestige in the world, jumped from 12% up to 21%.

The president of Romir Research Holding A. Milekhin believes that the fact that issues of Russia's prestige and strengthening of national system become topical and more important today testifies on the fact that Russian people today more than ever need a global aim, a national idea.

When we were preparing this article, WCIOM published indices of social well-being for December. These indices are calculated as the difference between positive and negative evaluations.

Index of financial state dropped down to the level of 2009 (52 points); 24% of respondents evaluate their financial state as "bad". Index of social optimism lost 17 points since summer, and the number of people who believe that in a year they are going to live worse than now is twice as high as in December 2009. Index of economic situation in the country has also noticeably dropped over the period from October to December: from 49 to 33 points. Every third Russian negatively evaluates economic situation in the country. Index of political situation decreased as well: it lost 20 points from July to December, including 10 points lost over the last month. 22% of Russians negatively evaluate political situation in the country; 24% of respondents share the opposite opinion.

V. Fedorov, Director General of WCIOM, explains that economic crisis undermined social optimism: decrease of real incomes by 10%, ruble crash amid the decrease on oil market negatively affected prospects of economic growth, and "the absence of prospects depresses people more than anything".

People don't understand what's going on. Last year was clear: Russia saved people in Donbass and Crimea from Banderites. But Syria is a distant Muslim country. Events that are happening don't really look like a triumph: the air plane blown up above Sinai, the knocked down military air craft and spoilt relations with Turkey, although just recently Turkey was a good friend. Situation became more confusing and disturbing, so the distrust grows. Socio-economic factors play an important role too: last year people believed they had paid a low price; now they understand that the crisis is going to last for a long time.

#### PUTIN VS. OBAMA

Russia lives under sanctions in the state of deepening economic crisis, but all this doesn't affect President V. Putin's rating. Rating doesn't fall because Russians' attitude to politics is completely different. Politics is another layer of existence. It's all about great past and heroic history. V. Putin is an influential world leader according to Forbes ratings.

Crisis 2008 didn't affect "national leader's" rating much. But gradually it started to decrease. It seemed that the process of decrease was irreversible. However, Olympic Games 2014 stopped the delegitimization, and then, amid Crimean events, there was a spike comparable to the spike which happened when V. Putin came to power amid explosions in Moscow in 1999. Similar spikes can happen very rarely, and it testifies on a very unusual state of society.

Director of Levada-Center Lev Gudkov explains: "This is the state of excitation. It doesn't change the structure of consciousness; it's just a change of register. You don't really change when you are scared, when you have an adrenaline rush. Emotional surge was maintained due to negative mobilization, but it starts to weaken. I would differentiate emotional evaluations, intensity of declaring them and readiness to defend one's convictions. Even at peak of anti-Ukrainian campaign only 10% of Russians at most were ready to pay for it somehow, for example, to bear costs, to go to Donbass or to send their children there. Majority (70%) said "No, let the power pay".

For majority of Russians V. Putin still has no contenders (Table 2). After the annexation of Crimea President's authority significantly rose (compare the second and the third columns). Year 2015 with the decrease of real wages by 9% didn't make any significant changes to the perception of the head of state.

According to the results of survey conducted by Russian Public Opinion Research Center (WCIOM) on October 17-18, 89.9% of respondents in Russia approve President V. Putin's job. WCIOM experts believe that the reason for a spike in this rating (in Au-

gust and September it was stagnating around 86%) is the military operation in Syria.

Previous record high was recorded in June, when rating of support of Russian President reached 89.1% according to WCIOM.

Public Opinion Foundation (POF) measures electoral rating of V. Putin weekly. In 2015 it was "oscillating" (quotation marks are appropriate here) between 71% and 76%. The fourth quarter of the year was not an exclusion.

