

CIVIC CHAMBER OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



REPORT

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT 2017





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Российской Федерации
CIVIC CHAMBER OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

RUSSIAN FEDERATION: CIVIL SOCIETY REPORT 2017

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The online version of the Russian Federation Civil Society Report 2017

Introduction

Civil society is the aggregate of caring and active citizens engaged in the shaping of their common future. No country can develop without a civil society. Even less so a country of Russia's scale and complexity that spans so many diverse regions.

Civil society is not granted "from above", one cannot just make a sketch and then follow this blueprint. Civic institutions evolve gradually driven by people's demands, interests, opinions, and their vision of issues and solutions. Civil society institutions are among the most important actors promoting Russia's national security, national interests and strategic priorities.

The rising role of the third sector in the economy, social and political life is a global trend. Russia is no exception, with the significance of civil society in our country permanently on the rise. Yet, civil society is on a constant move, and its "design" now is very different from what it was twelve months ago. These transformations are non-linear and controversial. Despite higher civic engagement and a significant rise in the number of people involved in various non-government initiatives, volunteering, and charity, the number of non-profit organisations has gone down, and the overall trust in the society towards NPOs is still poor.

In 2017, Russian society acutely reacted to clashes in the country's cultural life. Issues in the public utilities, social welfare, ecology, and law enforcement remained in the limelight, while anti-corruption efforts were also under public scrutiny.

Recent opinion surveys reveal higher social demand for fairness. No one thinks that hard-earned wealth is unjust. Yet, the inconceivably lustre lives of government officials and their families

are an extremely painful issue. Citizens resent such stratification in every sphere, from medicine to justice, they counter privileges allowing some to bypass common rules and override applicable norms. The mission of civil society is viewed as dismantling such injustice since the unfair inequality has become a drag for the country's development.

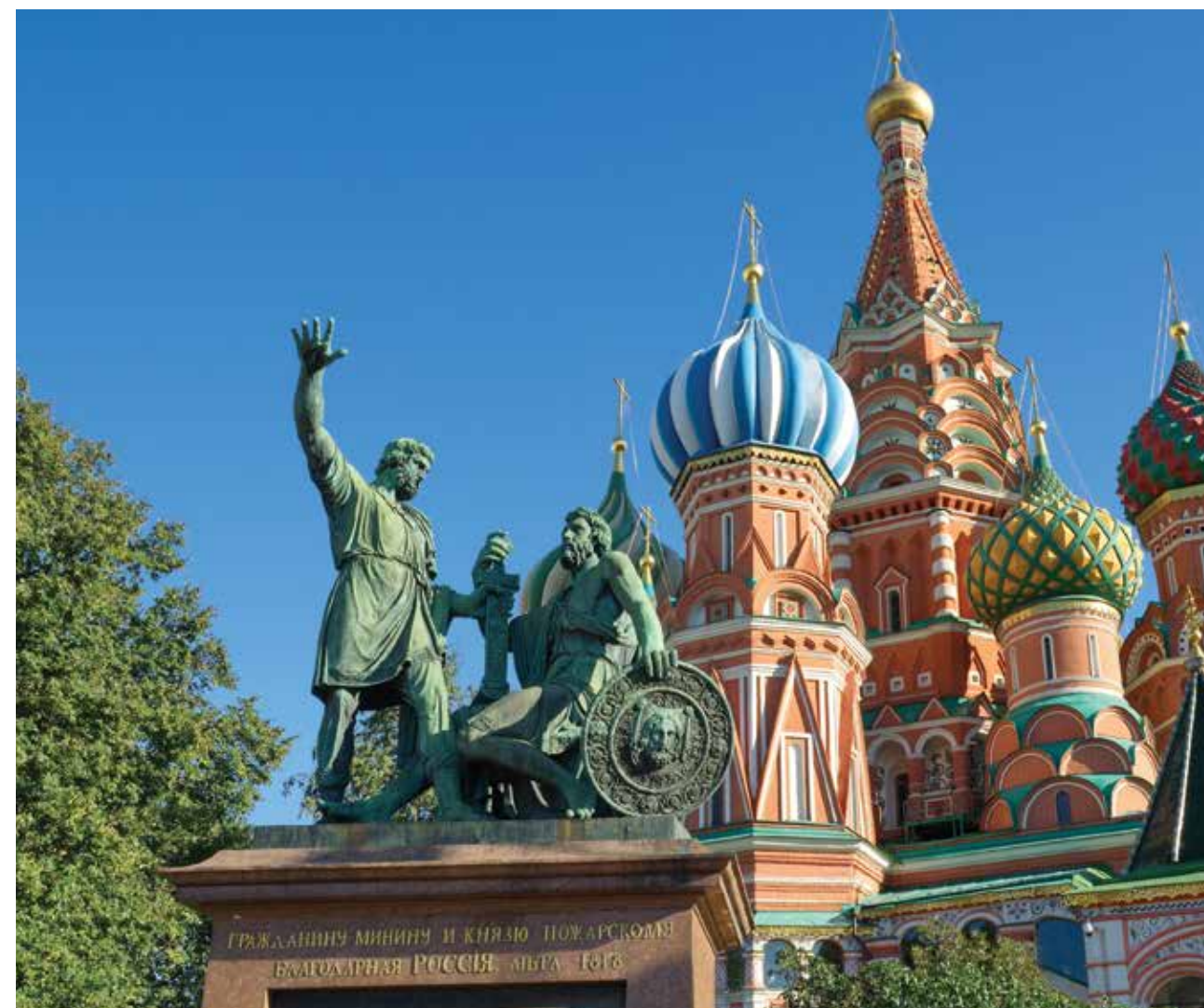
Civil society is all about justice, as follows from the multiple materials underlying the 2017 Civil Society Report. These encompass published results of research and surveys by various research centres, government statistics, publications in the national media, opinions expressed by leaders of public associations and members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, reports and proposals by civic chambers in Russian regions, as well as tens of thousands of citizens' appeals to the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.

In 2017, the Report highlights the development of civic engagement and non-profit organisations, key practices in philanthropy and volunteering. Special focus is placed on the institutions supporting government-civil society interfaces, such as public chambers and community boards, as well as public control institutions.

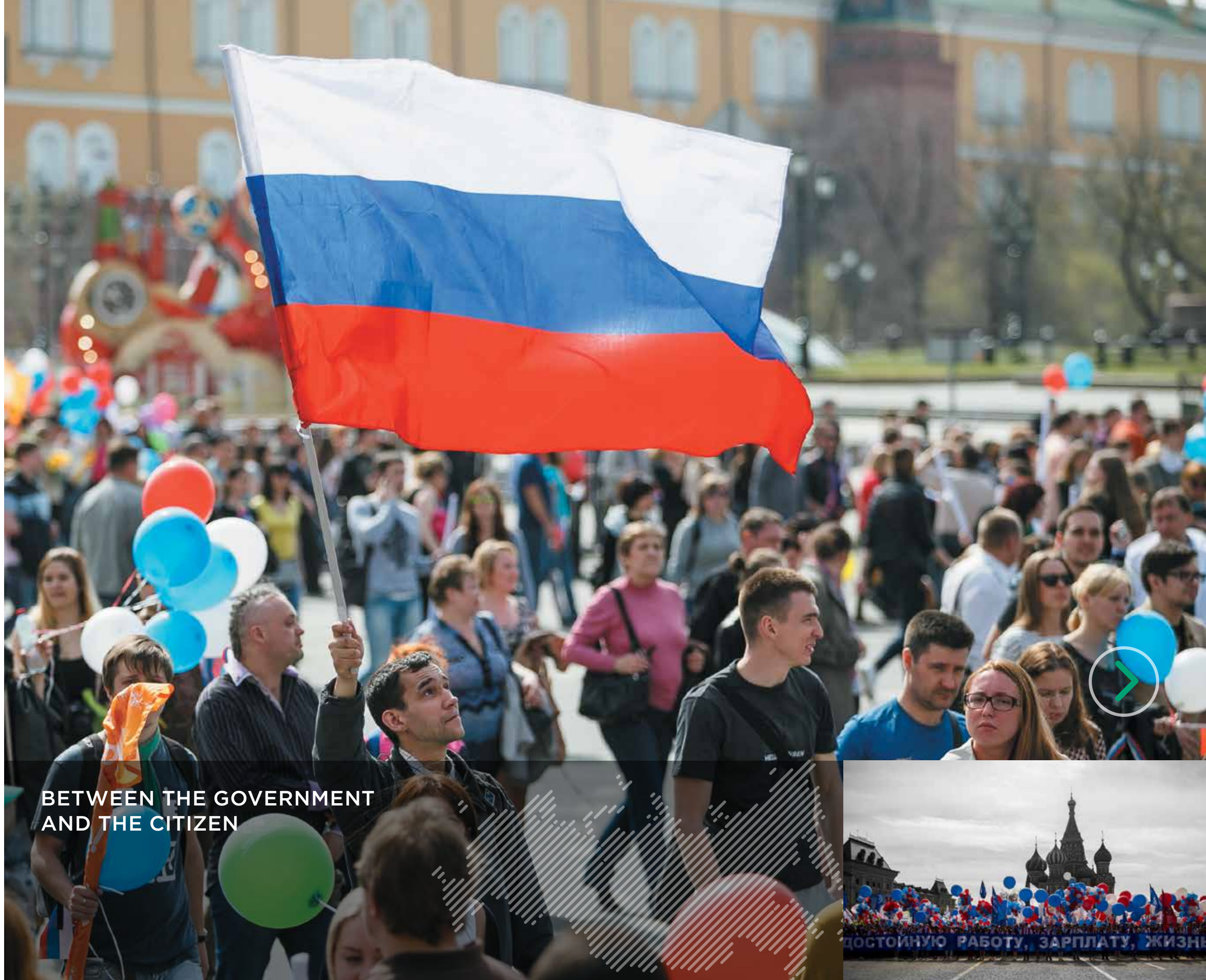
The Report preparation involved a series of in-depth interviews with the Russian Civic Chamber members. The information requests were sent to regional chambers, and the most substantive responses came from the civic chambers of Amur, Vologda, Kemerovo, Leningrad, Lipetsk, Magadan, Penza, Samara, Sakhalin, Tambov, Tula, Tyumen Regions, Republics of Komi, Tatarstan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and of the Primorye Territory and Yamalo-Nenetsk Autonomous District.

The Report is also based on non-Russian materials, including the ones gathered by the delegation of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation during its visit to Brussels. For the first time in three years, the Russian civil society representatives met with members of the European Economic and Social Committee to discuss the evolution of the third sector and cooperation prospects.

The Civic Chamber's Civil Society Report is a collective reflection on processes in various segments and institutions of the civil society within the country's relevant agenda. This Report is not merely an attempt to analyse and summarize what has happened and has been done this year, it is also an attempt to look ahead into the future, probe it for next steps, and understand what our civil society should be like to ensure Russia's sustainable development.



1 CIVIL SOCIETY



BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT
AND THE CITIZEN





Civil Society Institutions – Institutions of Democracy

The citizens' ability to influence developments in their country is the vital indicator for the state of civil society.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

The power of people is exercised not just through constitutional democratic institutions, but also through many other interactions between various communities and civic associations with public authorities and local governments. The weight of civil society leaders, their involvement and professionalism, as well as public expertise and oversight are equally important.

The notion of Russian national unity is now taking root in public conscience. Public conscience is about shaping values, norms, and concepts that are shared by most Russians regardless of their ethnic, religious, or social background, their ideologies or political preferences. Forty-four per cent of Russians agree that there is the Russian national unity in the society. That number is even higher among better-educated and better-off strata.¹ Those in disagreement with this opinion point at social division and high poverty rate as the primary reasons for the lack of such unity. It all goes to show that the problems of Russian national unity and consolidation are not about interethnic or interfaith relations, but most and foremost about the unjustifiably high

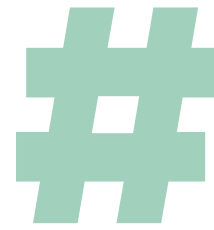
wealth and financial differentiation, and insufficient opportunities for social integration and mobility.

The society demonstrates an urge to have platforms for an equal dialogue with the government.

The absence of a dialogue is a straight path towards social unrest. Lately, active groupings who are attempting to put their own interests above those of other communities and the society at large have notably grown in number. The path of direct pushback is inefficient and sometimes produces the reverse effect; some of these groupings get even more radical in their demands.

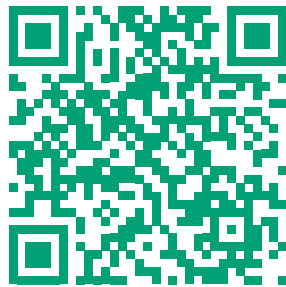
The new challenge for Russia's civil society institutions in 2017 was to counter destructive activism and show that extreme and radical advocacy of their views undermine public order and overall stability in the country, constitutional rights of the country's citizens and the values of the Russian society.





Dialogue Platforms

Over the recent years, the government authorities and the society in Russia got multiple platforms to sync their interests and find mutually palatable solutions.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

These include the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, Civic Chambers in Russian regions, the Russian Popular Front, the public councils under federal and regional executive branches, as well as ombudsmen institutions- for Human Rights, Children and Business respectively. There has emerged a network of federal youth forums, such as the Territory of Meanings, Tavrida, and others. In the 2010s, a number of trustworthy and reputable platforms started, including Russia's Social Forum, the Forum of Social Innovations in the Regions and others. 'Community' forums held by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation arouse great interest within the civil society.



The 'Community' is an open forum for the society, business, and the government. The year 2017 has shown that our country abounds in people who really care, who really make a difference and who choose action. That is why the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has voted to change the name from "the forum of active citizens" to the "forum of those who act". The country does not need an activity for the activity's sake. It needs positive action. And the country has the right people for that.

'Community' Forums in 2017

Forums map



Forum participants



ca. 8,000
overall during the year

On average - **600 visitors**
at each regional forum
3,500 participants at the
end-of-year Forum in Moscow

Experts



Around 500
federal and
regional experts

participated in the
forum campaign

Discussion topics



200
topics discussed

the average of 10
topics per forum

The NPO professionalization programme offered master classes and business games to improve the overall quality of development and implementation for social projects and boost cooperation between sectors.

Results



Public audits driven by citizens' requests helped to accelerate resolution of many local issues.



NPOs are now pooling together in the planning of joint projects for the future, including organizing festivals and setting up new resource centres. More and more local businesses, social entrepreneurs, mass media, and academic institutions also step in.



There were more applications to regional Civic chambers and the Presidential Grants Fund.



90%

of all regional mass media are alarmed about their future financial standing



59%

of the mass media survey respondents pointed at the insufficient qualification of journalists



20%

made a reference to administrative pressure from the authorities



The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation became a reputable civil society institution and one of the key platforms for dialogue between social activists, businesses, and the state. According to VCIOM (the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre), the public approval score of the Civic Chamber's activities grew notably: in September 2017, ca. 55% of Russians, in general, approved the Civic Chamber's activities (vs. 24% in 2010 and 38% in 2014).²

Mass media have traditionally been the most critical channel for the society - state interaction. Over the past years, the infosphere has undergone fundamental change with the arrival of online news services which do not even need a dedicated website, e.g. Telegram channels, newsletters, etc. Conventional mass media regulation does not work for such platforms because they are not registered mass media. Meanwhile, audiences of regional media continuously shrink, and journalism as a profession is facing a credibility crisis.

This underlies the financial decline of regional mass media. According to the survey held by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, almost 90% of all regional mass media are alarmed about their future financial standing. The professionalism of journalists is another topical issue. Curiously enough, when asked about the main hurdle in their work, 59% of the mass media survey respondents pointed at the insufficient qualification of journalists, while only 20% made a reference to administrative pressure from the authorities.³





Regional Civic Chambers

Regional civic chambers have become the core platform for the dialogue between the state and the society in Russian regions. Civic chambers are involved in expert assessment of bills, public control function and staffing of public councils.



In some regions, civic chambers exercise their right to put forward legislative initiatives.

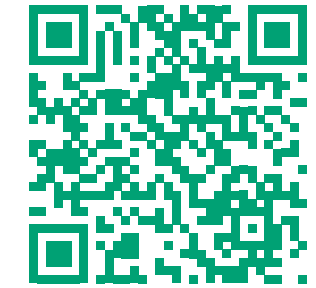
However, practice shows that frequently the results delivered by civic chambers are dependent on the position taken by region heads and their attitude to the civic chamber.

Thus in regions where the governor is eager to hear vox populi, chambers play a notable role in advocacy of various population groups. Tatarstan, Khakassia, Karachay-Cherkessia, Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, Belgorod, Kirov, Smolensk, Tula and Ulyanovsk Regions, Khanty-Mansi (Yugra) Autonomous District

are frequently mentioned by the 'Community' experts as showcases for civic chambers acting as vehicles for a continuous dialogue between civil society and the authorities.

Exciting inter-sectoral partnerships initiatives include Yakutia, where NPOs are stepping-up in rural areas. In Yaroslavl Region, NPO support proposals from the local government sometimes outnumber requests for such support from the NPOs themselves. The Civic Chamber of Kaliningrad Region actively engages in public monitoring in the utilities sector, bringing to the public light the community-relevant pressing issues around the current condition

Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation



and development prospects of this crucial area. The Civic Chamber of Sverdlovsk Region has successfully led the consolidation of the regional volunteer organisations.

An interesting initiative was advanced by the Zabaykalsky Territory where, shortly before the regional governor delivers his annual address, the civic chamber prepares the so-called "Citizens' Address" based on the proposals from the local community.

However, in many regions, civic chambers lack an agenda of their own in dialogue with the authorities, nor properly support social conflict situations.

According to the survey by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation as part of the 'Community' forums, less than half of the forum participants have ever attended any of the events arranged by regional civic chambers. Yet an overwhelming majority of those who have participated rate their participation experience as positive.⁴

In order to close up these gaps and ensure that local problems are handled through a joint effort, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has launched the #WHATISNOTRIGHT project in Russian regions.

The project has already started in four regions, namely Ryazan, Novgorod, Yaroslavl Regions, and the Republic of Karelia. As part of the project, regional civic chambers now run open panels with the participation of regional governors and a wide range of activists, including the ones who take a critical view of regional governments. While the round-table discussions go as they should, passers-by are snap-pollled near the #WHATISNOTRIGHT sign installed outside the civic chamber. In a few hours, the snap poll returns hundreds of responses, and all of them are forwarded to governors and city mayors, providing a valid feedback channel.

Discussion clubs open under the auspices of regional civic chambers. The clubs open their doors to all civic activists of the region, journalists, public officials, and businessmen. The ultimate purpose of these clubs is to set up a sustainable, direct, and efficient communication channel for local authorities and all

#WHATISNOTRIGHT

has already started in **four regions**
#WHATISNOTRIGHT



citizens, regardless of their civil position, political views, social standing. This arrangement does not infringe the position of the regional civic chamber but rather strengthens it. The results of such clubs are already gaining visibility: for example, in Ryazan Region, following a heated discussion of the long-abandoned children's summer camp called "Skazka" (Fairy Tale), local entrepreneurs donated enough to start the camp's reconstruction and repair.

Experience shows that such clubs now are one of the most relevant and sought after activities for the local civic chambers. This format is suitable both for citizens grouping around common ideas, interests and devotions and for each and every individual civic activist wishing to participate in promoting and implementing his/her ideas and projects to improve the quality of life.

Today the overarching objective and one of the key challenges for the regional civic chambers is to find the right balance between the interests of the community at large and each individual citizen.

Involvement of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation in staffing regional civic chambers could become one of the ways to strengthen their autonomy and independence in their regions, for instance, through a statutory quota for appointees to each regional civic chamber from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, or the introduction of a secret alternative voting procedure to elect regional chamber chairpersons. These proposals deserve a thorough discussion, and so does the overall approach to improving efficiency and autonomy of regional civic chambers.

Moreover, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has plans to more actively engage the Council of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation in coordination with regional civic chambers (the Council of civic chambers of Russia). Its extended meeting was held on 2 November 2017 as part of the 'Community' end-of-year forum in Moscow.

Federal Law of 23 June 2016 No. 183-FZ "On General Organisational and Activity Principles of Civic Chambers in Regions of the Russian Federation", which has been in effect since 2017, has established a new procedure of formation for regional civic chambers and allowed them greater financial and organisational levers to implement public initiatives. **Experience shows that such levers are more accessible to the civic chambers enjoying permanent funding from regional budgets. Therefore, the Law must provide a clearer statement on the budgets of regional civic chambers.**

Municipal civic chambers (public councils) are not to be overlooked either. Regional laws on civic chambers or the Federal Law on regional chambers have no guidelines about the set-up of municipal civic chambers (public councils). Nevertheless, such chambers (councils) have already been formed in 52 regions, and in 16 regions such chambers (councils) operate in all municipalities.⁵

It is too early to assess the performance of these new institutions of civic dialogue, yet it is obvious that regional and municipal authorities will have to make sure that these institutions develop. But it does not happen all that smoothly. For example, in Yalta, there are two municipal civic chambers, one supported by the head of the municipality, and the other



in 52 regions

municipal civic chambers (public councils) have already been formed



in 16 regions

municipal civic chambers (public councils) operate in all municipalities⁵

by the head of local administration, and they have trouble hearing each other. At the same time, in **some regions, these institutions come up with compelling initiatives.** The Komi Republic initiated a competition among civic chambers in municipalities for best-organised activities, while citizens initiated formation of public councils at the level of settlements.⁶ In some regions, like Moscow Region, for example, municipal chambers have engaged the active local community thus improving the overall quality of civic engagement in local affairs. In some regions, it is already a tradition to hold joint meetings of the regional civic chamber and municipal public chambers (councils). In Vologda Region, the regional civic chamber has issued an almanac of best social practices from municipal public councils and established the award for best public councils "Vologda Region Civil Society Leaders".⁷

The root cause of problems faced by executive authorities' public councils, civic chambers in Russia's regions and municipalities is one, that is, the absence of direct obligations of authorities vis-à-vis such intermediary institutions. Resolutions of public councils, chambers, and commissions are perceived as a recommendation only, there is no adequate mechanism for authorities to effectively respond to the requests from public organisations and initiative groups coming in the form of resolutions passed during their meetings.



