

PROSPECTS OF CRIMEA: REGIONAL STATUS

Opinions of Crimeans regarding the desired future for their region are rather controversial and unsteady, which makes them vulnerable to internal and external influences. For instance, the majority of Crimeans would like Crimea to secede from Ukraine and join Russia (63.8%), and at the same time – to preserve its current status, but with expanded powers and rights (53.8%). More than a third (35.1%) would like it to become a Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine; also more than a third (34.5%) – to secede from Ukraine and become an independent state.

As one may see from Diagram “*Would you like Crimea to...?*”, (p.20), such confusion and inconsistency are specific of actually all age, ethnic and confessional groups.

The issue of the desired status of Crimea remains undecided by its residents. In their approaches, Crimeans reveal confusion, as they sometimes support mutually excluding alternatives. For instance, half (50.1%) of all those polled simultaneously chose at least one option presuming secession of Crimea from Ukraine, and one option presuming its further stay within Ukraine. That is, half of Crimeans may, dependent on circumstances, support both secession of Crimea from Ukraine and an opposite scenario.

The share of those ready to personally act for implementation of secessionist options (as well as of any other) does not exceed a quarter of all of those polled (Diagram “*What will you do if Crimea...?*”, p.21).

Secession of Crimea from Ukraine and joining Russia are supported by the overwhelming majority (75.9%) of Russians and a majority (55.2%) of Ukrainians. Among Crimean Tatars, such prospect is supported by only 13.8%, against – 68.5%.

Meanwhile, a third or more representatives of all ethnic groups (35.2% of Ukrainians, 34.7% of Russians, 30.1% of Crimean Tatars) would like Crimea to secede from Ukraine and become an independent state, although it may be assumed that Crimean Tatar idea of the national substance of that state differs from that of Ukrainians and Russians.

32.3% of Ukrainians and 40.1% of Russians would like Crimea to be a Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine. However, this idea is supported by only 5.9% of Crimean Tatars (against – 75.5%). Meanwhile, the idea of Crimea becoming a Crimean Tatar national autonomy as a part of Ukraine is supported by 49.4% of Crimean Tatars and only 5.8% of Ukrainians and 2% of Russians. It is opposed by 81.3% of Ukrainians, 91.9 of Russians and 33.9% of Crimean Tatars (the latter figure may prove that many Crimean Tatars understand the impracticability of creation of Crimean Tatar autonomy in Crimea, where they are in minority, while the majority evidently oppose this).

At that, the overwhelming majority (72%) of Russians, a majority (68.3%) of Crimean Tatars and a majority (57.2%) of Ukrainians are against Crimea losing the status of the Autonomous Republic and again becoming a region (*oblast*) of Ukraine.

As regards the possible reaction of Crimeans to one or another option of developments, it may be as follows (verbal readiness for action):