**Table 2**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "According to you, is there someone who can replace V. Putin as the President?", %**

Variant of answer	12'12	12'13	12'14	11'15
Politician, who can replace V. Putin, can be named right now	10	12	10	6
If there is a need, a person, who can replace V. Putin, can be found	47	40	24	33
There is nobody in Russia who can replace V. Putin	27	31	54	48
DA	15	17	13	12

Naturally, the question on trustworthiness of sociological surveys, registering such stability, arises. Who can guarantee that these ratings are not faked? More cautions critics of Russian sociological phenomenon don't exclude the possibility that extra-high level of approval should be explained by Russians' aspiration to tell sociologists what they want to hear. The fear of being sincere about political predilections with complete strangers cannot be excluded too, especially if the mentioned predilections don't coincide with what is being told by TV.

According to a research published by Washington Post in November, nearly 5-10% of respondents are not sincere when they answer the question whether they trust V. Putin or not. To prove or disprove this fact a group of American scientists from Columbia University conducted a research in Moscow excluding the direct question on V. Putin approval from a part of polls.

The experiment is conducted as follows: if it is believed that people hesitate to say that they, for example, don't like cats, then respondents are divided into two control groups. Then the respondents from the first group are asked to choose the most pleasant animal amid dolphins, dogs and chickens. The other focus-group chooses between dolphins, dogs, chickens, and cats. As the level of support of dolphins, dogs and chickens is nearly equal in the two groups, averaging of results of the groups permits to calculate the level of support of cats without asking directly if people like them or not.

This method was used with V. Putin. Results demonstrated a difference below 10%. Thus it looks like Russians are quite sincere. However, authors of the survey sum up that a research, even conducted in accordance with such an artful method, excluding people's subjectivism, cannot demonstrate the real depth of support of V. Putin. As Washington Post puts it, only time will show if his supporters are ready to go through the mill with him, or if they will turn away from him with the first change of situation.

V. Putin's popularity on the world scale was also measured by Gallup Institute (USA). Almost 64.000 people from 65 countries took part in the survey.

In the rating of world leaders President of Russia is on the 8<sup>th</sup> position. Every third respondent liked him, while 43% of respondents expressed negative attitude. According to the index of appreciation (difference between positive and negative evaluations) only leaders of Saudi Arabia and Iran are less popular than V. Putin in the list of 10 head of states present in

the survey. The most popular world leader is B. Obama: 59% of respondents positively evaluate President of the US, while only 29% of respondents express negative attitude. The second and the third position are taken by German Chancellor A. Merkel and British Prime Minister D. Cameron.

The sociologists note that appreciation of two world leaders factually demonstrates polarity of the world: B. Obama is supported in Europe, both Americas, Eastern Asia; V. Putin is supported in Central Eurasia and South-Asian region. At the same time, V. Putin is one of the rare leaders whose support in his country is higher than in the world.

Respondents' appreciations were affected by several factors, say the experts from Gallup Institute: "Preferring a certain political leader, people express their attitude not so much towards a person, but towards political system, leadership style and outlook in general".

Attitude is affected both by objective (neighborhood, history, religions) and subjective factors. In particular, policy conducted inside a country and mass media can be named among the latter. When mass media in a country have different vectors, the results may be quite unexpected: for example, F. Hollande took the fourth position in the rating, but French people evaluated him negatively (appreciation index – 47%). At the same time, there are not so many bright leaders in the world, according to the experts: "You can count real world leaders on one hand, there are no more than 4 or 5 of them. In a strict sense, the competition can be reduced to Obama vs. Putin. This is determined by past confrontation, by relations between the US and Russia in the last 25 years, and duration of being in power".

V. Putin has two serious supporting groups in the world: outside the Western world these are haters of the West and "the Golden Billion", anti-globalists. They are offended by the ex-colonizers, this is a trauma for them, and V. Putin became their leader. The second group is Western conservators, which



feel discomfort at home because of changing values and because they don't feel themselves in majority. Against this background V. Putin, declaring devotion to traditional values, is a comfort to them.

#### WHO DO RUSSIANS APPRECIATE?

According to WCIOM survey conducted on November 22-23, A. Lukashenko heads the rating of trust of CIS leaders, with an advantage of 18 points over President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbaev – 63% vs. 45%.

As it follows from Table 3, this convincing advantage was first registered in 2014. Probably, this is another consequence of "Crimeaisours". When Russians felt they were surrounded by enemies, they needed an ally. There is nothing surprising that they preferred a leader of a Slavic state over a leader of a Turkic state, especially when the former constantly repeats "our Russia".