Public Councils

Public councils of federal executive authorities are to become one of the key channels for civil society and executive authorities to communicate with each other.

Since 2016, these councils are formed on a competitive basis with the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the Government Expert Council in charge of distributing quotas. Relevant non-public organisations have been given the right to nominate their candidates for public councils.

The task of these civil representation institutions is to bring to the attention of government officials the most pressing issues which call for immediate response. They are to not only discuss or approve initiatives proposed by ministries or relevant authorities, as used to be the case until quite recently, they are to urge such ministries and authorities to focus on the most critical bottlenecks in their relevant areas.

So far, in practice, only but a few councils have made this shift and help authorities to deal with the issues that weigh on the minds of the society. **It is not a coincidence that in June 2017 President Putin spoke negatively of the earlier approach towards formation of public chambers by ministries and authorities** by calling it "perfunctory, 'Brownian', and unnecessary" and voiced his hope that "...this will turn into a meaningful effort aimed at improving performance of ministries and government agencies".⁸

Today, there is only one formal criterion to assess the efficiency of public councils, that is, the number of actual meetings held and the number of attending participants. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has plans to change this approach. In order to do this, the Chamber has initiated the creation of an IT platform for regular elections to public councils of federal executive authorities. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation seeks to push public councils towards handling issues of pressing urgency**

that occupy people's minds. The Regulations for public councils assessment were prepared by the Civic Chamber with the active engagement of the public councils.

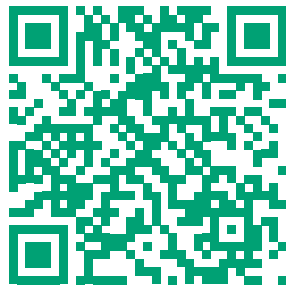
As far as public councils of regional executive authorities, there are still no general rules and approaches. In 2016, forty-five regions had in place some legislative acts and regulations determining the way public councils are to be formed, as well as to the key principles for their operation. Yet, the process of forming public councils in many cases remains non-transparent, and opinion leaders of local communities have an even smaller chance to get on such councils than into civic chambers. As a rule, executive authorities perceive such councils as 'yet another tick-off for the officials' who seem to have enough on their plates anyway, and sometimes regional leadership mistake public initiatives for a negative assessment of their own competencies and qualifications. The lack of the dialogue culture both on the part of authorities, and on the part of civic activists curtails more efficient interaction.

However, sometimes public councils in Russian regions whose members include members of the regional civic chambers become effective dialogue platforms. In a number of regions, public councils are formed in consultation between local executive authorities and civic chambers, while in others the composition of all public councils of executive authorities has been agreed with the civic chamber. It is advisable to make it legally binding for civic chambers to engage in the formation of public councils of territorial authorities.⁹ It is also advisable to establish a competitive process of enrolment on public councils, as well as key requirements to candidates and candidate nomination procedure.



Local Governments

The institution of local self-government is hybrid in nature. It is a public authority, on the one hand, while it is a civil society institution on the other.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

However, **over the past decades of bureaucratization of local governments, its self-governance nature has largely been lost, while a significant part of the municipal managerial resources are handed over to the regional level.** These factors deplete people's interest and trust in local governance, they replicate and aggravate the low public engagement in municipal governance.

Laws provide for various forms of public engagement in the decision making process at local levels, including referendums, public hearings, law-making, 'zero' stage readings, public monitoring, expert evaluation and regulatory impact assessment of legislative acts. Yet, most of these instruments are idle today. Very few want to spend their time on attending these events, citizens go active only when they know that they do



matter. So far, dealing with a specific issue at the federal level, by getting through to the regional governor or the President over the "direct line" seems easier than participating in municipal meetings.

In 2017, the pace of agglomeration of municipal formations went up. In 2016, the country's municipal map showed 72 municipalities fewer than the year before, while during the first five months of 2017, 193 municipalities, primarily the rural ones, disappeared.¹⁰ The key reason is depopulation of villages and smaller rural settlements because of the gradual disintegration of the farmers class. A serious risk in this respect is posed by Federal Law of 3 April 2017 No. 62-FZ "On Changes to General Principles of Local Governance Organisation in the Russian Federation". This law introduces fundamental changes to local governance principles allowing all rural communities within a municipality to merge into one urban district resulting in a subsequent abolishment of individual local governments. Since the law does not set out any specific criteria for such territorial transformations, there are grounded fears that practically all kinds of municipal units may be restructured into urban districts, including predominantly rural ones, with low urbanization and poor infrastructure. If they lose the status of administrative centres, many rural settlements may face closing of major infrastructure facilities, like post offices, banks, schools, or outpatient clinics.

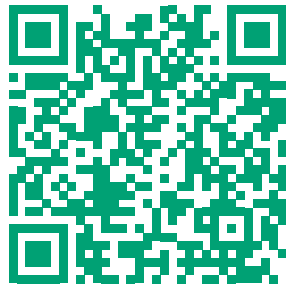
The process of municipalities consolidation, uneven population densities and concentration of population

in major cities and agglomerations do not only limit access to local governments for the local population, they lead to the estrangement of many citizens from dealing with local problems. In 2017, many political parties faced a real problem when looking for candidates for rural councils, because people do not want to put themselves up as candidates for they feel that they cannot really make a difference.¹¹

At the backdrop of the declining interest towards local governments and their activities, **many local problems are increasingly handled in informal ways, while various city and rural communities evolve.**

Over the past few years, **territorial self-governments (TSGs) in rural areas have gained momentum.** Rural TSGs emerge in settlements where, for a variety of reasons, major manufacturing and production facilities have either disintegrated into smaller manufacturers or have closed, farming has not stepped in, the opportunities for non-farming haven not been tapped. By chipping in own funds and labour the surviving residents of such 'abandoned villages' safeguard and repair the remaining infrastructure or create new improvements or places of public attraction.¹²

Today, it is important that this energy be channelled into local governments to revive civil engagement in their activities.



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“Gorodishche is my Home” TSG

The “Gorodishche is my Home” TSG (village of Gorodishche in Cherepovets District of Vologda Region) was set up in 2013. Having thus consolidated their efforts, local residents can boast quite a success now. They built a children’s playground and held the Green Rock ecology festival, coated the road to the village with asphalt and installed a cellular tower. Other endeavours include restoring the Holy Trinity church on the shore of the Rybinsk Reservoir.

People pay for most of the projects from their own pocket. Local administration helps as much as it can. The Gorodishche TSG is currently one of the best TSGs in the region.

According to TSG activists, the results exceeded their expectations. As people resolve common problems, they both improve life in their home village and become more responsible.

In 2017, the “Gorodishche is my Home” TSG became a finalist of the “My Project for My Country!” national competition.¹⁵

An important event in 2017 was the launch of “Creating a Comfortable Urban Environment”, a priority project that helps setup and fine-tune the process of engaging citizens in identifying which public areas in their cities should get federal government funding. During the first year of the project, the federal budget allocated RUB 25 billion, while the overall financing combined with the co-funding from regional budgets totalled RUB 42 billion. The topmost goal of this project is to make people feel responsible for what they own and help them realise that urban renewal is their project that they have initiated and implemented, and that all the authorities do is render a little help.

The Russian government has given regions freedom to choose their own ways to engage their population in projects for creating a comfortable urban environment. As part of this activity, many regions have generated non-trivial solutions. For example, Rostov Region developed an information portal with a respective mobile app. In Kirov Region, residents were offered a wide range of ways to participate,

from simple voting to attendance of seminars and children activities dedicated to the project. In Saratov Region, in addition to local residents, the project titled “Improvement of Areas Adjacent to Apartment Buildings and of Public Areas” engaged members of the local business community, civic activists, experts, architecture students, and the local youth community.

Large-scale area improvement can bring around social impact only if local communities are involved in the decision making as to what public areas, parks, embankments, and streets deserve improvement and what changes in the urban environment people, not the authorities, need.

Initiative-based budgeting, i.e. citizen engagement through shared civil participation ideology, has progressed a lot over the past years. The state is becoming more active in engaging citizens in the selection of budget-funded projects and in their follow-up checks. In 2016 alone the regional subsidies allocated to initiative-based budgeting programmes amounted to RUB 5.1 billion (vs. RUB 1.4 billion in 2015). The overall value of initiative-driven budgeting projects in 2015 amounted to RUB 2.4 billion vs. RUB 7 billion in 2016. The number of projects increased from 2,657 to 8,732 (3.3x). Forty-seven regions of Russia decided to launch initiative-based budgeting programmes. It is increasingly frequently the case that initiative-based projects are financed not only from regional budgets but from municipal budgets as well. In 2015, such projects were implemented in the following cities: Penza, Cherepovets (Vologda Region), Sosnovy Bor (Leningrad Region), Yakutsk (Republic of Sakha), to be later joined by projects in Novouralsk (Sverdlovsk Region), municipal areas in Ulyanovsk Region, Borovsk (Kaluga Region), Magnitogorsk (Chelyabinsk Region), and Zheleznogorsk (Krasnoyarsk Territory).

In 2017, the institution of village headmen was finally brought back to life. In 2015 and 2016, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation referred to the need to have this institution revived.¹⁴ In 2017, President Putin mandated the Russian Federation government to determine the legal status of the village headman and the guarantees inherent to the village



65% of Russians support the idea of referendums to elect city mayors, heads of municipalities, and rural settlements.



headman’s activities.¹⁵ At the same time, some experts note that the institution of village headmen should not completely replace existing local governments in rural areas, for they strongly doubt it that these headmen are capable of handling local matters professionally enough.¹⁶

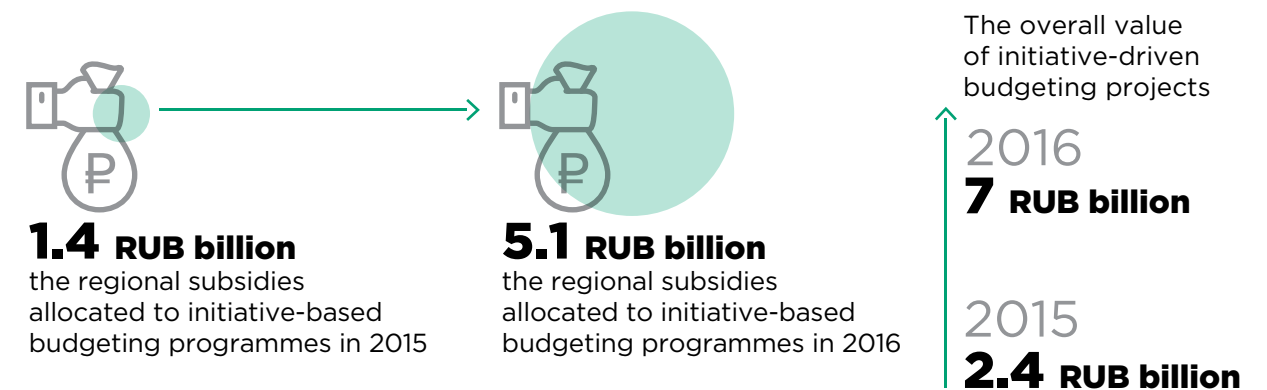
Nevertheless, people do wish to see a stronger municipal government institution.

Today, 65% of Russians support the idea of referendums to elect city mayors, heads of municipalities, and rural settlements. Most respondents questioned by sociologists generally support the idea of regional referendums



alongside presidential election and about the passing of regional laws to provide for electivity of local governments through referendums, and they are ready to support such laws.¹⁷

Russian and international experience around the development of municipalities shows that the more citizens are involved in the decision-making process at local levels, the more they are satisfied with the quality of the dialogue throughout the local society, as well as the more productive and constructive is the coordination between citizens and regional and federal public authorities.



The number of projects in 2015-2016



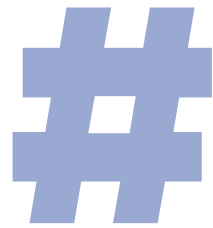
THIRD SECTOR

2



DEVELOPMENT PACE, ECONOMIC
POTENTIAL, PUBLIC PERCEPTION





Non-Profit Sector Development Numbers

In Russia, the official statistics of the non-profit sector are taken care of by two federal agencies, the Ministry of Justice and the Federal State Statistics Service, or Rosstat.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

According to the Ministry of Justice, in 2015-2016 the total number of NPOs in Russia was stable with a trend towards minor growth. At the end of 2015, its register counted some 226 thousand NPOs, and at the end of December 2016, their number was slightly over 227 thousand. In early November 2017, there were over 223 thousand NPOs on the Ministry's register, thus, the number of NPOs reduced by almost 4 thousand in one year.

Some independent research and expert assessments show that only 15-25%¹⁸ of all registered NPOs continue to run as going concerns. **Yet, the Ministry's register does not shed light on the number of organisations that are still operable.** The Ministry's statistics are not fit for analysis of any specific lines of NPO activities, nor do they allow for any conclusions about financial standing or those who work for the third sector.



Moreover, some major state-owned corporations are still included in the Ministry of Justice register as NPOs (Rosatom, Rostechnologii). More than four thousand political parties (including their regional offices) are also in this register among NPOs.

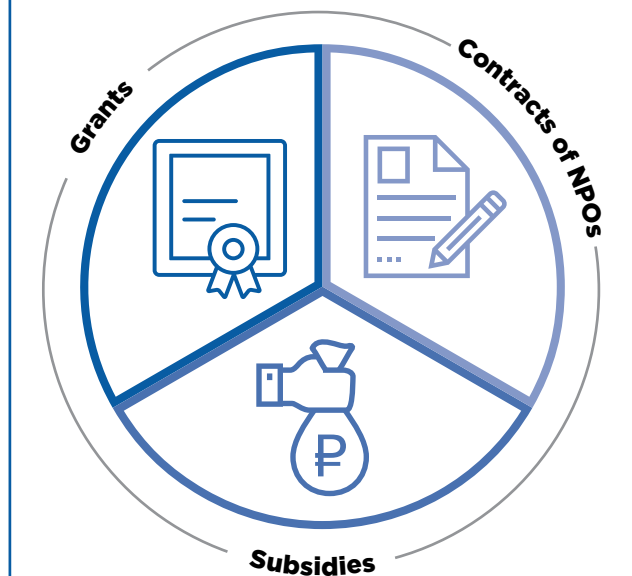
Although the category of socially oriented (SO) NPOs was added to laws in 2010, the statistical accounting of the third sector has not changed much since then. Statistical accounting of SO NPOs is done by the Federal State Statistics Service known as Rosstat. According to this statistics agency, the number of SO NPOs continues to go up, i.e. at the end of 2015 Russia had 140,031 SO NPOs, while at the end of 2016 their number rose to 143,436 or 63% of all registered NPOs. Yet, statistics in this case **do not mean that the sector grows, but rather that a greater number of NPOs is categorised as organisations with a social focus, and in order to be categorised this way an NPO only needs to make a reference in its charter to as much as one line of activity that is declared as socially oriented.** The list of SO NPOs includes, amongst others, the Analytical Centre of the Russian Federation Government, the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, as well as various government funds.¹⁹

According to the Rosstat's statistics, the overall revenue of SO NPOs was reported to amount to RUB 686 billion in 2015 vs. RUB 831 billion in 2016 (including revenue from the sale of goods and services of RUB 254 billion, and proceeds from Russian commercial organisations totalling RUB 174 billion). These numbers of astronomical magnitude do not align with the overall economics of the real non-profit sector (i.e. in 2016, SO NPOs received ca. RUB 11 billion of support from the federal budget). Clearly, these numbers include, amongst others, various government funds, budget-sponsored sports clubs and other organisations which can be categorised as non-profit only nominally.

Meanwhile, other numbers supplied by Rosstat on the SO NPO sector are also questionable. For example, according to the agency, the overall headcount of SO NPOs at the end of 2015 was 911 thousand (vs. 989 thousand in 2014), or 1.3% of the country's economically active population. However, at the end of 2016 this figure dropped to 672 thousand. How could the headcount of SO NPOs go down by more than 300 thousand in one year alone while the state is boosting its financial support to SO NPOs, and the latter get engaged in the delivery of socially oriented services? At the same time, at the end of 2015 Rosstat reported

Open NPOs

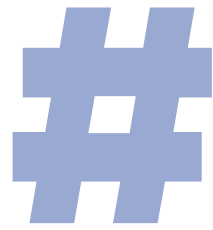
Launch year - 2017



some 2.5 million volunteers supporting SO NPOs vs. 3.8 million at the end of 2016. This rapid growth against the headcount reduction is difficult to explain.

In 2017, "Open NPOs", a public project, was launched. The purpose of this initiative is to aggregate information on grants, subsidies, and contracts of NPOs. The project shows in a clear and straightforward manner which organisations obtained government support.²⁰ However, sociological surveys and data aggregators are not a replacement for the so much needed adequate government statistics.

At the end of the day, we have no true and adequate way to assess the cash flows channelled through NPOs, while **the real contribution of most SO NPOs is not accounted for, and there is no information on their areas of focus. Government statistics do not allow for real accounting of non-profit organisations and do not shed light on the structure of the third sector. Without a clear picture of the structure and the resources available to the non-profit sector, there is no way for proper and efficient government regulation of this sphere or adequate support to NPOs. To solve this problem, we need regular in-depth and systematised research into the third sector standing in Russia and the dynamics of its statistical parameters.**



Legal Field for Non-profit Sector

In countries with a long-standing tradition of non-profit activities, they use differentiated approach towards regulating and supporting non-profit organisations and towards their reporting obligations.

Russia's public domain and government regulation are still dominated by the idea of the third sector as a homogeneous pool of non-profit organisations, i.e. the organisations that do not quote profit generation as their main purpose. As a result, during statistical assessments, the data are fed in by all NPOs as one single array, despite the fact that these organisations are so different that the data aggregated this way would not produce an adequate picture.

In effect, today the third sector is deeply segmented. It amalgamates smaller socially oriented NPOs operating at the municipal levels as well as major corporate and private charitable foundations and many other types of organisations. An important component of the third sector are the multi-branch professional and corporate alliances, i.e. business associations (Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Opora Rossii (Russia's Support), Association of Farming Enterprises and Agricultural Cooperatives (AKKOR)), self-regulating organisations, trade unions, artistic and creative unions, whose purpose is to protect the interests of relevant groups, maintain a consolidated position, communicate it to the legislative and executive branch, and to build a comfortable competitive environment. There are organisations that act on behalf and in the interests of their members, i.e. gardening partnerships, tourist societies etc. And, finally, NPOs integrate a variety of public associations, i.e. parish communities or sports fan clubs.

A big chunk of the sector are small NPOs (with up to five employees) doing their work for free with all costs (documented, minimal event-related costs) are covered out of the pocket of the organisation's head who personally prepares and delivers zero balance accounting reports to relevant supervisory authorities. According to a survey of local NPOs in 2016, almost 37% of NPOs show that they received funding below RUB 100 thousand in 2016.⁴¹

Finally, there are non-profit organisations that are established or created with the support of or directly by government authorities. These include sports clubs which are frequently registered as autonomous non-profit organisations. In 2016, they received grants, subsidies and contracts from the state in excess of RUB 20 billion.²² The sector has many government-funded or government-affiliated NPOs. This "organised public sector" is widely engaged in servicing the government order, which leads to the governmentalisation of the third sector.

In some instances, an NPO may be registered with one purpose only, that is, to participate in government tenders and competitions to obtain access to government subsidies in order to prey on the government support. **There is a well-shaped layer of NPOs specializing in grant competitions and government projects (intermediaries, promoters of grant applications).** Let us have a look at the case reported by the Civic Chamber of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. In 2014, Delay Dobro (the name meaning 'do good' in Russian), a local non-profit organisation, received a presidential grant of RUB 1 million for the creation of an all-Russia online discussion platform RosDisput. However, the platform never appeared online and, other than the intriguing name, nothing else is known about the project, or about a number of similar projects whose initiators' names say nothing to the region's civic activists.²⁵ In fact, these organisations are not directly related to non-profit activities, therefore, they should not enjoy various benefits or preferences. However, the applicable laws in their current form do not allow for any ranking among various NPO types.

Lawmakers have the same set of requirements applied to different NPOs, thus limiting access to additional tax benefits and preference for some of them. **There is a variety of forms to support small businesses (easier registration, reporting, targeted support), yet, there is nothing like**

this for the non-profit sector. But NPOs have to pay the same taxes as the commercial sector enterprises. NPOs do not enjoy any reduced property or land tax rates, therefore some non-profit organisations running public shelters or rehabs sometimes spend up to a third of their project's worth on taxes.

Incentives cannot be available to all NPOs. Therefore, it makes sense to consider categorising NPOs into various groups with different tax regimes as well as reporting and transparency requirements. There is a need for a tailored approach to regulating charity funds which gather donations, while NPOs wishing to be supported from the government budget must provide more in-depth reporting. A clear legislative line should be drawn between commercial and non-profit activities in order to make sure that NPOs are not used as a **tax optimisation tool.**

Lack of structure in the third sector results in quite stringent NPO registration requirements, which lead to complaints primarily from smaller socially oriented NPOs representing an overwhelming majority in this sector. There is no simplified registration process for NPOs, there is no regulation in place to make the state registration service available online and/or through the single window system at Multiservice Centres.²⁴ **Today, to register and maintain the status of an NPO is much more of a challenge than to register and maintain the status of an entrepreneur. A limited liability company is easier to register than an NPO, thus many choose to register non-profit initiatives as businesses. On the one hand, this is a justifiable step for many NPOs collecting private donations and eager to get government support, while, on the other hand, smaller socially oriented initiatives see it an entry barrier for the sector.**

For years now, there have been discussions around the excessive mandatory reports to be prepared by NPOs, which are much more abundant and more difficult to prepare than the reports by small businesses. Rosstat sets out 59 various statistics reporting forms, there are also reports to the Federal Tax Service, Ministry of Justice, and various social

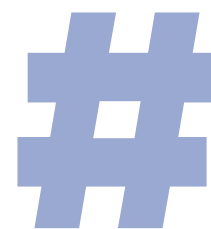


funds.²⁵ An NPO, as if it were an industrial facility, must provide to the Social Insurance Fund a confirmation that their employees do not have any harmful exposure, otherwise the NPO will have to make a higher accident insurance contribution. Such reports are a very serious burden on smaller organisations. **This is probably the reason why, in quantitative terms, the number of registered NPOs in Russia's third sector does not grow and reduced over the past year.**

Thus, the item on top of the agenda should be reorganising the government statistics system for the third sector and **legislative delineation of various NPO categories. The purpose of such delineation is to make governmental support of the non-profit sector more efficient.** Enhancement of applicable legislation may take the form of adopting an amended version of the 1996 Law "On Non-profit Organisations", which now resembles a patchwork as a result of numerous amendments and addenda. **Government regulation of the commercial sector with a significantly more flexible approach to clustering businesses into small, medium, and large ones can be used as a template.** The first, yet an absolutely insufficient step in this direction could be the legal definition of public service providers as a free-standing category of NPOs with extra government support.

As to legislative developments in the non-profit sector, experts have for years pointed at the vagueness of the “political activity” wording in the ‘foreign agent’ law. This allows for much leeway in the interpretation of laws when dealing with financing from outside Russia. For example, should the financing that comes from such a reputable source as the UN, where Russia is a member, be considered foreign financing? What is the difference between financing from a foreign organisation and international financing? On the other hand, the law interprets financing from a Russian company generating its

income from activities outside Russia as foreign financing. The law contains no clear statement that an organisation must not only receive the financing that is anyhow related to foreign sources, but it has to have a purpose and must act upon the instruction of the foreign agent of influence. Today, **the foreign agent law encourages the establishment of holding companies, where one organisation deals with politics and is funded with Russian money, and the other deals with foreign money and is out of politics.**



Government Support and Financial Standing of the Third Sector

Over the recent years, the government support to the third sector has grown through bigger grants, admission of non-profit organisations to providing social services in traditionally budget-funded spheres.

These are all important steps towards improving the financial sustainability of the non-profit sector. Today the development of the non-profit sector in the country to a large extent is initiated by the state.

The key format of government support of socially oriented NPOs are subsidies (grants) from the federal budget. The total support allocated to SO NPOs rose from RUB 8 billion in 2015 to RUB 11.2 billion in 2016. In 2017, the programme of presidential grants alone channelled RUB 7 billion in support of NPOs.²⁶



7 RUB billion
channelled in support of NPOs

Overview of financing SO NPO support programmes in 2015-2016

| Russian Federation government authority supporting SO NPO | Total financial support to SO NPO from government organisation | | # of SO NPOs to receive financial support | |
|---|--|-------------------|---|--------------|
| | 2015 | 2016 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Administrative Directorate of the President of the Russian Federation | 4,228,200 | 4,589,900 | 1,377 | 1,579 |
| Ministry of Economic Development of Russia | 859,000 | – | 3,964 | – |
| Ministry of Culture of Russia | 2,077,372 | 4,136,443 | 199 | 227 |
| Ministry of Labour of Russia | 765,598 | 2,320,439 | 17 | 30 |
| Ministry of Education and Science of Russia | | 86,373 | | 16 |
| Federal Agency for Youth Affairs | 74,000 | 103,200 | 44 | 100 |
| Federal Drug Control Service of Russia | 10,200 | – | 8 | – |
| Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia | 100,000 | 90,000 | 7 | 19 |
| TOTAL | 8,114,390 | 11,326,355 | 5,616 | 1,971 |

Financing of SO NPO programmes from federal budget in 2015-2016.

Source: Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation²⁷

In 2017, the system of government support of NPOs underwent change: there was created the integrated operator, the Presidential Grants Fund. According to general feedback, the applications selection process has improved, the award and spending of the grants have become more transparent, and an electronic document management system and a system of electronic feedback on applications have been introduced. The Fund received a records-breaking number of applications, and more than 80% of grant awardees are from Russian regions, while earlier most of the grants went to Moscow-based NPOs.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation plans to introduce public presentations and discussions of outcomes for the national-scale projects funded through presidential grants. Regional civic chambers are to become discussion forums to focus on efficiency of projects carried out in their regions.

A project can be submitted for co-funding so that it can receive financial support not from the state only, but also from businesses through fundraising. This practice should be encouraged in all types of government supported SO NPOs to nourish their skills of finding resources for sustainable development and to prevent NPOs from turning into quasi-governmental agencies.

Support of NPOs from regional budgets is affected by the 2016 roll-in of the competitive co-funding of regional SO NPOs support programmes from the federal budget. Without federal budget financing a number of regions now offer even more funding to their SO NPOs, however for most regions keeping such programmes, especially given their budget shortfalls, is very risky. It is clear that without federal incentives the framework of SO NPO values, principles, criteria, and development initiatives can fall apart. Therefore, it is feasible to revive federal co-funding of regional SO NPO support programmes on a competitive basis.

Supporting NPOs through grants at the regional level is less transparent and aligned. Open-source publications on recipients of budgetary funds, supported projects and their project outcomes should become a must.

Regional authorities should expand non-financial forms of NPO support, which are quite versatile, from the free-of-charge rent of premises, including rooms in universities, public establishments, libraries, clubs, to information support and support with materials, i.e. by helping NPOs out

with printed materials. Most regions do not provide clear and straightforward information on non-financial support available to NPOs. Some people rent offices at beneficial rates on behalf of NPOs, while in reality the offices are used for commercial purposes. Today it is a matter of pressing urgency to create an integrated electronic property navigator of all offices and premises available to NPOs for rent, similar to the navigator available for small businesses.

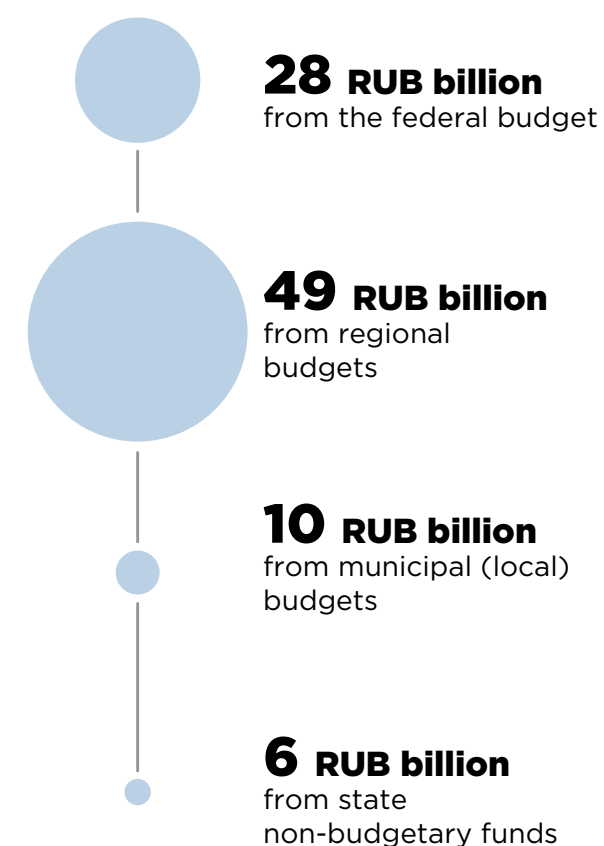
With the available statistics, it is quite a challenge to evaluate the total volume of government support channelled into the third sector. If we look at the data provided by Rosstat, in 2016 the total funds channelled into SO NPOs amounted to RUB 28 billion from the federal budget, RUB 49 billion from regional budgets, RUB 10 billion from municipal (local) budgets, and RUB 6 billion from state non-budgetary funds. But this also includes the government subsidies to autonomous non-profit organisations outside the scope of the public procurement law. Among recipients of government support are some NPOs with affiliation to public social establishments and professional sports clubs which can only nominally be treated as civil society institutions.

So far, our society predominantly believes that the non-profit sector cannot and must not make money. This is the sector with predominantly low pay, while some NPOs cannot afford a full-time accountant or a lawyer. However, the third sector is an important employer which will become a significant economic player in the future. Those NPOs who do want to make money by selling services or goods need to be taught to do this so that they could source funds for new projects and pay decent salaries to their staff. That is an essential prerequisite for the overall NPOs sustainability. This will expand the planning horizon for the third sector and contribute to its efficiency because it will task NPOs to assess the social impact of their projects and so make them more responsible cost-wise. Successful social entrepreneurs projects could be a benchmark for the whole of the third sector.

Russian regions see the emergence of non-profit organisations capable of sourcing their funding, attracting volunteers and being fully accountable to the state for the money they spend. However, they are yet too few, and most NPOs have no full time employees, professional accountants or transparent governance.

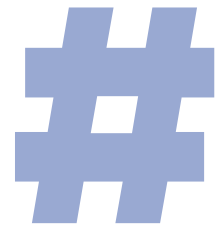
Resource centres, volunteer organisations, centres of social innovation are all there to render legal,

In 2016 the total funds channelled into SO NPOs amounted to



organisational, information support and advice to SO NPOs in the regions. Resource centres in regional centres and municipalities could take up the task of providing basic legal and financial training to NPO staff. In 2017, resource centres for NPOs operated in 31 regions only,²⁸ and the total number of such centres across the country is 234.²⁹ This number is obviously not enough because, in addition to consultations, resource centres could create a favourable environment for joint projects, arrange for exchange of positive experience, and replicate best social service practices. After the resource centres support programme sponsored by the Ministry of Economic Development was discontinued, all further support of such centres has been provided through the Presidential Grants Fund. Regular funding of resource centres from regional budgets could also be a viable option. It is advisable to have resource centres established in all constituent territories of the Russian Federation, i.e. on the basis of regional civic chambers. There should also develop a network of municipal resource centres.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has an important role as a centre of competencies, a kind of an 'open university' that will aggregate information on projects of social significance to build a civil contract culture between businesses, the government and the society, define and coordinate methodological support for public control institutions, independent assessment of services quality, volunteering, and social entrepreneurship.



Third Sector and the Society

Citizen activism remains largely unformalised.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

By saying so, we refer to various community groups, associations, coalitions, public initiatives, and activists who do not see why they should formally register their organisations.

There is a growing gap between informal civic initiatives and the 'organised public sector'. NPOs and civic activists interact only but very rarely and very little. For instance, regional civic chambers are fully focused on dealing with registered NPOs. This is why civic activists are rarely seen among visitors of civic chambers.

In 2017, the level of trust in the third sector has increased. Sixty-six per cent of Russians have trust in what NPOs and public associations do.³⁰ This result is good, yet there is room for improvement. Experts believe that, first of all, many people around us do not realise that the veteran councils, trade unions, their fitness clubs, or the art clubs their children go to are all non-profit organisations. Likewise, many do not realise that a lot of viral public campaigns (e.g. the Immortal Regiment march) are the result of a targeted effort of a specific activist or activists. People think of them as the 'natural environment' or an integral part of everyday life. And they certainly do not consider these organisations or campaigns as NPOs. Therefore, opinion polls normally capture people's attitude to those of the NPOs that they perceive as NPOs, even though they do not resort to them too often or know very little of them.



Experts keep pointing out the poor level of general awareness about NPOs, where they work and how they do it. Even that Russia has a lot of organisations working for the benefit of the society, people seem to know very little about them. There are only four or five foundations that people know or trust. Quite often, the number of people aware of socially oriented NPOs is limited to those who have had some past experience with such NPOs. The SO NPOs are there to extend real assistance. But normally they have very limited financial resources. Thus, they can neither invest in raising awareness about their activities nor hire communications professionals. Moreover, in many occasions, they just do not have time for that.

It is natural to have no trust in what you do not know. When supporting those who are in need, people prefer



to give their support directly in bypass of NPOs. The social advertising law does not seem to work. It contains no clear mechanisms or criteria, and there is no money to make it work. This issue was raised by President Putin during his meeting with members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation in August 2017. The President mandated the Chamber to analyse law-enforcement practices as far as social advertising and to come up with ways to boost the accessibility of social advertising for SO NPOs. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation will maintain a special focus on this issue. In order to support this effort, in November 2017 the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation set up a Coordination Council for Social Advertising and Social Communications.**

Another side of the medal is that the NPO sector is poorly self-regulated. There are very few platforms for alliances and consolidation, and the sector looks very segmented. This results in the mushrooming of all kinds of charity frauds and fake NPOs, allegedly established to engage in political or commercial projects.

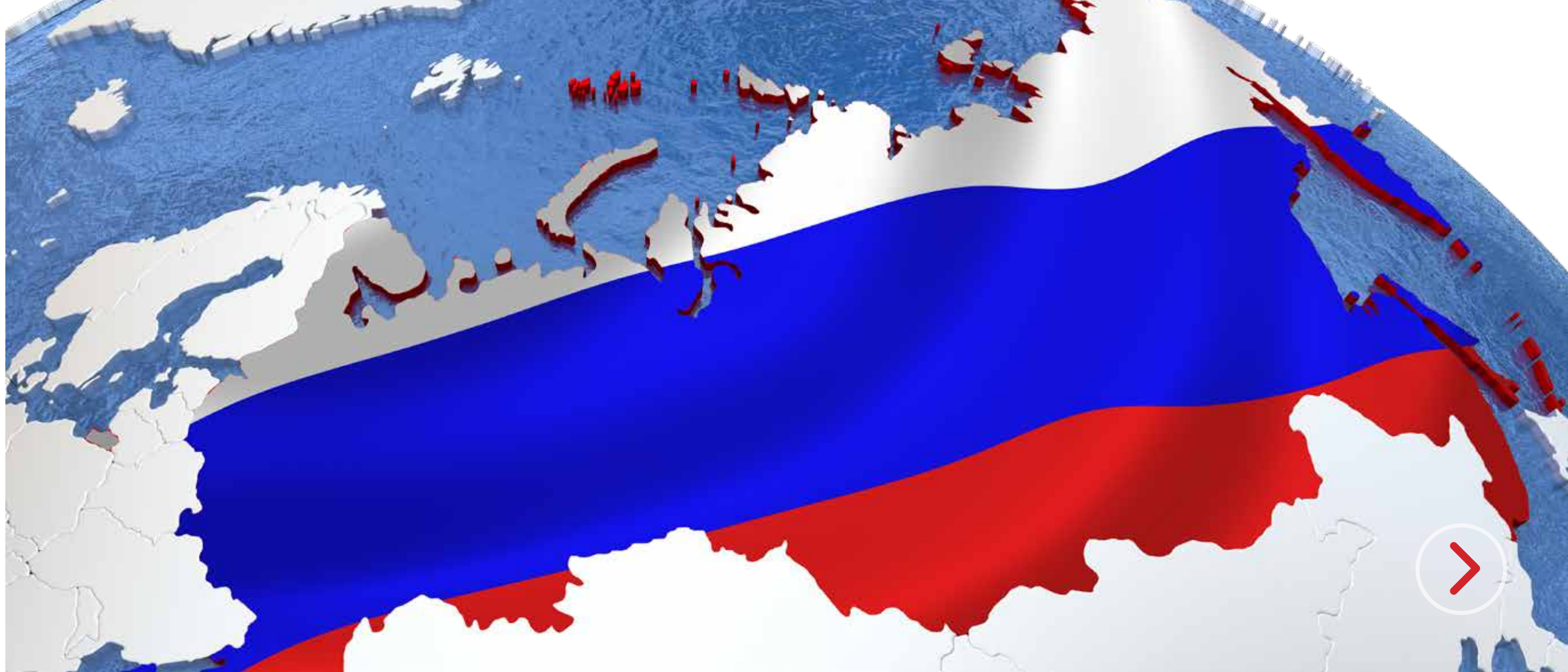
Global practice shows that a **highway to improving overall trust in NPOs across the society is to make sure that they are transparent and open.** Ideally, relevant public reports should be there in the public domain. These reports must be readily accessible for anyone willing to find out about any individual

NPO. These reports are to cover key areas of activity, completed projects, and financial flows. Russia has so far not opted for public reporting from NPOs, and just a few dozen organisations release them. In 2017, the Point of Departure, a competition among best reporting NPOs, resumed its work. However, only 244 reports were submitted. On the one hand, many organisations have neither time nor resources to prepare such reports. Yet, on the other hand, NPOs have little internal and no external motivation to prepare them, even if we speak of charity foundations.

In the meanwhile, transparency is not something that is wanted from NPOs by the government only. The general public wants them transparent, too. Most countries with the advanced third sector have an NPO ranking system where an NPO's rank is determined by the depth of its public report. In order for an NPO to access governmental funding, tax and other benefits, it must submit a more detailed set of data on its activities, including cash flows. In other words, transparency requirements should become more stringent. Thus, a more flexible reporting system is needed for different categories of NPOs. NPO reporting standards could be similar those used by commercial organisations for their non-financial reports. Such standards, once developed, could lay a foundation for communications between NPOs and their external stakeholders, including donors and grant makers.

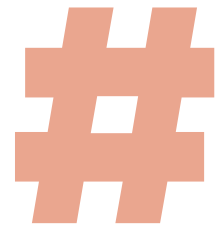
ACTIVE PATRIOTISM

3



SOCIAL ACTIVISM
AS A DRIVER OF MUTUAL AID





Growth of Social Activism

Over the recent years, social activism has witnessed aggressive growth. People use their own effort to compensate for the deficit of social justice.