Kyrgyzstan, 3% – Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, 1% – Moldova and Tajikistan.

A similar trend is observed in the answers to the question who, according to our compatriots, is the main partner of Russia among the CIS countries. Permanent leaders of this rating are Belarus (68%) and Kazakhstan (53%).

In the list of countries according to the rights of Russian speaking population Belarus (69%) and Kazakhstan (32%) are leading as well. Other countries were mentioned significantly less: Armenia – 6%, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan – 3%, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Georgia – 2%, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine – 1%.

POF also made an input in the study of Russians' attitude to Belarus and its leader. According to a survey conducted in October, prevailing majority of respondents (65%) don't see anything bad in the fact that A. Lukashenko was elected President for the fifth time running; 21% of respondents didn't know what to

**Table 3**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "Which of the following leaders of CIS countries is more trustworthy according to you?", % (closed question, maximum three variants)**

Leader	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
A. Lukashenko (Belarus)	16	28	34	41	61	63
N. Nazarbaev (Kazakhstan)	32	37	31	33	38	45
I. Aliev (Azerbaijan)	5	7	5	5	6	6
P. Poroshenko (Ukraine)	17	12	12	10	1	<1

\* V. Yanukovich in 2013 and before

**Table 4**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "How do you think, relations between Russia and Belarus are good or bad now?", %**

Variant of answer	01'07	12'07	11'08	06'09	07'10	10'10	01'11	09'13	10'15
Good	21	49	54	35	30	16	25	33	79
Bad	57	16	18	39	32	47	35	27	6

One should note the last row of Table 3. Trust rating of President of Ukraine V. Yanukovich exceeded rating of President of Azerbaijan I. Aliev by factor of 2-3. However, after the events that started in the beginning of 2014, new President of Ukraine naturally cannot count on trust from Russians.

Simultaneously with the decrease of ratings of A. Lukashenko and N. Nazarbaev WCIOM registered an increase of appreciation of Belarus and Kazakhstan. Russians consider these countries to be the most successful among other member of CIS: in 2015 accordingly 72% and 50% of respondents gave these answers (66% and 45% in 2014).

Other countries, as before, are named much more rarely, and no significant fluctuations were registered over the mentioned period. The only exclusion is Ukraine: it left the top three in 2014 and didn't return back in 2015 (only 1% of respondents consider Ukraine to be the most successful country in CIS). Every tenth respondent mentions Armenia (11%) and Azerbaijan (10%), other results: 6% – Georgia, 4% –

answer.

More and more Russians believe that relations between Russia and Belarus are good (Table 4). Positive evaluation jumped up to 79% over the last two years (from 32% in 2013). Over the same period the share of those who think that relations are bad dropped from 27% down to 6%. It's not difficult to notice that this is another echo of "Crimeaisours". Being surrounded by enemies for one year and a half is not very pleasant. To neutralize the growing feeling of discomfort people need to balance the image of enemy with an image of friend. Thankfully, it was easy to find one. It is not for nothing that Presidents of Russia and Belarus founded the Union State in 1997.

#### TWO VIEWS ON THE EVENTS IN UKRAINE

According to Levada-Center, in November 37% of Russians followed the events in Ukraine "very attentively"/"rather attentively". This figure is by 22 points lower than in January. At the same time the share of

answers "not very attentively"/"don't follow at all" jumped up to the record high level (from 40% to 62%). This dynamics is the direct result of federal TV channels switching to military actions in Syria. However, this didn't significantly affect the level of support of annexation of Crimea: January – 88%, November – 83%.

Majority of Russians are still convinced that annexation of Crimea was more profitable than harmful to Russia (Table 5).

**Table 5**

**Dynamics of answering the question: "How do you think, was annexation of Crimea profitable or harmful for Russia in general?", %**

Variant of answer	03'15	08'15	11'15
Profitable	70	59	<b>59</b>
Harmful	18	23	<b>22</b>
DA	12	18	<b>18</b>

The views of Ukrainians are naturally significantly different. According to Razumkov Center (November) majority of Ukrainians (71.8%) consider Russia as an aggressor in the East of Ukraine, and only 12.2% of respondents believe that Russia has nothing to do with the Donbass conflict. Besides, according to the same survey, 64.4% of respondents believe that self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Lugansk People's Republic" are terroristic organizations, which have no rights to represent population of these territories. At the same time, 22.8% of respondents consider that DNR and LNR represent the according populations, and 12.8% didn't know what to answer.