Some people join protests, and they have every right to do that. Others come up with new ways for tackling social problems and contribute to social innovation.³¹

For example, “My Project for My Country!”, a competition³² organised by the Civic Chamber

of the Russian Federation, has admitted over a thousand unique citizen activism projects addressing social problems and social injustice. The projects range from recycling plastic into skateboards to the organisation of municipal environmental watches and child bereavement programmes, and many others.³³



The My Project for My Country! Award Winners

Natalia Titova
“The Mobile Hospice”,
Angarsk (Irkutsk Region)
Nomination: Social Care. Social Services
and Social Support

Svetlana Burago,
“The Heart Route”,
Kemerovo (Kemerovo Region)
Nomination: Support Sports and Healthy
Lifestyles. Health Protection and Healthy
Lifestyle Promotion

Nikita Vostrov,
“Physica. The Start”,
Tver (Tver Region)
Nomination: Science and Education. Science,
Education and Awareness Development

Daniil Vostretsov,
“ReBoard – the New Toy Story”,
Chelyabinsk (Chelyabinsk Region)
Nomination: Ecology. Ecology
and Environmental Protection

Yulia Betneva,
The “Affordable Housing” Centre for Young
Families Comprehensive Social Protection,
Yaroslavl (Yaroslavl Region)
Nomination: Basic Rights and Freedoms. Human
and Civil Rights and Freedom Protection

Tatiana Cherneva,
“MaMy” (Moms + us),
Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod Region)
Nomination: Family, Motherhood and Childhood
Support. Family, Motherhood and Childhood
Support and Traditional Family Values
Protection

Olga Ermilina,
The “Window to the World” Social Tourism
Development Club for the Disabled, Moscow
Nomination: Youth Policy. Youth Initiatives
Support

Zoya Kareva,
“I Choose My Profession”, Moscow
Nomination: Volunteering and Charity. Charity
and Volunteering Initiatives

Ekaterina Borisevich,
“The All-Caucasus Youth Training Centre”,
Nalchik (the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic)
Nomination: Interethnic Relations.
Strengthening Interethnic and Interfaith Accord

Roman Kazakov,
“The House Management Academy”,
Krasnoyarsk (Krasnoyarsk Region)
Nomination: Public Control. Public Control
over Governmental and Local Administration
Activities

Sergey Skrigin,
“The Scale of History: School and Military
History Museum Exhibitions Refreshment
Programme”, Ulyanovsk (Ulyanovsk Region)
Nomination: Civic Duty. Patriotic Education and
Historical Memory Preservation

Svetlana Leontieva,
“Rehabilitation Workshop for Teenagers with
Mental Disorders”, Kemerovo (Kemerovo
Region)
Nomination: NPOs Infrastructure, Promotion of
Non-Profit Sector and Socially Focused NPOs
Development

Sergey Stupnikov,
The “Russia – the Holy Land: Link between Times
and Generations” International Humanitarian and
Awareness Project for Youth Volunteer Groups
Exchange, Kaluga (Kaluga Region)
Nomination: People’s Diplomacy. Public
Diplomacy Development and Compatriots
Support

Oleg Isakov,
“People’s Pride in the Native Language”,
Syktyvkar (the Komi Republic)
Nomination: Culture. Projects in the Area of
Culture, Art and Cultural Heritage Preservation



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

Another example is the Communities Map, a joint project of the Russian Reporter magazine and the Agency for Social Information. The project is focused on the promotion of best practices of progressive communities in addressing social problems.³⁴

In September 2017, Google, with the support of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, launched the Beyond Capitals platform.³⁵ Its aim is to identify the most proactive, talented, and caring people outside

Moscow and Saint Petersburg to tell others throughout the country about their projects.³⁶

Those who are driven by paramount values prefer action. It is an action that helps them make the society friendlier, more comfortable and fair. These people either step in for the state by taking up some of its functions or they act in its support. **“Active patriotism” looks a more appropriate way of naming this nation-shaping phenomenon.**

Areas of social activity (social engagement) in Russia

21%

of Russians participate in the life of their parish, charities, parent-teacher boards, environmental protection, professional communities and trade unions. Some of them attend elections as observers

13%

help strangers

19%

help their peers, i.e. colleagues, friends, family, neighbours, acquaintances

7%

are involved in dealing with local community issues and/or participate in NPOs

4%

attend educational courses, lectures, and/or have membership in museums and hobby, sports or fitness clubs

3%

engage in civil rights protection initiatives and/or mass actions, demonstrations, strikes, meetings, walking protests, and marches

31%

keep out of any social activities

Source: Public Opinion Foundation



Active patriotism is about helping those who are weaker. It is about protecting national interests domestically and abroad. Active patriotism is about major and smaller projects to revive the country's economy, develop its culture and improve the quality of education. Patriotism is like a seasoning that goes so well with the movements of Russian history lovers, local history fans, and tourism enthusiasts. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation plays a very special role in the creation of domestic tourism promotion tools** (i.e. “Holidays in Russia”, “Crimea in Detail”). It has set up a hotline for travellers, and it keeps focus on relevant legislation and children recreation activities.³⁷

Promotion of the ‘Patriotic Education of Citizens’ state programme and the revival of mentoring as part of “The Generations Relay” project is strongly supported by Russian veterans organisations. These include the Russian Union of Afghanistan Veterans, Paratroopers Union of Russia, Brothers in Arms, Russian Heroes Association, Labour Merit of Russia, Russian Union of Veterans, and others. Members of veterans organisations are eager to share their knowledge and experience, traditions and values with the younger generation of Russians.

A whole range of federal laws regarding veterans' rights to decent social services currently need revision. Such laws include laws “On Veterans” (No. 5-FZ of 12.01.1995), “On the Status of Heroes of the Soviet Union, Heroes of the Russian Federation, and Full Cavaliers of the Order of Glory” (No. 4301-I of 15 January 1993).

However, some regional authorities avoid dealing directly with veteran organisation members and prefer not to rely on them in their work. Veteran organisations thus have to be in a continuous struggle for their rights.

The same is true for elderly people. Non-profit organisations that support seniors are already in operation all over the country. There are dedicated charitable foundations (e.g. The Joy of Old Age, Sofia, Good Deed, Union of Generations etc.³⁸). It is the public effort that helped escalate the topic of developing general standards of care for the elderly and the disabled up to the governmental level.³⁹

Elderly people are a notable part of the civil society, and they deserve being proud of their input in national development. They would rather work with the younger generation to share their experience and traditions than protect their modest rights fighting with heartless bureaucrats of all levels. It is an efficient partnership between the public and the state alone that can form the basis for further civil society development.

Today, there is a number of areas where social activism has produced positive results. At the end of the 1990s, the international Downside Up foundation was probably the only big organisation in the country to help families with children with the Down syndrome. Nowadays, communities and organisations supporting such families exist in virtually every region of Russia. Many of those NPOs are founded by parents with special needs children. These NPOs now widely

group into communities that care about the lives of their children after the parents are no longer there to take care of them.

Our country has been on the reform of the children's homes system since 2014. The reform was initiated by activist public organisations (i.e. Volunteers Helping Orphans Charitable Foundation, Perspektivy Charitable Organization, and others).⁴⁰ They managed to win the attention of governmental authorities and get across their idea that a child benefits far more from staying at a family-type children's home rather than from any form of "institutional childhood". For these children, it is better to get back to their families or to a foster home as soon as possible. As a result of this effort, a new law has been adopted and a reform of the whole network of orphanage institutions has been launched, which reform is being carried out under the control of civil society.

Public monitoring of the children's homes reform

In 2016, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and civic chambers of Russian regions acted as "operators" of public monitoring of the children's homes reform.⁴¹ The monitoring showed the huge and very successful work that had been done: over a short period of time, 72.5% of the 1,440 organisations for orphans became compliant with all applicable regulatory requirements.⁴² This kind of monitoring is to become regular, and officials in the regions with poor progress with the reform will feel strong public pressure.

Russian society reacts strongly against child abuse in orphanages. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has sent a request to the General Prosecutor's Office asking to inspect all children's homes in Russia and assess their personnel's adequacy for their jobs.

There are however more problems in this sensitive area of child protection. Public discussions focus on insufficient support measures for families with children and disputable cases when child protection services take children away from their families.⁴³

President Putin's decree on the Decade for Childhood in Russia was a most important achievement of child protection activists in 2017. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held public hearings on the draft Decade for Childhood Action Plan till 2020.⁴⁴

There is a true boom of inclusivity in education, both in the private and the public sectors. There emerge

culture and sports initiatives aiming to engage special needs children and adults in the social life. These initiatives cover music (e.g. the White Ship project in Khabarovsk⁴⁵), social theatres, and the Paralympic movement. The Special Child Opportunity Map⁴⁶ portal has been set up for parents to select a facility close to their home where their special needs child can study, spend his or her free time, or exercise.



The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation is the initiator of a project to create affordable recreation opportunities for disabled children. So far, not all children's camps and hobby centres can provide a favourable environment for inclusive recreation.

Faith-based organisations now play a more visible role in community service. There are unique projects in each confession. Community service projects of the Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's Central Spiritual Governance for Muslims are well-known and deservingly win public attention and respect. Other confessions have excellent projects, too, i.e. Caritas of the Transfiguration Catholic Bishopric in Novosibirsk that helps women in difficult situations.

Society does change, although the change is stepwise. People, even those who say they never used to be too enthusiastic to donate, start helping, their help extending to not children only, but also to adults. There are dedicated foundations, like "Live. Adult Aid Foundation" or the foundation of Svetlana Izambayeva, which supports HIV positive people. Yet, we have to admit that the number of foundations helping adults is still very low.

Russia now has an institutionalized structure for the protection of rights. There are Human Rights Commissioners of the Russian Federation, human rights commissioners in the RF constituents, Children's Commissioner and children's commissioners

in the regions, the Business Ombudsman, the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, public monitoring commissions, as well as there are non-profit human rights groups. For many years, human rights activists have stood up to bureaucratic injustice, callousness, and despotism.

A number of resonant publications have drawn public attention to the life of patients of psychoneurological boarding facilities. Statistically, almost 150 thousand people are patients of such boarding facilities in Russia. Approximately a third of them are ex-orphans with permanent disabilities or psychiatric disorders. The way these facilities operate and care for their patients has made it to the top of the public discussion agenda. This discussion goes on with the direct involvement of relevant government agencies. **Eventually, the public pressure (including that from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation) has caused the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation to set up a task force to deal with the reform of psychoneurological boarding facilities.**

Efforts of activists are driving public justice humanization. Since the Soviet times, human rights defenders have been talking about the inhumanity and repressiveness of the penitentiary and law enforcement system in general. The currently ongoing humanization of public justice happens through interaction between the society and the state. For years, human rights defenders have been demanding that the government improve conditions in detention facilities, requesting justice in court and milder punishment for minor offences. Activists and rights defenders, acting through public monitoring boards, have gained access to prisons. They are consistently involved in investigations of arbitrary arrests and other abuse of law by enforcement agencies. They raise discussions of the disastrous state of medical facilities in penal colonies⁴⁷, and philanthropists are involved in rehabilitation and resocialization⁴⁸ of ex-convicts.

Another vulnerable group is migrants. **Civil society stands up against violations of migrant employees' rights⁵⁰ and invests effort in the creation of an effective system for integration of migrants into the Russian society.**

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has for several years deliberated the need to develop a programme for the social integration of second generation migrants to be supported by the state and the society.

Contradictory social integration processes, primarily among younger generations, result in some younger people getting under the influence of extremist propaganda. This propaganda usually finds its way through the dissemination of interethnic and interreligious hatred and antagonism.



A fundamental approach to dealing with this problem lies in a pivotal change as far as the efficiency of social integration of youths. This approach is to focus on helping the younger ones assimilate the basic values of the Russian society and turn these values into a real motivation in their private and social lives.

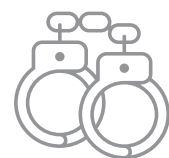
A key element here could be the creation of a system of horizontal monitoring, including the establishment of reference groups for the youths (i.e. youth associations, religious communities, ethnic communities etc.). Civil society institutions are to play an important role in the creation of such system.⁵¹ They are to be put in charge of public monitoring of these communities' alignment with civil values and national regulations. It is equally important to have alignment across civil society institutions with the horizontal monitoring agenda. These civil society institutions are to identify those who rise up against public norms and who happen to be under extremist or, sometimes, terrorist influences.

It is extremely important that civil society institutions support the initiatives and projects of conventional religious associations educating about the basics of relevant religious doctrines. On the one hand, this support will help overcome barriers between the circular and the religious society. On the other hand, this will convince people that extremist and, moreover, terrorism, cut cross with the basics of respective religious doctrines.

For now, neither regional nor local authorities are resourceful enough to come up with programmes preventing interethnic tension, such programmes involving socially oriented NPOs.

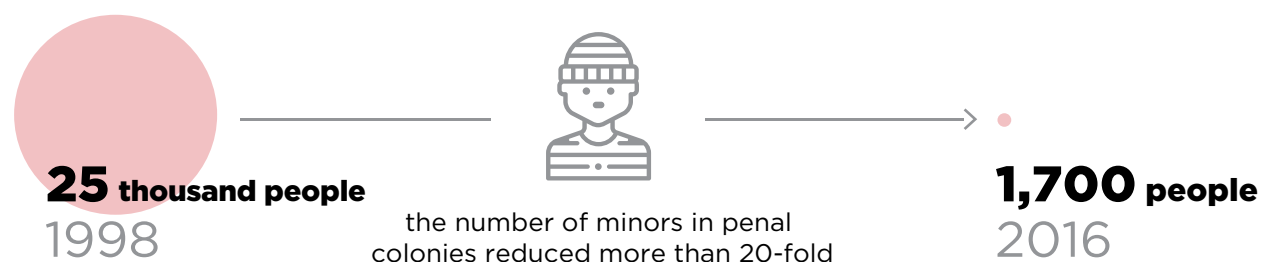


from 8 to 5 years according to some data, to 3 years
average prison term reduced
from 2000 to 2017



To 630 thousand people
the number of inmates
in Russia decreased in 2017

REACHED
THE HISTORICALLY
MINIMAL LEVEL



Source: Expert ONLINE magazine⁴⁹

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has developed and presented to its partners a proposal for the Russian Federation government to pass a guideline that will ensure that a standard allowance (1-2% of total estimated costs) is included in draft budgets of all investment projects in Russian regions. The purpose of this allowance is to fund **inter-ethnic tension prevention initiatives**. These initiatives are to be put through expert assessment by regional chambers and they are to be promoted through the joint agenda of the investor, local authorities, and civil society institutions.

Volunteering has gained truly massive scale in Russia. After thousands of people took part in fighting wildfires and rescuing people during the floods in 2010, volunteering has become a generally recognised social practice for active citizens. The all-Russia social movement "Victory Volunteers" has woven its name in history by its projects of real social value and scale. The mass patriotism of Russians is supported by the success of the Immortal Regiment

march campaign. A tremendous number of younger people are put together by their willingness to do good and help those who need their help.

The so-called **Scouting Movement of Russia** has discovered thousands of burial grounds of Russian soldiers killed during the Great Patriotic war, helped identify their remains and preserve the memory of the war heroes. Established in 2013, the pan-Russian social "Scouting Movement of Russia" with a mission to commemorate those who died while defending our country is one of the largest organisations engaging in scouting operations and military archives search. The movement unites dozens of thousands of scouting volunteers of all ages. This movement has about 1,500 scouting teams in 81 regions of Russia. It was not created "top down", this is another shining example of how the Russian society understands justice: the war is not over until the last soldier is committed to the earth.

In 2016-2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation supported the drafting of amendments

Counteracting terrorist propaganda

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation continues combating the threat of terrorism. The **Coordination Council for Combating Terrorism** that was established for this purpose in 2017 organised a series of events aimed to prevent xenophobic and extremist moods among the younger population and to counteract targeted propaganda of terrorist organisations in broader layers of the Russian population and in the media space. The efficiency of their work is driven by regular interaction with the National Counter-terrorism Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Science and Education of the Russian Federation, and the law enforcement agencies

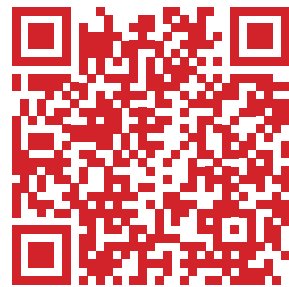
As part of its awareness raising and educational effort, **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has prepared** the Counteracting Terrorist Propaganda⁵² publication and issued a brochure entitled "Methodological Materials for Counteracting Pseudo-Religious Extremism and Interacting with Faith

Organisations" for civic chambers and authorities operating in regions of Russia.

The threat of recruiting Russians still exists as this trend is evidenced by the **hotline of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** for countering recruiters. Over 90% of messages on attempted recruiting communicated through the hotline have been confirmed. This proves that the civil society needs further consolidation in order to deal with this issue.

Therefore, we should focus on developing a **non-government security sector (NSS) in this country.** The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation pursues a consistent policy aiming to improve legislation. This effort is to help establish an efficient mechanism for the use by the national security system of NSS facilities for collection of true and comprehensive information for the prevention of crime and for identification of persons with links to organised crime and/or terrorist organisations.





Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

to Federal Law of 11 August 1995 No. 135-FZ “On Charitable Activities and Charitable Organisations”. These amendments are to regulate volunteering. An action plan for the facilitation to the development of volunteering in the Russian Federation, as well as the Volunteering Development Concept until 2025 have been prepared and approved.



The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation was actively involved in the making of **5 December the official Volunteer Day in our country**. A respective decree by the Russian Federation President was put into effect on 27 November 2017.⁵³ Besides, the year 2018 was officially proclaimed as the **Year of Volunteer**.⁵⁴

Social volunteering develops in every region of Russia. Although slowly, governmental budget-funded organisations are becoming more open to the volunteers who are ready to help those under the care of such organisations. There is a greater regional presence of NPOs focusing on caring after children and adults in hospitals. Volunteers offer continuous tutorship projects at children’s homes. They are there to offer assistance to people with disabilities, nursing homes and psychoneurological facilities. This segment tends to organise into associations, i.e. the Association of Volunteer Centres, the Union of Volunteer Organisations and Movements (SVOD)⁵⁵, and others.

The blood donor movement gains momentum. Active engagement of citizens and inclusion of volunteers in the donor movement has helped deal with the shortage of blood donors. The society now tends to treat regular donation of blood and its components as a norm. Russia has a network of Blood Donation Resource Centres whose mission is to coordinate the effort of the civil sector and the needs of the Blood Service. This work has been initiated by the National Healthcare Development Foundation (the Blood Donation Coordination Centre).

Environmental protection movements become more active. They no longer evolve with the support of grants from Western countries, but rather with the support of domestic resources and, sometimes, pure enthusiasm and active patriotism.

In 2017, announced by the President of the Russian Federation as the Year of Ecology, there was an upsurge in activities aiming to draw public attention to environmental issues.

Historically, since the Soviet times and until now, the most large-scale form of citizen participation in environmental protection has been the “subbotniks”, tree planting, and natural areas cleaning events. Action groups and organisations that stand up for the protection of the right to a healthy environment have become more active in the recent years. The best known ones among them are the defenders of the Khimki and the Selyatino forests, the protesters against nickel mining at the Kopper River, the movements against the construction of waste incineration facilities in Moscow Region and in Tatarstan.

The constitutional right to access information on environmental health is vulgarly violated. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has become a discussion venue for many of the foregoing problems.

Environmental organisations that have for years engaged in a continuous effort to address specific



environmental problems pursue their work. These include the World Wildlife Fund, the All-Russian Society for Nature Conservation, the Sakhalin Environment Watch, Greenpeace Russia, and many others. New environmental NPOs are established, and they rapidly gain popularity, e.g. the Far Eastern Leopard, the Amur Tiger etc.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held the Marathon of Good Deeds in 2017. Over 100 thousand participants from 1,600 settlements across the country sent over 55 thousand reports on the environmental protection measures they took.

Local communities take an increasingly active part in the transformation of the urban environment and their habitats. People no longer wait for local authorities to put a hand on their problems. Instead, they come up with an initiative. Active citizens ‘re-animate’ villages⁵⁶ and monotowns.⁵⁷ For example, activists of the Russian Union of Rural Youth have been implementing the Information and Advisory Crews project since 2012. They have held over 3,600 offsite events and informed about 240 thousand people on governmental support measures and ways towards self-fulfilment in rural areas.

Many towns spanning from the European part of Russia to its Far East now have independent Applied Urban

KEY PROJECT TOPIS OF THE YEAR OF ECOLOGY

- Implementation of a new waste management system and best available technologies
- Protection of the Baikal natural territory
- Preservation of water and forest resources
- Development of the natural reserves system
- Conservation of biological diversity



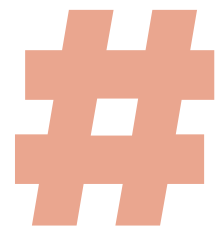
RUB 347 billion
total project funding

Source: 2017 Year of Ecology in Russia website⁵⁸

Studies Centres. The Living Cities community is gaining momentum as well. The Archnadzor (“architectural supervision”) movement in Moscow and their colleagues stand up for the protection of architectural sites in Saint Petersburg. The TomSawyerFest project born in Samara has already gone beyond one city. This project focuses on public renovation and reconstruction of historic buildings with the assistance from local businesses and regional administrations.

Local activism helps with the shaping of a solid local community and its new identity.

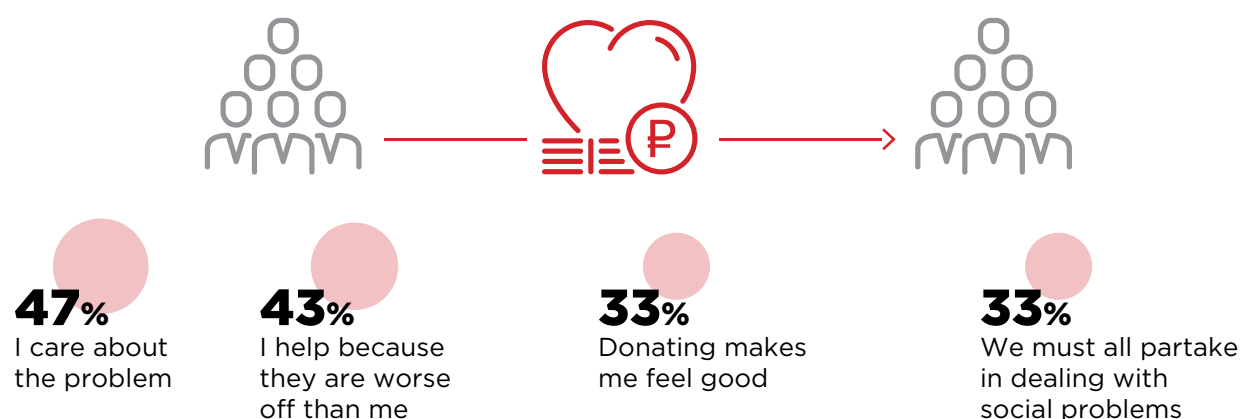
NPOs and civic activists take up the social task to strengthen solidarity, seek justice, and protect human and civil rights. What is more, they give the quickest feedback from ‘the fields’ that enables a better understanding of the problems and issues faced by individuals and gives a better idea about their thoughts, moods, and lives.



Philanthropy

In 2017, **two thirds** of Russians took part in charities⁵⁹. In 2017, private donations to charities amounted to **RUB 143 billion, or 0.34%** of Russia's GDP.⁶⁰

Why do people donate?



A survey by VCIOM (the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre) in September 2017 shows that the number of individuals participating in some sort of charitable activities has grown by 20% over the past decade. In 2007, 50% respondents said they participate in charitable activities. Ten years later, 69% of Russians confessed to engaging in charities. Respondents from Moscow, St. Petersburg and respondents with higher education engage in charities more frequently than respondents from smaller towns, rural areas and respondents with secondary education.⁶¹

Direct cash transfers to the accounts of specific people in need have grown the most (4% in 2007 vs. 32% in 2017). The share of charitable foundations

donors grew at a slower pace (17% in 2017 vs. 4% in 2007). An average donation ranges between RUB 101 and RUB 500 (24% of respondents) or between RUB 501 and RUB 1,000 (17%).⁶²

Charitable projects as a corporate social responsibility tool are the key driver for charity. Along with the traditional donation formats, new types of the so-called smart fundraising emerge, including NFC payments, interactive billboards, QR and barcode activated payments, geographical maps, and mobile apps. Charitable communities develop as an individual branch of charity in social networks and through interactive charities (e.g. Rusfond.Navigator).



Modern technologies and interactive venues in fundraising promote philanthropy and make it increasingly more accessible.

Charity technologies help people feel a 'moment of joy' from the help they have given and to see the visualisation of its immediate effect, even in a mock-up diagram. This is especially important when it comes to fundraising for the 'unpopular' areas involving global scale projects, e.g. funding of disease control studies because this is where no quick results are deliverable or visible. Smart fundraising gains scale, too. Smart fundraising is about comprehensive campaigns with fundraising activity running in the parallel in both the physical and the digital space, including websites, social media etc. This is also a good topic to discuss with children.⁶³

Intellectual philanthropy enjoys rapid development. Lawyers, designers, accountants, and journalists engage in the rendering of their professional services to charitable organisations pro bono, which literally means "for the benefit of the society". Some companies pay their employees for the time they spend working for charitable foundations.

The intensive evolution of charity in combination with the use of new technologies and social media has attracted dishonest players.

In 2016-2017, the professional charitable community has been fighting charity fraud, i.e. fake volunteers, pseudo charities etc.

There are fraudsters who put on a disguise of well-known charities. They set up organisations under the names matching major foundations and use lookalike domain names on the Internet. For example, the now blocked website <http://www.podari-zhizn.com> looked almost the same as the official website



67%
or two thirds of Russians
took part in charitable activities in 2017



53%
more than
a half of Russians made cash donations

of the well-known Gift of Life foundation (Russian: Podari Zhizn).

As part of its effort against unscrupulous organisations, Miloserdie.ru website has published fraudster identification guidelines.⁶⁴ The following are the key ones: a fake philanthropist does not provide comprehensive information on its organisation or its contacts, and no donations or expenses reports, or donations expense plans are posted on its website, etc. Major foundations put their stake on transparency. They release their reports in the public domain. They communicate proactively with the media and through social networks. But before these foundations on-board someone who seeks their help, they always double check his or her background.⁶⁵

On the back of this, the Penza Region Civic Chamber has come up with the proposal to create **the Association of Bona Fide Charitable Organisations, an informal structure for consolidation of fraud-countering effort**, maintenance of a shared database of benefitters, and protection of interests of charitable organisations.

A joint effort of various organisations has brought up legislative initiatives promoting fraud prevention and consolidation of charities. The Charities Declaration of Fair Cash Collection Practices through Donation Boxes was signed in 2017 as part of the "Together Against Fraud" project. The project has already won the support of more than 250 organisations all over Russia.

One of the challenges in countering this phenomenon is the lack of information, and there are no ways for a proper assessment of the actual magnitude of this problem. In its response to an inquiry from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation about ways of managing charity fraud, the Ministry of Internal Affairs wrote that “ministry statistics do not record acts of fraud by fake volunteers and dummy charities that collect donations on public transport and in the streets of Russian cities”.⁶⁶

Therefore, the law needs to be amended in order to give the necessary protections to local communities and charities from fraud. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation will focus on charity fraud management** in cooperation with relevant departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Investigation Committee.

To improve transparency and accessibility of philanthropy, in 2017 Russia joined the International Day of Charity and the #GenerousTuesday initiative for the second time. According to the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), in Russia this year the movement was joined by 1800 partners from 227 localities spanning from Kaliningrad to Kamchatka. Over 2,000 various charity events were held, and the size of online donations was up 1.8 times vs. the previous year.⁶⁷

Another effort to improve transparency and popularise philanthropy was the **launch of the online public voting, or “primaries”, project. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation started this in October 2017 to discuss and promote potential nominees to the National Award in the charitable sphere.** A special popular vote module was made available on the websites of all civic chambers of all Russian regions. The system helped to find information on philanthropists from remote areas and smaller places, not only those that are active on the national scale or in big cities. These ‘primaries’ were an important tool to promote people that would otherwise have been left unknown to the public.⁶⁸

However, despite the higher quantitative parameters describing citizen engagement in philanthropy, the quality of such engagement leaves much room for improvement. Russians would still rather render targeted aid without recourse to specialist organisations, for they still have little awareness of organised charity formats.

A charitable foundation is the very last resort for people to turn to in case of acute need. At the same time, many people just do not know that they can turn to a charitable foundation.⁶⁹

59%
are inclined to trust
charitable organisations

11%
agree that they fully
trust charitable
organisations

8%
are convinced that
all charitable organisations
operate without seeking profit

Research shows that the most serious challenges of the charity sector in Russia are the following:

- **Russians engaging in charities have poor trust in charities overall.**

A survey by the Dobro.Mail.ru portal on trust in charities shows that half of those who help beggars and those who ask for donations on streets with money do not believe them to be really that needy. Forty-three per cent have doubts about it, and only 6% of all respondents have absolute certainty about the honesty of street beggars and those who ask for donations. The share of vigilant people among those who prefer donating through foundations is greater: 63% do not trust people asking donations and beggars on streets. Still, as the survey demonstrates, Russians continue giving away despite the lack of trust.⁷⁰

According to the Centre for Civil Society and Non-profit Sector Studies of the National Research University of the HSE, overall trust in charitable organisations sector started to grow in 2013. As of today, 59% of Russians are inclined to trust charities, and 11% of the respondents agree that they fully trust them. However, only 8% of the respondents think that charities seek no profit.⁷¹

- **Even that Russians now donate more, they still know very little about charitable foundations⁷²**

According to VCIOM (the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre), 70% of respondents do not know any or cannot recall any single charitable organisation, and an overwhelming majority of Russians do not understand what “fundraising” means (92% have never heard it, 5% are only vaguely aware of it but cannot give a definition).⁷³ This is why media coverage of charitable organisations and a wider engagement of mass media in creating awareness of the charity movement are needed. These topics were

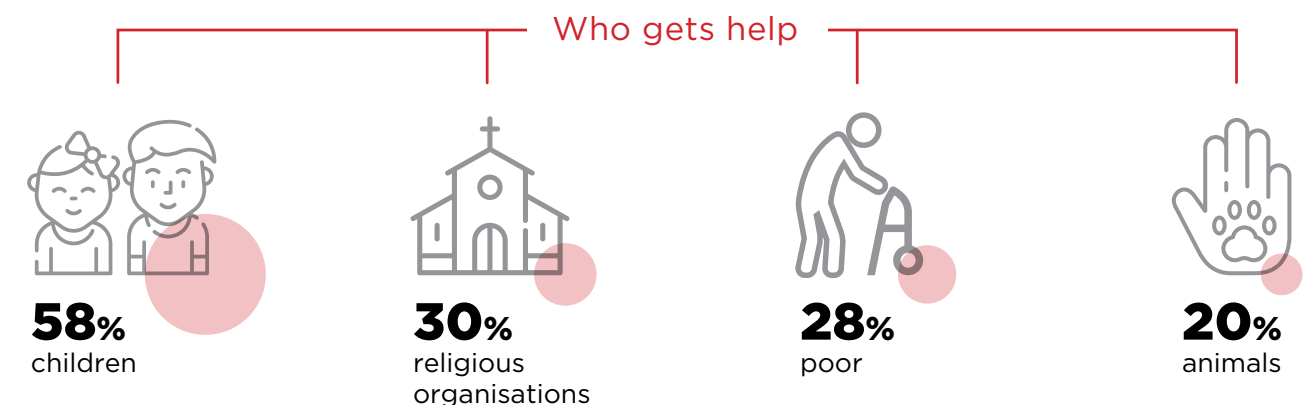
in the top lines of the agenda of the Mass Media vs. Philanthropy round table discussion held by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation in Saint Petersburg.⁷⁴

- **People tend to think that support of philanthropy is the task for major businesses. There are still stereotypes in respect of charitable organisations, philanthropists, and charitable activities.**

In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation arranged a series of workshops and round table discussions to promote philanthropy and expand the number of its participants through engaging artists, sportsmen, and members of other publicly recognised groups in charities. This move was to demonstrate that philanthropy is not a privilege for the rich only. Philanthropy is an opportunity for anyone to help someone else.

Philanthropy is broader than donations. Philanthropy is about blood donors and volunteers who help sick children at hospitals, renovate homes for the elderly, pool money to pay hospital nurses, or arrange transportation to any place of expensive medical drugs whenever there is someone who needs them there.⁷⁵

- **Doing charity in Russia has its peculiarities. For example, people are not always ready to help certain social groups.**



Russians are most unwilling to donate



1%
scientific
research



1%
protection
human rights

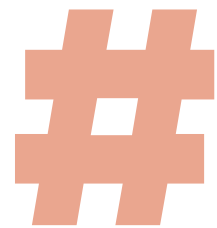


1%
mental
health

When asked by the Public Opinion Foundation “Who are you ready to help first?”, half of the respondents responded that the age does not matter, 32% of them said they are ready to help children, while 12% were ready to help the elderly. Only two persons out of 533 respondents expressed readiness to help adults (which, statistically, corresponds to 0%). Children get help more frequently, and people are a lot more ready to help them.⁷⁶ Russians are more willing to support an environmental project than to send money to a severely ill adult person.

In this context, it is necessary to create a favourable environment for palliative care and, most importantly, to procure sufficient financial support from the government to those social groups who need it the most.

Russians are ready to donate more if they understand how their money is going to be used. They also donate when they are personally engaged with the object of their donation or the relevant topic. This is why NPOs need to involve more people in their work so that they understand the essence and the magnitude of problems in NPOs’ focus.⁷⁷



Volunteering

The year 2017 was a breakthrough one for volunteering because volunteering was recognised at government level as the key driver for civil consolidation.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

During his annual 2016 Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, President **Putin paid particular tribute to the invaluable contribution of volunteers to creating in Russia of an atmosphere of common cause.** He urged to remove all the hurdles for the development of this socially beneficial activity. Alongside other civil society institutions, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has become an active participant of this effort.

Almost two thirds of Russians (65%) believe that volunteering and gratuitous help to strangers definitely facilitate solving the problems that our society is faced with.⁷⁸

According to the Centre for Studies of Civil Society and the Nonprofit Sector of NRU HSE, 66% of organisations resorted to volunteers in 2017, and 42% of Russians engaged in some form of volunteering and/or pro bono activities (mostly territory cleaning and litter picking in urban areas, with more than a half of all respondents participating in this type of activities), or social work (36%) over the past 12 months.⁷⁹

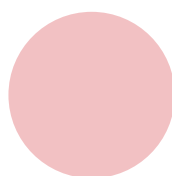
The labour input per one Russian volunteer is estimated as 42.7 man-hours per month. If Russian volunteers got paid for their effort at the average rate of NPO hired staff, the value of volunteer labour resources in the non-profit sector would amount to RUB 16.4 annually.⁸⁰

Volunteer's Profile⁸³

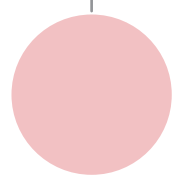


A typical volunteer is a **17-24 years old** female

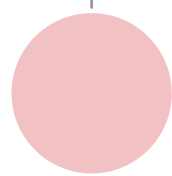
Her top interests are:



82%
helping animals



79%
social sphere



79%
volunteering at events

According to the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh), **the share of volunteers among younger population grew 27% in 2017.** In 2016, Russia had 4,168,228 volunteers, and in 2017 their number reached 5,283,778.⁸¹ This corresponds to about 3% of the overall population on a national scale.⁸²



However, in Russia, social volunteering is not limited to younger people only. Sociologists note a positive trend towards greater engagement in volunteering of the elderly. Thus, a third of all respondents above 56 years old are engaged in social practices, as well as one fourth of respondents aged above 64, and every tenth respondent aging between 72 and 80.⁸⁴

However, according to a study by the Russian Public Opinion Research Foundation, the share of volunteers was 5% in 2017⁸⁵ vs. 3% in 2012-2015⁸⁶. For comparison, according to the European Commission statistics, about 22-23% of the European Union residents engage in volunteering on average.⁸⁷ At the same time, about 63 million people became volunteers in the USA in 2014 and contributed about 7.9 billion hours or more than USD 184 billion in value terms. The economic potential of volunteering in Canada exceeds economic potential in the agricultural, automotive, and machine building sectors.⁸⁸

Despite the available reserves and a great potential for volunteering to develop in our country, **volunteering has not yet won a massive spread in Russia.**

Moreover, **no statistical recording of volunteering in Russia is in place, with virtually all data coming from private surveys and studies.** In addition, some respondents do not view their work as volunteering. The low percentage of volunteers can also be explained by the fact that many people engage in ad hoc activities without any direct involvement in specific projects. According to the Public Opinion Research Foundation,

the number of the so-called 'local activists' that render help in their respective local communities is 30%.⁸⁹

The methodology used by the Rosstat for accounting the volunteers is imperfect, for, in reality, it takes into account the volunteers engaging with SO NPOs only, thus underestimating the overall real number.

The imperfection of ways used to collect official statistics on volunteering gives rise to one more problem. Any volunteering movement can report any number of volunteers, as it cannot be verified. **There is a need for a diligent background and fact checking on volunteering organisations.** This would create additional barriers for unscrupulous practices and abuse.



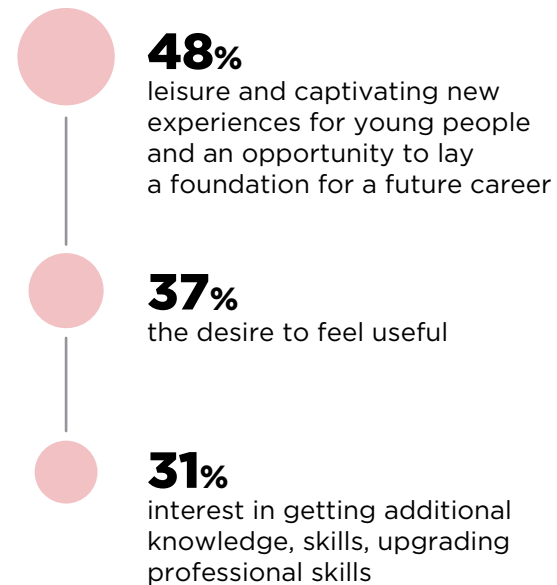
Volunteering has been developing very unevenly over the past years. There is an explosive growth of "event volunteering", i.e. volunteer participation in major sporting events like the 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi, the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students, the FIFA Confederations Cup Russia 2017 etc.

At the same time, the level of volunteering development in the social and medical services spheres is still comparatively low.

The key problem is that managers of hospitals, homes for the elderly and other social institutions are unwilling to admit volunteers in. This happens because of many matters, including work safety and working hours, remain unregulated. Another frequent reason is that these facilities do not want to let strangers within the area of their responsibility.

The rules for admitting volunteers to medical and social institutions keep changing all the time. There are no common rules that would make access universal. Yet, such rules are necessary, as such

Volunteers Encouragement



54%

The most widely spread type of incentives is letters of gratitude and souvenirs

institutions have their own specifics, and a person without the necessary training or a health record may do harm instead of good. The objective is to **create a clear list of more or less fixed requirements for those volunteers** who wish to support medical and social institutions.

The evolution of medical volunteering in Russia is driven by the Medical Volunteers All-Russian Public Movement. The movement is committed to the shaping of the volunteering movement infrastructure at medical education establishments in over 60 regions of Russia. Currently, the movement unites 10 thousand professional volunteers who render assistance to paramedics at more than 200 medical organisations across Russia.

An important point in the history of medical volunteering was the establishment of the first specialised **Federal Healthcare Volunteering Support**

Centre. The objective of this centre is to develop a general approach to organising volunteering in healthcare.⁹⁰

One of the key issues that experts and activists discuss in connection with the development of volunteering is **whether volunteering needs financial or non-financial incentives.**

In 2017, volunteers had a chance to speak up on the matter, as **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, together with VCIOM** (the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre), conducted a survey to identify measures of support that volunteers could choose as relevant. The optional answer in the survey covered travel benefits, discounted mobile communication fees, extra days off, insurance, and free cinema tickets.⁹¹

According to the research, **more than 90% of volunteers in Russia are ready to work for free**, but if incentives were there, they'd stimulate people to give more time to devotion.⁹²

Even that letters of gratitude and souvenirs are still the most widely spread incentives, in the opinion of 58% of all respondents volunteers are more interested in other incentives, e.g. having their leisure arranged, attending round tables with interesting people, mastering of new skills, education opportunities, benefits, and support in getting additional education.

Many experts believe that volunteering is intrinsically gratis and freewill and that it should not be driven by any kind of incentives other than moral encouragement.⁹³

On the other hand, volunteering is to a certain degree encouraged by the fact that **volunteering may be a tool to promote self-development, socialisation, and to strengthen cooperation between countries.**

There should be no doubt about the substance of volunteering. The very status of a volunteer should be an incentive. It could give volunteers preference when entering universities or building their careers. **Russian volunteering needs broader mass media coverage and promotion.** Volunteering is increasingly becoming a form of self-fulfilment. However, there are still some stereotypes associated with the idea of free labour. Some people just do not understand why they should do something if they are not paid for it.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation suggests introducing a national award for individual contribution to the development of volunteering as a potential incentive option. This could be an award that would be similar to the one approved last year, i.e. the Russian Federation award for outstanding achievements in philanthropy. The award could be linked to the results of the annual Russian Volunteer national competition by the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) and the Federal State Institution Rospatriotcentre. Similar practice already exists in the regions. For example, at the initiative of the Civic Chamber of Lipetsk Region, on 25 November 2010, the regional council of deputies instituted the "Lipetsk Region Volunteer" decoration. From 2010 to 2017, this decoration was awarded to 26 volunteers from Lipetsk Region.⁹⁴

Volunteers should not be perceived by administrations and corporate management as a free workforce that has no rights and can be thus seconded to any event whether they want it or not. This perception completely discredits the idea and the value of volunteering for those who are forced to volunteering by administrative pressure. It is necessary to make sure that **volunteering is not a general obligation for everyone** in order not to devalue the status of volunteers in the society.

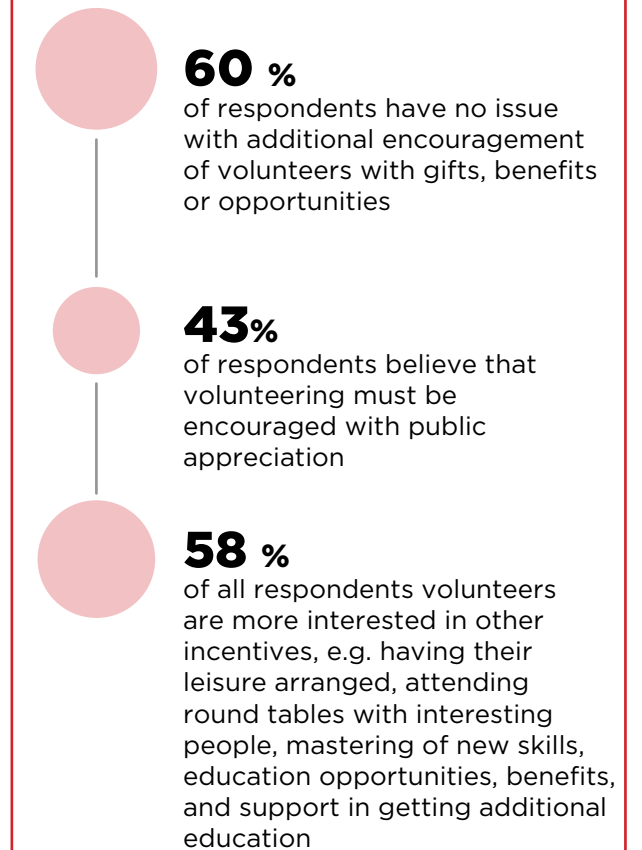
Statutory regulation of volunteering is another important issue to address.

The draft law "On Volunteering" submitted to the State Duma back in 2013 was amended in 2017. The new draft law provides for amendments to current legislation, in particular, to the Federal Law "On Charity and Charitable Organisations" (Law No. 135-FZ of 11 August 1995).