62.4% of respondents stated that people from territories occupied by separatists shouldn't be allowed to influence the politics of Ukraine; they are also against giving these people funds from state budget of Ukraine. 27.2% of respondents on the contrary believe that people from occupied territories of Donbass have the right for self-determination (5.4% of respondents chose another variant of answer, 5.1% didn't answer at all).

The share of Ukrainians seeing the US as a strategic ally is constantly growing: February 2012 – 8%, September 2014 – 30.6%, November 2015 – 39.1%. At the same time Russia's role as a strategic ally dropped from 40.2% in February 2012 down to 5.9% in November 2015. Besides, according to November survey, 34.2% of respondents consider Poland as a strategic ally, 23% – Germany, 24% – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At the same time 23% of respondents believe that Ukraine has no strategic allies.

Answering the question "Are you ready to protect your country up in arms?" 23.9% of respondents gave a positive answer, 30.4% – a negative one, 27.5% declared that they are ready to participate in voluntary movements, and 18.2% of respondents didn't answer the question.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AS KEY FACTOR

For the first time since 1970s the share of Americans with average income turned out to be lower than the sum of shares of people with high and low income (120.8 billion vs. 121.3 billion). These are results of a research conducted by Pew Research Center and published by Financial Times. Authors say that technology development and globalization contribute to stratification of society.

The problem of middle class reduction, which became the base of post-war economic success of the US, is especially topical on the eve of presidential election of 2016. Neither democrats nor republicans don't give a strict definition of the middle class, which they promise to revive. Middle-income households are those with an income that is 67% to 200% the US median household income. For a three-person household it ranges from \$ 41 869 to \$ 125 608 a year. Today less than 50% of adult population can be included in this category (in comparison with 61% in 1960s). Middle class reduction is caused by fast decrease of shares of poor and rich Americans.

21% of population lives in upper-income households (incomes greater than \$ 125 608) according to Pew Research Center. This is the highest value. Since 2008 this share jumped by 7.8 billion people. For comparison: middle class numbers increased by 3 billion people over the same period, while two categories with lower-incomes increased by 6.8 billion. "In general it is more of an economic progress, than regress", note the researchers.

Specialist of Pew Research Center divided population into five categories according to incomes level. Lowest income – below \$ 31 000; lower-middle income – \$ 31 000 to \$ 42 000; middle income – \$ 42 000 to \$ 126 000; upper-middle income – \$ 126 000 to \$ 188 000; highest income – more than \$ 188 000. All households consist of three persons. Research uses official data.

David Autor, professor of MIT Department of Economics, agrees that focusing on the disparity between the top 1% and the 99% is misleading. "It gives people the wrong message that if you are not Mark Zuckerberg or Bernie Madoff you are kind of out of the game. That is not correct".

A key factor driving the wedge between successful Americans and those who are struggling is the outsized premium the labor market places on skills and higher education. College graduates are eight times likelier to live in the upper income tiers than adults who did not finish high school, and twice as

likely as an adult who has only a high school diploma, Pew Research Center finds. The sense of polarization in society is underscored by the rapid growth seen at the extreme rich and poor ends of the spectrum. This process is observed since 1970s, underline Pew Research Center experts.

Jason Furman, chairman of President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, says: "You have seen a hollowing out of the middle of the income distribution, and there's neither one cause for it

nor a single answer. It's a big problem, it is decades in the making, and it will require a lot of solutions".

*"Levada-Center" (levada.ru), WCIOM (wciom.ru), The Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (isras.ru), Romir Holding (romir.ru), Public Opinion Foundation (fom.ru), Washington Post (washingtonpost.com), Gallup Institute (gallup.com), Razumkov Center (uceps.org), Pew Research Center (pewresearch.org)*

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