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes that amending the current Law is a better solution as compared to adopting a standalone one, as the new Law will target specific tasks in specific areas. One needs to keep in mind however that formalism and red tape are to be avoided when dealing with volunteering.

The draft law suggests making equal the different versions of the term "volunteering" in the Russian language ("dobrovolchestvo" and "volonterstvo"). Besides, it introduces the notion of volunteer work organisers, volunteer organisations, and volunteering

How to encourage volunteering



support centres. The latter may be either non-profit or governmental. Their purpose is to provide "resource, outreach, information, and advisory" assistance to volunteers and volunteer work organisers. The draft law also formalises volunteer rights and responsibilities, including the right to life insurance and medical aid. The law specifically points out the volunteer right to get "public recognition and encouragement".⁹⁵

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes that the new law on volunteering if adopted, will make interaction with officials easier for volunteer organisations. What is most important, the amendments will formalise the right of authorities to support volunteer movements. There is no statutory provision like that now, and officials often have no statutory grounds to help the volunteers that turn to them.

Experts opine that the law needs to regulate not only the work and responsibilities of volunteers but the work and responsibilities of local officials and heads of federal ministries in respect of volunteers.⁹⁶



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

Key steps to develop volunteering in 2017:

- *Creation of an Action Plan for the “Facilitation to the Development of Volunteering in the Russian Federation”.*

In his Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 1 December 2016, President Vladimir Putin tasked it to design a volunteering development action plan. **The President said that “all barriers to the development of volunteering need to be removed” and urged the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, together with the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI), to prepare a volunteering movement development action plan. The Cabinet was to approve the plan and ensure its proper implementation.**⁹⁷

During the preparation of the Action Plan over 300 best practices of governmental support to volunteering were collected from all over Russia.

The preparation and subsequent implementation of the Action Plan called for the adoption of the Volunteering Support Standard for Russian regions. This Standard outlines common ways for overcoming the obstacles to the development of volunteering.

- *Creation of a Concept for Volunteering Development in the Russian Federation until 2025*

The Concept outlines the key volunteering development areas until 2025 and provides for consistent volunteer initiatives support measures. The document offers the broadest possible coverage of volunteering development prospects across different professional and social groups and age categories. It covers the most diverse volunteering initiatives, including corporate volunteering as part of corporate social responsibility programmes.

- *Establishment of interactive platforms and online resources to consolidate the volunteering movement*

The launch of the Volunteers of Russia⁹⁸ federal online resource has been an important step.

The resource brings civic activists, volunteer centres, non-profit and commercial organisations, state institutions and everyone else involved in the volunteer movement together on one website. Anyone can create his or her profile as a volunteer. By accessing the profile, organisations can find volunteers for specific initiatives or projects. To engage volunteers, non-profit organisations can publish calls for help and up-to-date information on their work. As of the end of 2017, the system had 28,850 volunteers and 1,396 organisations registered, and 636 successfully completed events.

The volunteering movement can be valuable for safeguarding the nation’s traditional values. Along with the existing projects that have proven successful (Victory Volunteers etc.), the format of quests for the young has proven to be efficient. These include the Marathon of Good Deeds, which basically is a competition for the title of the kindest town and the kindest school in Russia. In 2017, over 100 thousand Russians from 1,600 localities took part in more than 50 thousand events intended to create a new attitude to the environment, creative labour etc.

- *Development of an infrastructure for the volunteer movement*

Every year, **the volunteer movement in Russia becomes progressively more structured.** Schools often have children’s volunteer troops which operate with the support of the Russian Schoolchildren’s Movement. There is a developing network of volunteer centres with secondary vocational and higher educational establishments. These centres offer students opportunities for social and professional self-realisation. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the National Healthcare Development Foundation supported the creation of a network of Blood Donation Resource Centres.** The network provides information, methodological and advisory support to the blood

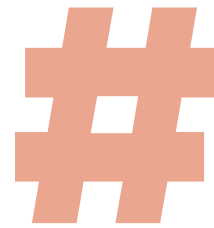
donor movement. The functional scope of these centres is to expand, with plans to hold cross-regional events pursuant to the needs of the Blood Service.

Despite the growing popularity of corporate volunteering in the Russian business community, there are difficulties to be faced. These include, first of all, the lack of volunteering support infrastructure in Russian regions, poor engagement of small and medium-sized enterprises (because they have limited management resources capable of developing and implementing relevant corporate programmes), and the lack of interaction and coordination across entities engaging in the development of volunteering at the regional level. In five years’ time, pro bono should become the core development stream

in the corporate sector. The corporate sector will increasingly render professional services and assistance to charities, public and other non-profit organisation without a consideration. This will be done with the support of the National Council for Corporate Volunteering (NCCV). The council summarises best practices in corporate volunteering and shares them relevant stakeholders.

Major NPOs and relevant governmental and municipal institutions transform into resource centres for volunteering support in regions of Russia. They render educational, organisational, advisory and other support to volunteer alliances. Within the coming three years, the Volunteer Centres Association plans to set up resource centres in every region of Russia.⁹⁹





Non-profit Organisations in the Social Services Market

A direct path towards upgrading the role of the third sector in the economy is to give NPOs equal rights and engage them in the developing sectors of the economy where the main social problems sit.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

These include healthcare, education, culture, sport, tourism, and social services. Third sector organisations are capable of delivering high quality social services in the targeted aid format to certain groups. They help the disabled and the elderly, work on inclusivity initiatives in education and help to those who are in need.

Encouragement of NPOs to enter the social services sphere boosts competition and improves the overall quality of social services. Today, almost nowhere in the world social issues are handled by governments and with funding from state budgets only.

There are countries where social services are rendered mostly by non-profit organisations. It took these countries decades to come to this arrangement. Russia does have truly unique methods and approaches of its own. What is important is that the **NPOs engaging in social services offer a number of advantages, including flexibility and adaptability, and they widely engage employees in the delivery of social services.**

Today, many NPOs deliver social services that are in high demand and address wide population groups. However, other than the immediate recipients of these services, the general public is poorly aware of what these organisations can in effect do. Russia has a long-standing tradition of governmental paternalism in social services. **Whenever the government**

speaks of its intention to quit the social services, this gives rise to general public irritation and misunderstanding, and the state is immediately perceived as going back on its social obligations.

The government has set a course for active involvement of NPOs in social services, with their effort to be covered from the state budget. Institutionalisation of socially oriented NPOs as social service providers and non-profit sector entities started on 1 January 2015, after the enactment of Federal Law of 28 December 2013, No. 442-FZ “On the Fundamentals of Social Services for Citizens in the Russian Federation”. The law opened up opportunities for socially oriented NPOs and other non-profit organisations to participate in the delivery of social services along with state-funded institutions.

In May 2016, after a broad discussion with the relevant community, the Government of the Russian Federation approved a Set of Measures for 2016-2020 to Ensure Staged Access for Socially Oriented Non-profit Organisations to Budgetary Funds.

And, finally, **the Law on the NPOs that engage in the provision of public services came into effect on 1 January 2017.** The key message of the law is that NPOs that deliver social services of a due quality are entitled to special government support and access to the budget. Pursuant to the assignment of the President of the Russian Federation, a complete regulatory framework is already in place, and a register

of SO NPOs that provide social services socially is about to appear.

These major undertakings have transformed the non-profit sector. In early 2016, the number of NPOs providing social services was less than 400. However, in early 2017 registers recorded 1,047 nongovernmental organisations, including 705 non-profit ones.¹⁰⁰ According to the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation, the total of funds transferred from the budget to service-oriented NPOs in 2016 exceeded RUB 10 billion, including RUB 4 billion in education, RUB 3.2 billion in fitness and sport, and RUB 2 billion in culture.¹⁰¹

This has laid a foundation for this sector to develop intensively in a number of regions. Yet, **in most regions, the Federal Law “On the Fundamentals of Social Services for Citizens in the Russian Federation” (Law No. 442-FZ of 28 December 2013) is still not fully operable. In some regions, registers of social service providers contain only just a few NPOs** (e.g. in Moscow), while in other regions budget-

funded organisations deregister as such and register anew as socially oriented NPOs. This emasculates the very idea of the law. One might ask, why this mummery around same providers just changing their form of legal form.

Moreover, non-profit organisations are faced with real challenges when they have to render services of a certain quality on a continuous basis. They are largely unable to guarantee compliance with applicable construction, sanitary, or fire safety rules. **There is absolutely no clarity as far as the size of compensation that NPOs are to be paid in exchange for their services. Standard rates are normally not even close to the market value of such services.** There is also a lot of uncertainty about public purchasing of social services through competitive tenders.

According to the Set of Measures for 2016-2020 to Ensure Staged Access for Socially Oriented Non-profit Organisations to Budgetary Funds approved by the Deputy Chairman of the RF Government on 23 May 2016 (No. 3468p-P44), all constituents



of the Russian Federation are to adopt comprehensive regional plans that will provide for the access of socially oriented NPOs to the delivery of social services. There measures have so far been mostly perfunctory. Some of the coordination boards have never met, and those who failed to update relevant socially oriented NPOs on the work they do. Regional agencies appointed as key operators of coordination boards do not have the power to coordinate across other agencies. But, most importantly, **in most cases, regions do not understand why they should address these tasks and they lack the comprehensive vision of the non-governmental sector development policy.**

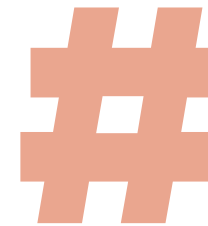
As of the end of November 2017, the register of socially useful service providers included only 45 NPOs. There is **still no clarity about the competitive advantages that the new status gives these organisations.** According to federal legislation, they have two years of guaranteed material and financial support. In practice, no support mechanisms are there. **We must admit that the Law on socially oriented NPOs that engage in the provision of socially useful services is not yet in operation.**

Moreover, **getting the official status of a socially useful service provider is a very time-consuming exercise. In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and relevant community representatives succeeded in getting**

the legislation refined. From now on, the quality of socially oriented NPOs' services can be validated and assured by regional executive authorities along with the federal ones. This will certainly ease the barriers for inclusion on the register. The sector will benefit from the introduction of an electronic document management system to allow for electronic submission of the necessary documents like it is done in the case of Presidential grants where everything is automated, user-friendly and with online status updates.

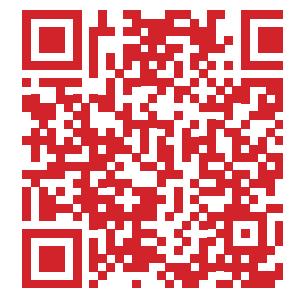
Another area of focus is the involvement of NPOs in rendering services at municipal levels. So far, municipal government leaders neither have an understanding why engage NPOs as municipal service providers nor a motivation, other than by top-down orders, to do this. **And although local NPOs already demonstrate their readiness to deliver social services (i.e. social amenities, sports, culture, and education), so far no local mechanisms for such involvement have been developed.**

In order to complete all the tasks at hand, there is a need for methodological guidance on the part of competent agencies. It is necessary to develop a template of a social services contract that will take into account the specifics and capabilities of NPOs. All targeted federal and government programmes that address public interests must envisage participation of NPOs with their effort to be funded from relevant budgets.



Public Control

Public control is a key communication channel between the society and the authorities.



Please see the multimedia version of the Report for comments from members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

Current understanding of public control rests on two conceptual approaches. The first one is that public control is a fixed legal concept, and only a limited list of organisations, namely the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, civic chambers (councils) in municipalities, public councils of federal executive authorities, and public councils of legislative (representative) and executive authorities in Russian Federation constituents, are deemed public control entities according to Article 9 of Federal Law of 21 July 2014 No. 212-FZ "On the Fundamentals of Public Control in the Russian Federation".

The second approach treats public control as oversight efforts of citizens and public organisations aiming to maintain public order and monitor compliance with current laws.



In fact, the two approaches are not in conflict. Public control entities listed in the Law do not act on their own behalf, they are representatives of citizens and of those organisations that have delegated them to public control entities.

The essentially game-changing Federal Law of 21 July 2014, No. 212-FZ "On the Fundamentals of Public Control in the Russian Federation" was enacted, and so were regional laws on public control in 65 regions. There is however very little positive experience in applying this legislation yet.

Key public control efforts most often take place **at the level of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** and regional and municipal civic chambers. Such efforts include, for example, monitoring of the Unified National Exam process, availability and quality of high tech medical aid and the situation at orphanages and residential care facilities, regulation of relations in the animal rights protection, environmental protection, education, public utilities and all other spheres of community life.

Another area in which the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation is active as a public control entity is the handling of citizen petitions. **In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation received 20,264 petitions from citizens.**¹⁰² Most of them concern the work of law-enforcement bodies, issues in the security, system of state and social domain, and the country's socio-political

and economic development. The key issues raised in these petitions include public utility tariffs, building renovations, and environmental protection. The petitions are mostly filed through the website of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, there are also 'hot lines' set up on the acutest issues.



One of the first public control initiatives of the new Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation was the creation of a dedicated hotline on the enrolment of students with disabilities to academic institutions and universities.¹⁰³ It is important to note that almost 85% of hotline callers eventually became university students.¹⁰⁴ Consistent efforts supported by the Russian Federation President's Commission for the Affairs of the Disabled and the Russian Federation Ministry of Education and Science resulted in initiative amendments to federal laws intended to simplify university admission procedures for applicants with disabilities.¹⁰⁵

The hotline of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation on disability examinations is among the most popular hotlines according to the number of callers.¹⁰⁶ A number of locally made decisions on assignment of disability categories have been reconsidered, and people have been either assigned a disability category or upgraded the one they already had. Most importantly, this initiative has been taken up by regional civic chambers. For example, members of the Regional Civic Chamber and the Civic Chamber of Orsk in Orenburg Region have set up a hotline on issues with the local disability examination board and ran a survey of local residents on the matter.¹⁰⁷

The most advanced public control system currently exists in the housing and utilities sector, which covers 20% of the national economy, is the second largest cost item for every individual and is ranked 1st (along with public healthcare) by the number of complaints. It is not by chance that **most of the appeals to the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation are about the assessment of utility payments and the quality of utilities, apartment buildings management, implementation of refurbishment programs, and exercising housing rights, including relocation from the dilapidated housing.**



Efforts of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation contributed to the recent establishment of a multistage public control system in the housing and utilities sector. The system includes regional and local civic chambers and public councils and engages around 300 relevant non-profit organisations in its work. Approximately 3,000 activists from 1,349 municipalities participate in the municipal public control network.

Perm and Khabarovsk Territories and Chelyabinsk and Tyumen Regions have positive and proven public control practices. For example, Chelyabinsk Region now has its first public housing inspectors. They have been trained at the State Housing Inspectorate of Chelyabinsk Region, and most of them are chairpersons of homeowners' associations or apartment buildings.

Public control is however not equally well-developed in respect of housing rights. This primarily pertains



to protection of the 'cheated housing equity holders'. When enacting the Federal Law "On Amendments to the Federal Law "On Participation in Shared-Equity Construction of Apartment Buildings", the State Duma did not take into account the suggestions of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation regarding special procedures for public control over the Shared-Equity Construction Indemnification Fund and expenses associated with its functions and its powers.

Another serious problem is that NPO efforts aimed at promoting housing law awareness and protection of utility services consumer rights are not on the list of priority focus areas in socially useful services set forth in Decree No. 398 of 8 August 2016 from the RF President. This is an obstacle to registering NPOs as vendors of socially useful services. Besides, this often shuts the door on them as far as regional grants to support socially oriented NPOs.

As part of public control efforts, members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation visited over 40 cities and towns in 2017. They met citizens, held round tables, inspected apartment buildings refurbishment projects, utilities infrastructure condition, winter readiness, looked into the progress of relocation from the dilapidated housing, waste management and other burning problems.

What makes the situation with public control in housing and utilities more difficult is the numerous 'invisible' infrastructure facilities in Russia. For example, one out of five roads in Russia is not maintained by anybody or properly registered. Gas distribution pipelines are in a graver situation, with a half of them unregistered. Depending upon the region, 30% to 70% signposts used for cadastral valuation and boundary surveys have no owners either. As a result, there is nobody to repair and renovate such 'invisible' infrastructure.

This situation is a result of the recent municipal reform. Roads used to be the responsibility of settlement-level municipal authorities. Yet currently, pursuant to Federal Law of 6 October 2003, No. 131-FZ "On the General Principles of the Local Governments Organization in the Russian Federation", the roads are the responsibility of district or urban settlement authorities. That transfer of property across public authority levels caused the current situation with part of the roads not controlled by any authorities. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes it necessary to ensure oversight in this field so that infrastructure facilities would be in a proper condition to make life comfortable.**¹⁰⁸

Another area that requires more rigorous public control is environmental protection. There are concerns



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about the construction of the so-called landfill sites. These facilities are primarily designed to isolate and remove solid domestic waste, but in the end, they cause environmental pollution instead. Residents of Troitsk Administrative District (which is part of New Moscow) **contacted the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** because they were extremely concerned about the construction of the Malinki landfill site, – the largest one in the region and located near them.¹⁰⁹ The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation mediated the matter and **turned to the office of Moscow Mayor asking to look into the situation and meet the locals.** In the end, Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin announced his intention to sign an order to mothball the Malinki landfill in New Moscow.¹¹⁰

governmental support funds which are, however, virtually not accessible for small agribusinesses.



The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation also supported the project of tracking waste collection trucks and where the waste was eventually disposed of. Twenty-nine GLONASS trackers were installed in all districts of Moscow. They were placed in garbage containers in residential areas and in waste bins at medical institutions or construction sites. During the experiment, anyone could check where waste from any specific container went: to a legal waste disposal site, or to an unauthorised dump.¹¹¹

Effective and efficient environmental public control means that citizens get timely and reliable information about the environment. In Instruction No. Pr-2436 of 2 December 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin recommended that the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation should assess the efficiency of solid domestic waste recycling and to make proposals that will ensure taking public opinion into account when building such waste management facilities.

Russian President **Vladimir Putin determined that changing the ideology of entrepreneurial activities oversight should be one of the key principles underlying the economic development strategy. This includes expanding the area of operation for self-regulated organisations as far as possible and handing part of the government functions over to them.** This is especially relevant in the agricultural sector that receives significant

Another area of public control jointly promoted by **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** and the National Healthcare Development Fund is donation of blood and its components. A range of activities has already been completed in this area, including independent quality assessment of services offered by branches of the Blood Bank (the so-called Blood Services) from the viewpoint of their information openness and accessibility. This revealed the key issues in managing blood donors and helped to identify the leaders among Blood Services. A special “Quality Seal” prize has been instituted to incentivize the latter.

Drug provisions to people suffering from cancer or rare diseases¹¹² is another issue in focus. Petitions filed with various authorities, including the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, are infinite: regional authorities fail to deliver on their commitment to provide sufficient amounts of requisite medical drugs, even despite court orders in some cases.¹¹³ To tackle this problem, **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has initiated a series of round table discussions in the regions¹¹⁴** aiming to align the positions of regional authorities and active parents and patients. Such efforts also involve patient associations (“Rare Diseases”, “Hunter’s Syndrome”, “Fragile People”, and many others).¹¹⁵ In equally close cooperation with the patient community, in 2017 the Civic Chamber **held the second Russian**



Oncology Forum to address a broad range of issues that people face when they have heard this horrible diagnosis.

Another important area in public control is **the control of conditions in the penitentiary system.** Eighty-three public monitoring commissions (PMCs)¹¹⁶ are currently operating in Russia. According to the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia, there are currently over 500 thousand people in detention facilities. More than two thousand of them die every year.¹¹⁷ Activists and human rights advocates now have more powers to control the situation of the individuals serving sentence in custody. The goal is to ensure that PMCs only include honest and competent individuals seeking no benefits from joining PMCs. Their sole purpose should be to help the state to deliver punishment in compliance with the law and to help the convicts to serve their sentences in decent conditions. The approved procedure of public reporting on the PMC activities serves this purpose.¹¹⁸ This practice is especially important given the criminalization among the youth. Certain quite numerous groups of young people (aged from 18 to 30) are inclined to crime. According to some data, up to 40% of the total number of registered offences are committed by this category of citizens.¹¹⁹

In 2017, the **Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation re-established the work group for organizing public monitoring commissions and maintaining relations with them.** Besides members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, it includes representatives of the President of Russia’s Council on Civil Society and Human Rights, the Human Rights Ombudsman, public and religious organisations. Adding members to certain public monitoring commissions, which became necessary in the autumn of 2016 when part of PMCs was short of staff after the rotations, was one of the important issues to address. Seventy-five new members joined public monitoring commissions in 22 RF constituents in December 2017.

One of the main forms of public control is the public evaluation of draft statutory and legal enactments. The purpose is to align the socially important interests of citizens, public associations, government agencies, and local governments. Public evaluation as a mechanism aims to engage citizens in the law-making process. It enables quality improvement of new laws both from the legislative perspective and from the position of their practical efficiency and alignment with the needs and expectations of the civil society.

Since 2014, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has been developing the practice of 'zero readings' of draft laws. According to Russian President Vladimir Putin, 'zero readings' are a "real mechanism of direct democracy which we consistently develop and will continue to do so in the future".¹²⁰

In 2014-2017, the **Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation completed 210 public evaluations** of draft statutory and legal enactments, including 12 public evaluations in 2014, 64 in 2015, and 65 in 2016. In 2017 (as of 27 November 2016), the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held 69 public evaluations, including 60 in the 'zero reading' format.

In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held public evaluations of a number of draft statutory and legal enactments aiming to improve regulation of the non-profit sector. As assigned by the Russian President in paragraph 5 of the Russian President's List of Assignments of 01.01.2017 No. Pr-16, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held a number of 'zero readings' of draft statutory and legal enactments regulating qualification of SO NPOs as vendors of socially useful services.¹²¹

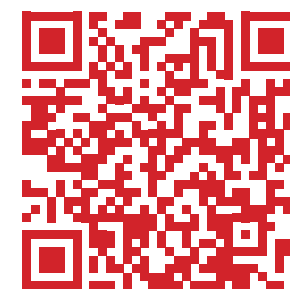
Draft Federal Law No. 274618-7 "On the Federal Budget for 2018 and the Planning Period of 2019 and 2020" was discussed in such zero readings. As a result, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation concluded that the proposed draft federal budget conflicted the Russian Federation President's assignment given to the Government of the Russian Federation. The assignment was to "prepare a detailed action plan until 2025 to enable national economic growth at rates outpacing the global level with the first deliverables of the plan to become visible as soon as in 2019-2020 and, thus, to enhance Russia's position in the global economy". A number of provisions contained in the draft law call for major amendments.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held public hearings and evaluation of the draft Federal Law "On Changes to Article 19.28 of the Russian Federation Code of Administrative Offences and Article 1 of the Federal Law "On Countering Corruption" (as far as introduction of a more stringent liability for corruption)" and of the draft Federal Law "On



Changes to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (as far as introduction of a more stringent liability for corruption)". These draft laws suggest a more extensive notion as far as the subject of corruption offences by including delivery of non-monetary services, vesting of non-proprietary rights, and other unfair preferences in its definition. The authors of the draft laws, however, failed to make a reference to the efficiency of the norms of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation in its running version as far as countering corruption. There is also no reference to the fact that some changes to criminal legislation are driven by the needs of law-enforcement and judiciary authorities, as new social phenomena emerge and call for the fine-tuning of relevant statutory regulations. These draft laws in their proposed versions found no support from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation.

Further to its 2016 initiatives against encouraging suicidal behaviours among minors, in 2017 the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation held a series of public evaluations of relevant draft federal laws. Those included, in particular, Federal Law No.76354-7 "On Changes to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation". The Civic Chamber did not support the draft due to its significant deficiencies. However, the next legal initiative did find support with the public evaluation board, i.e.



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the drafts of Federal Law No. 118634-7 "On Changes to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Russian Federation in terms of introduction of additional mechanisms to counter activities encouraging suicidal behaviours among minors" and of Federal Law No. 118707-7 "On Changes to Individual Legal Enactments of the Russian Federation in terms of introduction of additional mechanism to counter activities encouraging suicidal behaviours among minors" subject to comments and proposals during the evaluation. At the time of the 'zero reading', the criminal law did not provide for liability for spreading information encouraging actions that threaten children's lives and/or health, including self-injury and suicide, among children. In this light, the proposal to introduce criminal liability for such actions contained in the draft laws found the support of the public evaluators as being timely and justified.

Yet, the social impact of public control is so far insufficient. There are methodologies and reports, but there is no effective public control system at the local level. This, again, brings up the issue of the imperfect legislation at the regional level: there are no by-laws, there are no legal precedents, the status of public controllers and findings of the completed checks is not clear.

The Civic Chamber believes that the Law should be adjusted after the fundamental development vectors of the public control system are defined.

First, federal legislation should be **amended to make the powers of public control entities and oversight mechanisms more specific.**¹²²

Such crucial areas as the judicial system, law enforcement, defence, banking, elections, etc. need public scrutiny and control. The Federal Law, however,





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stipulates no such procedures given the specifics of those areas. Control over protection of orphans' rights is a separate issue. For example, Article 2 of Federal Law of 21 July 2014, No. 212-FZ "On the Fundamentals of Public Control in the Russian Federation" stipulates that public control of care for orphaned children and children without parental custody should be governed by the applicable federal law. Such federal laws are however currently non-existent.



Besides, **efforts of public control entities at the regional and local government level need coordination.** The system should include public councils established at the executive authorities and law enforcement agencies. It is the public councils that must become the foothold of regional public control in the future. The current Federal Law lacks a sufficiently clear conceptual framework, which is a critical issue. This results in diverse interpretations and difficulties in implementing its provisions, which impedes systemic improvement of the legal foundation for public control. **The notions of "public authority", "public interest", "worthy cause" or "socially useful activities", "public control object", "public control entity" etc. should have more straightforward definitions.**

Activism in the public control sphere has the reverse side as well. Precedents have already been reported when unscrupulous social organisations abuse the Law to blackmail commercial entities and even

state-owned companies.¹²³ Fake controllers would hold an "inspection", issue a "breach report" and start threatening businessmen with legal recourse, effectively engaging in extortion. Such fraudsters take advantage of the lack of legal knowledge in business to act against the law.¹²⁴

Public control must be a civil society element rather than a personal enrichment mechanism.

For the law to be successfully applied, there must be liability established for both public control entities and individuals hampering public control. Article 27 of the Federal Law "On the Fundamentals of Public Control in the Russian Federation" stipulates that offenders may be prosecuted. This provision is however not yet fully reflected in the sectoral legislation. Other issues of public control development include imperfect or lacking mechanisms for the non-government financing of public control entities.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes in the need to define a public control development road map. It would ensure a comprehensive set of legislative, organisational and financial measures and establish the responsibility to account for public control results.¹²⁵

On 17 July 2017, **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation re-established the Electoral Rights Monitoring Task Force.** For two months in advance of the single voting day on 10 September 2017, the society actively engaged in the public control of elections. The Task Force provided methodological and informational support and helped to establish similar groups at the civic chambers of the following regions, where they actively participated in public monitoring: Belgorod Region, Perm Territory, Sverdlovsk Region, Yaroslavl Region, Republic of Buriatia, Kirov Region, Tomsk Region, Omsk Region, Karelia Republic, Mari El Republic, Mordovia Republic, Republic of Udmurtia, Kaliningrad Region, Novgorod Region, Ryazan Region, Saratov Region, Sevastopol, Supplementary regions, Bryansk Region, Kursk Region, Khanty-Mansijsk,

Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. Over 2,000 public observers in more than 20 regions participated in public control of the elections during the single voting day representing task forces of the civic chambers, and over 40 events were held at the federal and the regional level. Several regional civic chambers issued their own handbooks for the observers participating in elections.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation operated a 'hotline' for protection of the citizens' electoral rights. Similar 'hotlines' were also established at several regional civic chambers. On the election day, two observers call centres operated in close contact – at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the call centre initiated by the Belgorod Region Civic Chamber.

Legislative recognition of the right of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the regional civic chambers to send observers to voting precincts during the Russian presidential election establishes a new important form of civic engagement. Besides, it creates all pre-requisites necessary to establish an elections public monitoring mechanism that is independent of candidates and political parties. It also helps to improve the election process transparency. This right needs to find its way into RF State Duma deputy elections, the election of governors and legislative bodies



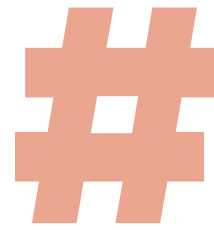
in Russian Federation constituents, and into public referendums at the federal and regional levels.

On November 21, **the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation signed an agreement** regarding control over electoral rights protection and election observers training. For example, approximately 100,000 observers delegated by civic chambers are expected to participate in the elections of the President of the Russian Federation.

Similar agreements are being signed at regional levels. Tula Region has had such agreements for a few years, and they have proved efficient.



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Public Diplomacy: Russia's Soft Power

Civil society is a pillar of both domestic and foreign policy of the government.



The Russian civil society consistently promotes dialogue based on the principles of equality and mutual respect between countries and nations despite the stronger pressure put on our country by the West in 2017. The unilateral sanctions result in material social and economic damages suffered by the states that initiate those sanctions. In such a troubled international environment, Russian NPOs involved in public diplomacy work hard not to allow relations to deteriorate and to activate the collaboration with civil society institutions worldwide that has already been established.

Public diplomacy is a response to global challenges. When politicians fail to reach an agreement, common people get involved, clear initiatives are implemented, and people and organisations that would like to continue collaboration and promote peace and stability do succeed in building bridges. Public diplomacy has a number of serious benefits

compared to official diplomacy. It is less costly, its methods, approaches and contents are more diverse, it relies less on stereotypes, and takes into account the differences in social and cultural environments, as well as in customs and traditions.

Public diplomacy is an innovative technology of public self-organisation used to prevent conflicts or resolve them in an amicable way, bring states and nations closer, improve the living standards and protect the environment. A public diplomat is essentially a new profession and an extremely relevant one.¹²⁶

Public diplomacy is the most important focus area for the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation. In September 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation was re-elected to the Presidium of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS) that unites organized civil



society institutions from 75 countries worldwide, which is one example of successful efforts in this domain.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation follows the principle “From personal contacts to intergovernmental contacts” in its international activities. The meetings with civil society organisations from Europe and North America held in 2017 proved effectiveness of such work. For example, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the European Economic and Social Committee held a joint workshop initiated by the European party after a three-year break. And although the US Department of State objected, a delegation of New York state senators paid a visit to the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation. Collaboration with the Asian partners, in particular, China, Vietnam and Laos, is enhanced. Integration processes get stronger throughout the Eurasian region in general. Public representatives participate in all CIS, CSTO, EEU, Greater Eurasia, SCO and BRICS summits.

Russian NPOs are extensively present at international forums, which helps with the extremely important task of sharing objective

information about our country. **Members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation take part in events run by the OSCE, the UN Human Rights Council and the Council of Europe**, thus making sure that the matters that are topical for Russia remain on their agenda. Such matters include protection of traditional values, fighting aggressive nationalism, religious intolerance or neo-Nazi trends that become more pronounced in certain European states, counter-terrorism measures, and drug interdiction. As a result, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation received OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings M. Jarbusinova, the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on human rights I. Jazairy, and the OSCE Special Representative on Countering Radicalisation and Violent Extremism P. Neuman as its visitors in 2017. Besides, the **Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation initiated the international conference “Combating Drugs and Related Crime**. The interaction between the State and the Civil Society”, with Yu. V. Fedotov, the UN Under-Secretary-General, as a participant.



Our assertiveness is shared and supported by some countries and intensely opposed by other. The attempts to isolate Russia failed to yield the desired outcomes as evidenced by major international summits, sports events and international projects held in 2017. Examples include **the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students, and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation** played an active role in organizing and holding it. Participants and guests of such events coming to Russia from different countries can see the social and economic progress in our country with their own eyes, they get to know our people, and take home a friendly and hospitable image of our country.

Growing **interest in the Russian language and culture** becomes more prominent worldwide, therefore, there is demand for systemic efforts creating the conditions necessary to learn Russian. The successful **implementation of the 'Russian Corner'** project supports the idea: in 2017 alone, the number of requests for multimedia textbooks for learning Russian tripled. Given that, it is important to pool best practices used by foreign NPOs promoting Russian culture abroad, develop systemic support measures, and set up a system to promote experience sharing among such organisations.

In the modern international policy context, humanitarian efforts of Russian non-governmental organisations that produce an immediate impact on people's lives become increasingly important. Actions like delivery of solar panels and new textbooks

for a Russian Orthodox school in the suburbs of Jerusalem,¹²⁷ or delivery of Russian language and literature textbooks, ABC books, first readers, and arts learning guides to the Republic of Tadjikistan¹²⁸ by the **Russian Humanitarian Mission**, a Russian public organization, give rise to natural gratefulness and generally good feelings towards our country.

The tradition to gather supplies for relief cargos sent to Syria continues, which delivers a dramatic growth of interest and gratitude to Russia in that country. Over a thousand textbooks, books and multimedia learning aids were prepared and delivered to citizens of Syria in 2017.

Protection of Russian citizens abroad is an extremely important topic. They frequently fall victims to crime, and people who find themselves in a foreign environment and who do not know the language and the customs of the country where they are proven unable to protect their rights.



In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation established a task force to monitor the court proceedings into the January 1991 attempted coup case in Vilnius. An important part of this initiative is to free the former tank commander Yuri Mel from prison. He has already spent some four years in a one-man cell without any charges pressed against him.

Proactive efforts to protect citizens' rights continues in the South-East of Ukraine as well.



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The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation receives hundreds of letters on citizens' rights violation by Kyiv authorities and prepares, with support from lawyers, a series of lawsuits to be filed with the ECHR.

In addition, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation pays close attention to preserving economic and social stability in Transdnier. Following up on the agreement signed by the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and Transdnier representatives and using the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation as a platform, specific steps to develop relations between the civil societies of the two countries and joint actions aimed to resolve the problems of Russians residing in Transdnier were discussed. These efforts involved the Chairman

of Transdnier Government and members of the State Duma.

Friendship, partnership, mutually beneficial contacts mean painstaking work. Russian public diplomacy organisations work persistently to establish, maintain and develop horizontal human contacts between Russia and other countries, and to make sure that they would demonstrate their resilience and be an example of "structural resistance" despite any challenges.

In the times of sanctions, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation bridges the Russian society and the West. It is the mechanism to overcome the fictitious separating lines.



4 CIVIL SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE



ON THE WAY TO SOCIAL JUSTICE,
TRUST, AND SOLIDARITY



The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation sees combating poverty as one of its priorities



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Russia is the world's richest country by the size of its territory and natural resources.¹²⁹ At the same time, according to Rosstat, the Federal State Statistics Service, 21.1 million Russians (14.4% of the population) have income below the minimum subsistence level¹³⁰ and 12.1 million Russians (16.8% of the employable population) are "working poor".¹³¹

Near the poverty line are 93% of agricultural workers; 93% employees of consumer industry; 87% of educational sector employees; 85% public healthcare employees; 83% employees of the services sector,

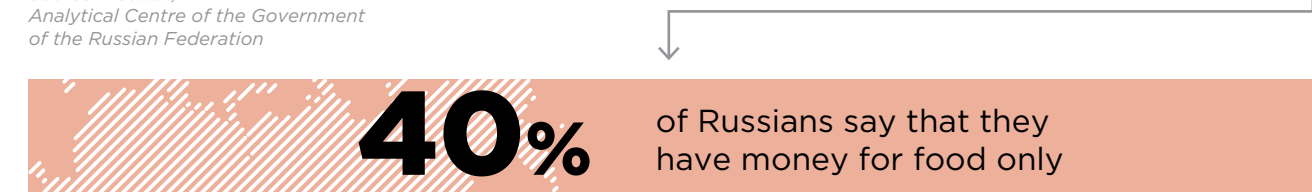
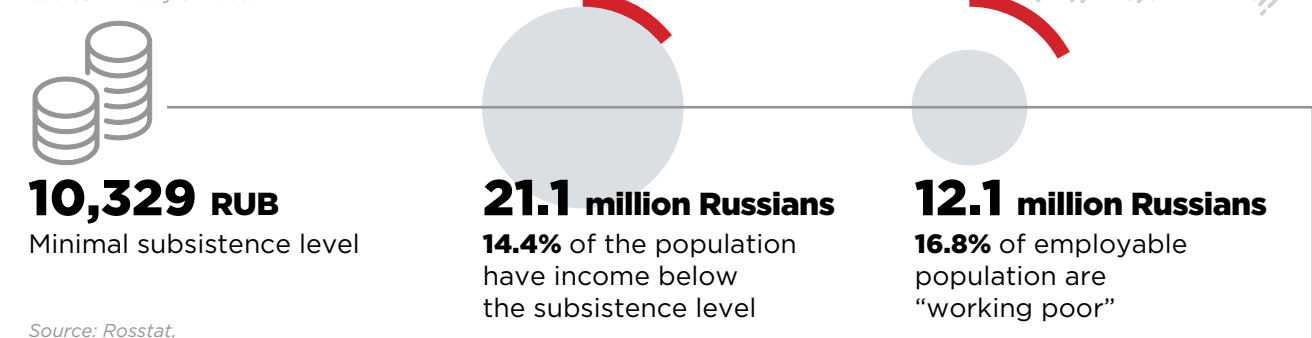
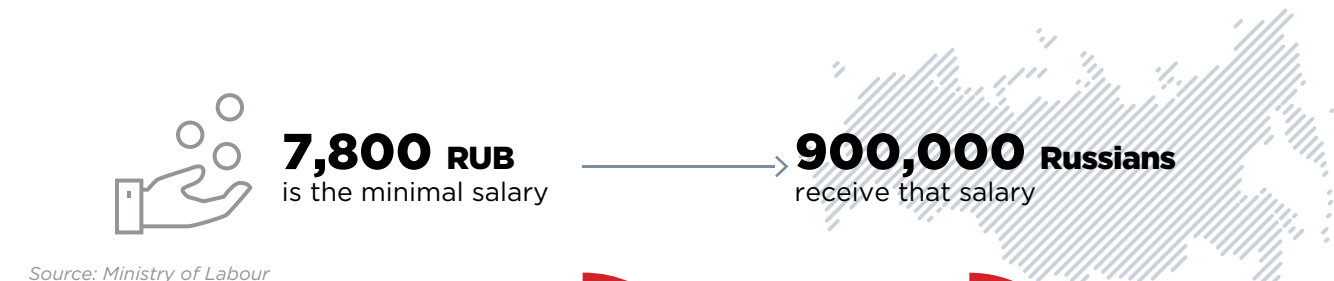
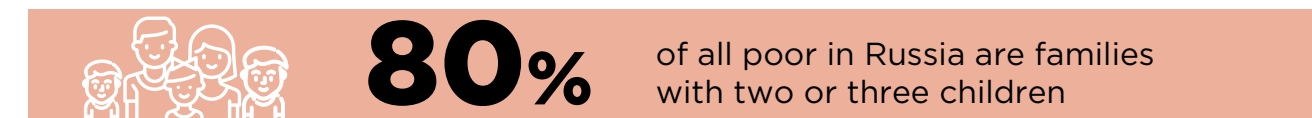
including utilities, social and other services, culture and sports.¹³² Currently, 80% of all poor in Russia are families with two or three children.¹³³

Forty per cent of Russians say that they have money for food only.¹³⁴ Actual numbers may be even higher because people prefer to give socially acceptable responses and are ashamed of being ill-provided.

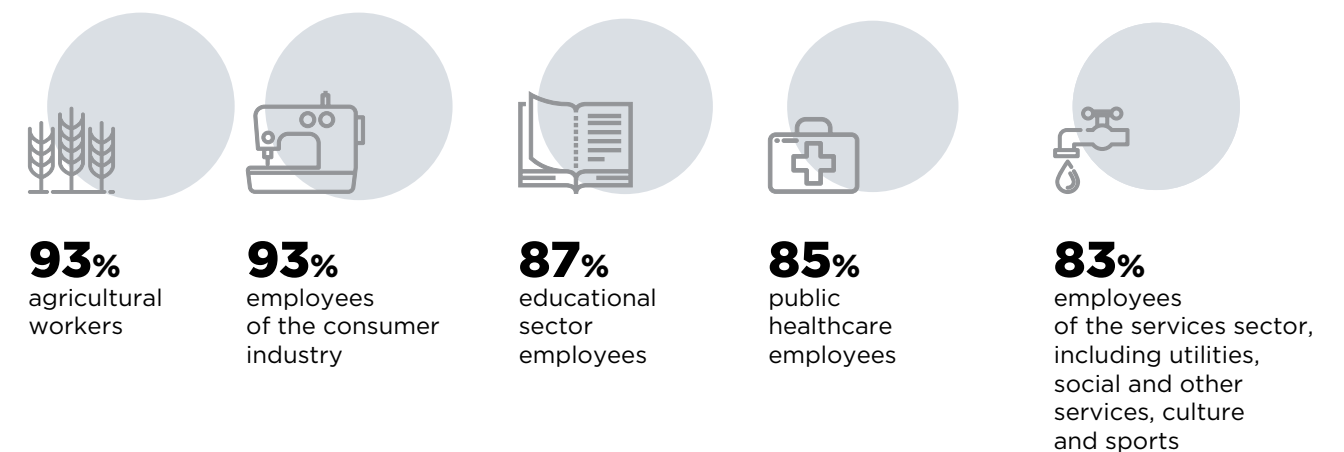
There is a strong need for justice, honesty and respect in the Russian society, sociologists suggest.¹³⁵ This is extremely important. In good



POVERTY



NEAR THE POVERTY LINE



times, people pay little attention to those values, yet their lack is always noticed during the periods of decline or crisis.¹³⁷

Currently, 61% of Russians claim that modern Russian society is unfair.

They believe that injustice manifests itself through social inequality, unfair income distribution (16%)¹³⁸, low living standards (9%), corruption, theft, no punishment of corruptionists (5%), no care of people (4%), lack of legal order (4%), etc.¹³⁹

The average salary in Russia Russian before tax is RUB 38,083¹⁴⁰ (which is less than that in Serbia, Romania, China or Poland¹⁴¹). Besides, this number is calculated as the mean value of the salary of a state corporation top manager and, for instance, a postman. And those salaries are different many times over.

Consider the example of how the salaries of university rectors and research and teaching staff compare. Why do junior research fellows and young teachers earn RUB 7,000 per month and some rectors earn millions? Resulting from such injustice is the obvious: young specialists see no potential for development in the academic and scientific sector, the layer of promising scientists and teachers is destroyed, universities become uncompetitive, and the higher education system in Russia remains in a general crisis and fails to provide skilled resources for the country.¹⁴²

Or take the gap between salaries in business and the public sector. Why should a person who opted to serve the society and became a teacher, a doctor or a social worker assume huge workloads (including lots of paper-based reporting¹⁴³), hold several jobs, take additional teaching hours just to earn the regional average salary?¹⁴⁴

Or the gap between salaries in the RF constituents and in Moscow. Instead of earning a fair wage in their regions and developing them, people have to relocate to the capital looking for a better life. Even supermarket staff in Moscow can earn more than teachers or doctors farther away from the capital.

The situation is similar inside Russian regions, where a huge gap exists between the living standards in urban and rural areas.

The official wage benchmark in agriculture stands at 55% of the average salary in the national economy,¹⁴⁶

Rural areas development

Villages receive only 10% of the state funding allocated to a region,¹⁴⁵ and their development under federal programmes does not take into account local specifics, resources and opinions of the residents. This impairs the sustainable development of rural areas.

which inevitably results in economic migration from rural areas to cities.¹⁴⁷ The outcome is 2,267,900 abandoned households (12% of their total number).¹⁴⁸

Such contradictions and issues, social distances and property disproportions result in injustice, which in turn causes social tension.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation launched an online survey of the residents of the Russian Federation regarding their attitude to poverty and social disparity. It proposes to use its outcomes to establish a system for protecting the interests of the most vulnerable groups of the population. According to the initial results of the survey, **Russians believe that poverty threshold is a monthly income of RUB 20,000.**

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes that overcoming poverty and social injustice is to be structured along several streams.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation proposes to establish a system to prevent or mitigate key social risks that reduce the income level. Potential measures include a review of the social support system at the regional level followed by its optimisation. Other possible steps to reduce poverty are re-focusing the current category-based social support system towards targeted support and introducing a universal family income supplement.

Potential measures to reduce poverty include re-focusing the current category-based social support system towards targeted support (including **ration stamps**), the introduction of a universal family income supplement, establishment of statutory **allowable multiples for the correlation** between salaries of regular employees and managers of state-controlled enterprises and organisations.

Wealth inequality results in inequality in other areas. **Throughout the year 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation has been pointing out the issues of dilapidated housing, violation of good faith purchaser rights, lack of equal access to proper quality social services and social infrastructure**

Preserving villages by providing state support to farmers and rural cooperatives

Insufficiently active support of farmers and agricultural cooperation squeezes population away from villages. Major agricultural holdings currently receive up to 98% of credits and subsidies that the state grants to rural areas.¹⁴⁹

As a result, rural residents have been “defarmed”: they do not own either land (currently, 81.5% of cultivated areas are controlled by 0.113% of agricultural organisations¹⁵⁰) or personal subsidiary plots (27.7% rural residents cannot produce anything at all for their families).¹⁵¹

Agricultural holdings do nothing to address social issues,¹⁵² they do not care about soil fertility,¹⁵³ and they do not revive villages. All such efforts are taken by common farmers who live on their own land and cultivate it. They are small but most motivated investors in the social development of their villages.¹⁵⁴ Consider the example of the “We Remember. We are Proud. We Inherit” project¹⁵⁵ at the Teply Stan farm owned by A.V. Shipulin at Khutor Vostochny, a village in Leningradsky District of Krasnodar Territory. In 2010, local residents established a cooperative and accumulated their own funds and subsidies from the state budget to set up gas supply infrastructure, restore a nursery school and a club, they rescued the local junior secondary school from ‘optimisation’ and created a pasture to develop cattle breeding at personal subsidiary plots.

The state should reconsider the rural support system. It should focus more on smaller business formats and ‘make a large step forward to develop rural entrepreneurship’.¹⁵⁶

One of the potential tools to resolve the low rural incomes issue is rural cooperatives, people, however, lack the required knowledge. This is why the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation suggests using it as a venue for a national workshop on the topic, as well as holding such events as part of the ‘Community’ forums.

Besides, **the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes that the profile of living in the country should be raised, with rural problems discussed and addressed at a completely new level.** To this end, in plans to run the “**Good Deeds at Home Village**” competition in 2018.

This is the only way to help revive villages and improve rural living standards.

in education, sports, and culture to authorities of all levels.

About 159,000 Russians still live in dilapidated housing. There are also those who became owners of the so-called “new substandard housing”, and about 32% of new residential buildings belong to this category.¹⁵⁷ The state budget-funded programme for relocation from dilapidated housing also raises serious concerns. There are no particular suggestions as far as establishing a permanent mechanism for relocating people from housing officially acknowledged as dilapidated after 1 January 2012.¹⁵⁸ **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and regional civic chambers have raised this issue** on many occasions at their forums.

In 2017, protection of good faith real estate purchaser rights remains on the agenda. **The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation continued the discussion** of this issue as it held a ‘zero reading’ of draft Federal Law No. 243975-7 “On Changes to Article 302 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation (in terms of improving protection of rights of good faith purchasers)”. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation stressed that the practice of taking real property from good faith purchasers that paid for it must be stopped completely. Overcoming negative trends in court practice could emphasise the importance of constitutional provisions on the equal protection of all forms of ownership. Legal mechanisms enhancement in this area should start with the update of the Uniform State Register of Immovable Property to ensure the reliability and accurateness of information on property owners contained in it. And the introduction of liability mechanisms will guarantee that no favourable conditions for illegal dealings with real property continue in the future.

The issue of unequal access to proper quality **social services** and critical social infrastructure becomes increasingly acute. This is primarily due to the deficit of social, medical and educational infrastructure in remote areas. Besides, the legacy system is still in place, with social services only available to citizens at the place of their permanent registration.

For example, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation encountered situations where branches of the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation refused¹⁵⁹ to pay disability pensions because their recipients have no permanent resident registration.¹⁶⁰ The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation put its hands on this issue¹⁶¹ and won the support of the Ministry



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72%

of disabled individuals do not leave their homes due to the transport accessibility problems

of Justice of the Russian Federation.¹⁶² This effort resulted not only in the successful resolution of individual cases, but also in the review, which is currently in progress, by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation of its own order in terms of the package of documents and sufficient grounds required to award pensions in the absence of a permanent resident registration.¹⁶³

The outrageous cases of indifference and lawlessness when a person could die while waiting in a queue to see a physician at an outpatient's clinic, a cancer-stricken child would be prohibited to go to school strike massive public outcry.¹⁶⁴

Disabled individuals are still among the most exposed groups. Despite the task to ensure inclusivity, the unspoken denial of educational institutions to accept children with disabilities still persists. A disabled child would be denied access to a camp or a theme park.¹⁶⁵ Having no enabling **accessible environment**, individuals with disabilities cannot live a full life and even go anywhere in their home city because the transport is not suitable for those who are physically disadvantaged.

Employers do not seem to be lining up to hire disabled individuals either: only 25% of the country's working-age population with disabilities are employed.¹⁶⁶ The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation has been tasked to boost this percentage. Efforts in this area include the **ABYLIMPICS PROF** National Championship of Professional Excellence for disabled individuals that took place on 1-3 December 2017. That was the third

time when this event being a venue for businesses to meet their potential job applicants was held.¹⁶⁷

In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation seriously reconsidered its approach to disability issues. **It re-focused on the overall system of government support to people with disabilities rather than individual groups or spheres of life.**¹⁶⁸ This is important as the system staggers upon gaps in the multi-relay coordination between a huge number of "supervising" ministries and agencies.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation receives numerous complaints from people with disabilities about the never-ending requests of medical re-examinations, lack of transparency of decisions on the award of the disability status to children or a disability group to adults, and the need to spend months running between hospitals and disability examination boards.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, together with various of the **patient communities** (Russian Centre of Mucoviscidosis, branches of the Russian Diabetes Community, and others), monitors the frequency of denials to award or confirm a disability status or group and re-examinations.¹⁶⁹ An interim result of this effort is the agreement from the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Russian Federation to review provisions of its own order on the award of disability with respect to a number of diseases.¹⁷⁰ And on December 5, during a meeting with representatives of public organisations of the disabled at the Russian State Specialised Academy of Arts, President Vladimir Putin supported the idea of simplifying the re-examination procedure for certain diseases. He also gave tasks to set up electronic document exchange between healthcare establishments and the disability examination boards system, and urged to strengthen public oversight over such boards with relevant assignments given to ministries and agencies.¹⁷¹ This means that a considerable number of children will be awarded disability status during their first re-examination that will remain effective until the age of 18, and adults will get this or that disability group for life.¹⁷²

No access to social services in rural areas



20 km
the access distance
to a nursery school



17 km
the access
distance to
a school



85 km
the access
distance to hospitals



15 km
the access distance
to medical and
obstetrician centres¹⁷⁹



1/3

of villages have no reliable
road connection

there are less than 60 km of hard-surface roads per 1,000 sq. km of total area¹⁸⁰

Speaking about education, free education in Russia is not quite free any more (mandatory tutors needed in order to enter a university, paid trainings¹⁷⁵ and "charges" at schools¹⁷⁴). The situation is similar in free medicine, which is also not quite free (no proper health check-up is possible in a public clinic without paid tests or medical services. Besides, from 1 January 2018 the procedure of medical check-ups for children changes. The number of free procedures for children will be reduced, and medical check-ups at educational institutions for children will be cancelled.¹⁷⁵ It generally hard to understand why residents of one region may not get fast and unhampered high-tech medical aid in another region).

The issue of lack of access to **social services in rural areas** is extremely acute:¹⁷⁶ the access distance to a nursery school is 20 km, a school – 17 km, hospitals – 85 km, medical and obstetrician centres – 15 km.

What makes the situation more difficult is the lack of hard-surface roads or the horrible condition of existing roads,¹⁷⁷ as well as the poorly organised public transport system – there is no public transport available at some remote settlements at all.¹⁷⁸

Another important issue is the quality of social services. For example, the quality of **education**. Can the current education system guarantee that the graduates will be in demand in the future labour market?¹⁸¹ The current educational system does not train resources for a knowledge-based economy. The school is insensitive to the need for change, and the quality of university education gets worse from year to year despite its better accessibility nowadays. As a result, 91% of employers mention that graduates lack practical skills.¹⁸²

Quality of education in Russia

Modern education, career planning and employment models need more than a "facelift" – the educational paradigm should be fundamentally reviewed. It is necessary to understand what a future employee will look like, what he or she should learn, what skills he or she should master to be a success in the labour market.

Russian science seems to be in a difficult situation as well. The purpose of the national scientific and technical policy pursued for the past twenty-five years was to support a resource-oriented economy. This approach disregarded science as the key productivity driver. The government made several



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34.2% of the population
(i.e. about 46 million Russians)
are actively involved in sports¹⁸⁶

for the liquidation of the academic sector of science as the backbone of innovation-driven development. The reform of the academic sector has delivered no improvements, yet, it is one of the drivers of the negative processes in science, education, and culture.

attempts to reorient the economy towards innovation-driven development: since the early 2000s, a number of relevant documents have been passed,¹⁸³ yet the results have been limited.¹⁸⁴

The issue of support and resources for science is still outstanding. There are a lot of problems in organising scientific research. The 2013-2020 Science and Technology Development national programme was among the least efficient programmes with only 69.6% of its targets met so far.¹⁸⁵

As far as science, national policy has been inconsistent and controversial. No strategic document provided

The Law “On Science and the National Science and Technology Policy” is not the only law that needs to change. It appears that the whole of the legislative foundation underlying science calls for a major adjustment to ensure the development of the country’s science and technology potential. A whole range of laws to regulate all development aspects of the science and innovation domain need drafting and enactment.

But before that, we need to design and adopt a new development doctrine for the Russian science. The doctrine could become the basis for the national science and innovation policy aiming to achieve long-term global technology leadership.



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Availability of high-quality and safe sport services is generally deteriorating throughout the country.

Although a lot of Russians are actively involved in sports, the number of state-owned sports facilities declines steadily,¹⁸⁷ and the system of governmental funding of sport is not sufficiently well grounded. For instance, the **difference in per capita expenditure in different regions is more than ten-fold**. This is the derogation of the right to exercise and do sports at the place of residence with regard to part of our citizens.

As there is no integrated system of continuous physical education,¹⁸⁹ the fragmented and uncoordinated efforts of the government, individuals and public organisations

The average per capita expenditure on “physical training” in Russian regions is RUB 2,881 (this applies to regular residents, not sportsmen). For example, per capita expenses in Bryansk and Saratov Region, the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic and the Republic of Altai on physical training are RUB 500. Leaders include Yamalo-Nenetsk Autonomous District and Sakhalin Region with about RUB 13,000 per capita. There is, however, no clear correlation between the expenses and the population in the regions. Moscow spends RUB 4,500, St. Petersburg – RUB 3,200, Chechnya – RUB 2,100, and Tatarstan – RUB 6,800.

Source: Ministry of Sport of the Russian Federation¹⁸⁸

Need for self-regulated fitness and sports industry

There is a growing number of commercial sports organisations that do not control the quality of services provided, i.e. their coaches may have no relevant education or permits, and their operation may be subject to zero control of public supervisory bodies. In addition, wrestling or power-lifting clubs may sometimes be used to recruit young people to criminal groups or extremist organisations. Such problems cannot be resolved unless a proper legal framework is established and self-regulation is developed in the industry.

to promote sports and improve public health generally fail to fully achieve their goals. As a result:

Therefore, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation highlights the importance of creating a **continuous**

2/3 of children

suffer from chronic diseases by the time they are 14

50% of schoolchildren

have abnormalities in their musculoskeletal system

30% of schoolchildren

have cardiovascular and respiratory problems

up to 40% of army conscripts

are unable to meet the minimal PE requirements for military servicemen¹⁹⁰



physical education system,¹⁹¹ i.e. the **National Physical Education Programme** for all Russians, which programme will lay the foundation for a respective priority project.

The lack of access to cultural institutions remains another acute issue. By far not all residents of our country have a chance to watch films on a large screen, use a library or get to a community centre without calling for some ATV or a tractor.¹⁹² All that is the consequence of the lack of cultural institutions accessibility criteria at the federal level.¹⁹³

Besides, 85% of cultural institutions are currently financed out of the regional budgets, and the principle

Cultural institutions accessibility monitoring

In 2017, the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation began monitoring accessibility of cultural institutions at the Russian Federation constituents. The outcomes of the monitoring will be used to develop suggestions on modifications to the regional cultural institutions financing system.¹⁹⁴

Preliminary results of the monitoring from 20 RF constituents are not optimistic. Cultural institutions close on a massive scale – we are losing what we could preserve.



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for such financing is, unfortunately, to allocate whatever remains after all other expenditures. In spring 2017, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin issued an assignment to perform an indexation of culture and arts grants. This is the first time when grants to the cultural establishment to fund their ongoing activities have been indexed since 2012, and the list of grant recipients has expanded. Setting up public control in the area of culture is an urgent task, as we need to have a clear understanding of how governmental funds are spent – there have been a lot of corruption scandals in the sphere of culture recently.

The Law on culture is generally obsolete, as it regulates nothing and is generally declarative in nature. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation thinks it necessary to continue efforts to bring this law up to date.

The current situation in the social sphere hampers building the proper level of social comfort¹⁹⁵ and does not match the generally accepted social justice norms. Investments in intellect, health, knowledge and living standards, i.e. in human capital, are the key driver of innovative economy and knowledge-based economy.

Today, the importance of social and human resources gets increasingly important for the development of Russia. Mobilising such resources enables better and quicker response to the needs of all sorts of strata and groups, overcoming of various bureaucratic hurdles, and building of a more organic relationship between the state and the society. It is important to focus the country's development on the 'human dimension' so that people could see the results of major socio-economic and political changes in their everyday life.

This approach calls for a quality change in the role that the civil society plays in the country's development.

New challenges demand mutually responsible partnership between the state and the civil society. And it is a partnership that is required, in the true sense of this word, with two equal parties sharing a common vision of problems, assessing the limits of potential changes and their opportunities, as well as the consequences of such changes, and accepting responsibility for their joint decisions.

This kind of partnership suggests quality change – both in the overall system of government and municipal authorities and in civil society institutions. This is to become a strategic focus area for the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation and the whole of the civil society.



Afterword

No stable progressive development of our country in the 21st century will be possible unless civil society is enhanced. The image of our country's successful future is the product of collaboration between the civil society and the state. It may take the forms of a mutually respectful dialogue, yet in most cases, this is an area where interests clash.

This is absolutely natural because the civil society is virtually always a conflict environment, and personal involvement entails criticism, discussions, and conflicts. Civil initiatives most frequently arise out of confrontation and fight – the fight for one's own rights and for the rights of one's friends and relatives, the fight against injustice and impunity. A conflict is, in fact, a natural process for any living and evolving social organism.

Without the civil society, the state would rapidly turn into a “Ding an sich” – a “thing in itself” operating solely on behalf of the bureaucratic corporation. The purpose of the civil society is thus to keep the authorities on their toes and prevent bureaucratic lull when real people's problems are blurred over and remain unresolved for years, hidden behind high-sounding but empty words about ‘stability’ and ‘patriotism’. Meaningful civil activity and pressure from the civil society on the authorities never imply acting against the state – on the contrary, this is the foundation of social stability. For instance, public control strengthens government institutions, as negligent officials are not the same as the state.

Viewing criticism as an opportunity to find a new solution to an issue that would be acceptable for all

stakeholders, rather than a conflict, is an important skill for all parties of public debates.

Civil society institutions are a most important tool for changing the society over. New cultural and public spaces appear where there are cells of civil self-organisation. Local activism delivers closely-knit local communities and a new identity.

No wonder that progressive development and real consolidation to meet shared objectives are achieved in those regions where proper dialogue is established, and where the authorities communicate with the most “inconvenient” and “prickly” activists. Where the social sphere is “cleaned up”, social tension may arise at any time, and its development scenario is impossible to predict.

The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation believes that its mission is to strengthen civil society institutions as democracy institutions enabling feedback between the society and the authorities.

Regional civic chambers should become a convenient platform for dialogue and consolidation. This requires the involvement of both the authorities and the representatives of all civil initiatives in the region, even those unsympathetic about the authorities.

Public councils at federal and regional levels **currently undergo re-formatting to be able to get the “people's agenda”** across to the authorities and discuss real problems that people face instead

of focusing on narrow industry-specific or bureaucratic concepts.

As of today, an increasing number of caring citizen and non-profit organisations in Russia are helping socially vulnerable groups, i.e. sick children, residents of homes for the elderly and orphanages, the underprivileged and those experiencing hardships. **Such civil activity, which is focused on joint purposeful actions and achieving common goals, gives rise to new solidarity.** We are still on the way to building and restoring solidarity as an important social practice and value.

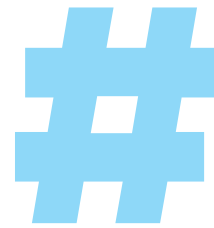
That's all fine, but there is a more global issue of poverty, with people working but getting no fair payment for their work. There is a very high degree of inequality in Russia with regard to both incomes and access to social and cultural benefits, and there is a clear need for justice in the society. **The Civic Chamber deems these issues a priority, and they may only be resolved if the civil society is actively involved and capable of initiating a full-scale public discussion.**

As far as charity is concerned, Russians do find it important to know that their donations are spent as declared to help those in need, which means that charitable foundations should consolidate and become more transparent. This is the only way to stand against all sorts of fake activists, fake controllers or pseudo philanthropists who have sensed the increased demand for the society to be involved in resolving acute issues and take advantage of the situation. In other areas of public activity, it should also be understood clearly that no activity,

no matter how good the intentions are, may be contrary to the law.

In the third sector, gaps in the legal framework and insufficient structuring result in numerous associations, which essentially have nothing to do with civil self-organisation, operating in the guise of non-profit organisations. This makes state support of true NPOs difficult, narrows opportunities for targeted support programmes, results in redundant and frequently unnecessary reporting, while the information transparency that the society demands is still not there. **The legislation and statistics on the third sector should obviously be put in order, and different types of non-profitable organisations should be clearly delimited.**

In Russia, the traditionally strong state is absolutely necessary to maintain unity across the diversity of its ethnocultural, economic and social space. This understanding is currently shared by all key social and political forces of the country. **There can be no state without power, and there can be no country without a strong state.** This is an axiom our country learnt at a very high price, the price of a crash of statesmanship and a civil war, 100 years ago. The key lesson from the events of 1917 for us today is as follows: one can and must fight specific cases of abuse and injustice, bureaucracy and individual officials, but progressive development is only possible through disputes, conflicts, meticulous, tedious and scrupulous work that changes state institutions and mindsets of people slowly, making them increasingly more democratic and fair. We have no other option.



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