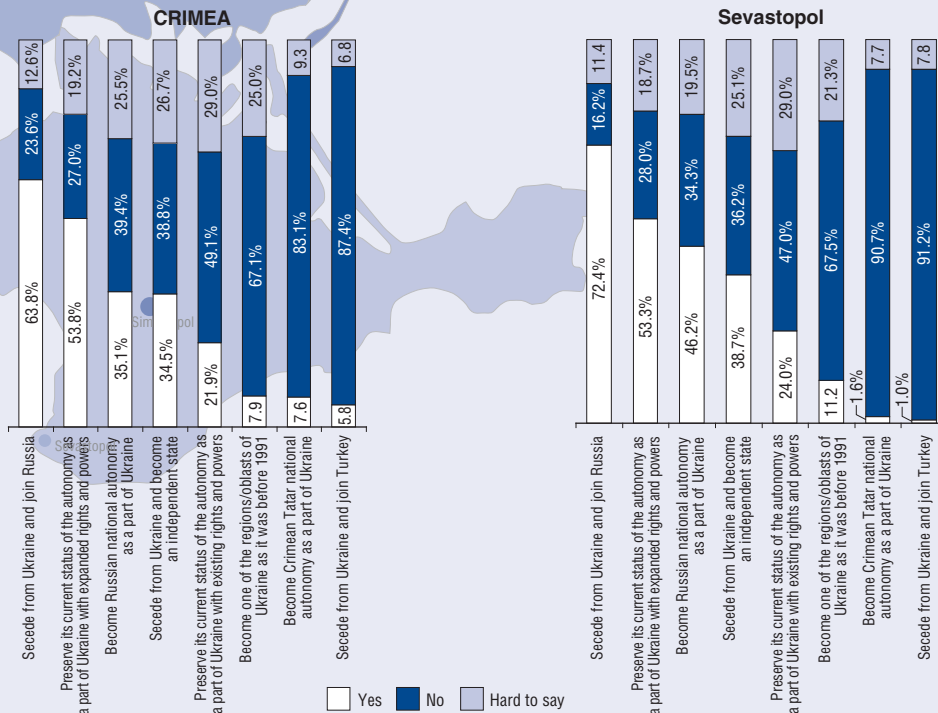
- The strongest rejection is caused by the prospects of Crimea joining Turkey and transformation into a Crimean Tatar national autonomy as a part of Ukraine. 8.3% of Crimeans are ready to oppose the former with arms, if they can; 63.6% – to protest peacefully. The latter option may face armed opposition of 12.8%, peaceful protests of 53.2%;
- Annexation of Crimea by Russia may face armed opposition of 6.5% of Crimean Tatars, 42.3% will protest peacefully. Annexation of Crimea by Turkey will prompt peaceful protests of the majority of Ukrainians (63.9%) and Russians (69.6%), but also 31.5% of Crimean Tatars. Meanwhile, 10.4% of Crimean Tatars are ready to act for that, and 17.5% will hail it. Readiness for armed struggle against it was reported by 8.6% of Ukrainians and as many Russians;
- Transformation of Crimea into an independent state would be hailed by 31.3% of Ukrainians, another 13.1% reported readiness to contribute to that personally. Among Russians, such readiness was reported, respectively, by 37.8% and 9.1%, among Crimean Tatars – respectively, 28.6% and 10.3%. 13.9% of Ukrainians, 8.0% of Russians and 15.1% of Crimean Tatars would protest against it peacefully;
- transformation of Crimea into Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine would be hailed by 34.4% of Ukrainians and 38.9% of Russians; respectively, 22% and 15.2% would peacefully protest against it. 45.5% of Crimean Tatars would protest against it peacefully, 7.3% would oppose it with arms, 11.5% would hail it;
- 54.8% of Ukrainians and 60.5% of Russians are ready to peacefully protest against transformation of Crimea into a Crimean Tatar national autonomy as a part of Ukraine; 13.2% and 13.9%, respectively, are ready to oppose it with arms. 20.1% of Crimean Tatars, are ready to personally contribute to such change of Crimean status, and 43.9% will hail that decision; 8.8% will peacefully protest against it, 2.4% will oppose it with arms;
- Mass peaceful protests may be expected in case of restoration of the regional (*oblast*) status of Crimea. 40.4% of Crimeans are ready to protest against it. However, only 3.3% will resolve to put up armed resistance. 32.8% of Ukrainians, 44.3% of Russians and 38% of Crimean Tatars will peacefully protest against transformation of Crimea into a region. Meanwhile, 4.9% of Ukrainians would personally contribute to such decision, and 10.1% would hail it. Among Russians and Crimean Tatars, this opinion is far less popular. However, given that 40.8% of those polled remained undecided, it may be said that the reaction of Crimeans to such developments will be uncertain.

“CRIMEAN SEPARATISTS”: STROKES TO THE SOCIAL PORTRAIT

In this survey, the conventional group of “separatists” included the respondents who, when asked about the desired status for Crimea, gave answers envisaging secession of Crimea from Ukraine (Crimea as an independent state, as a part of Russia or Turkey), and

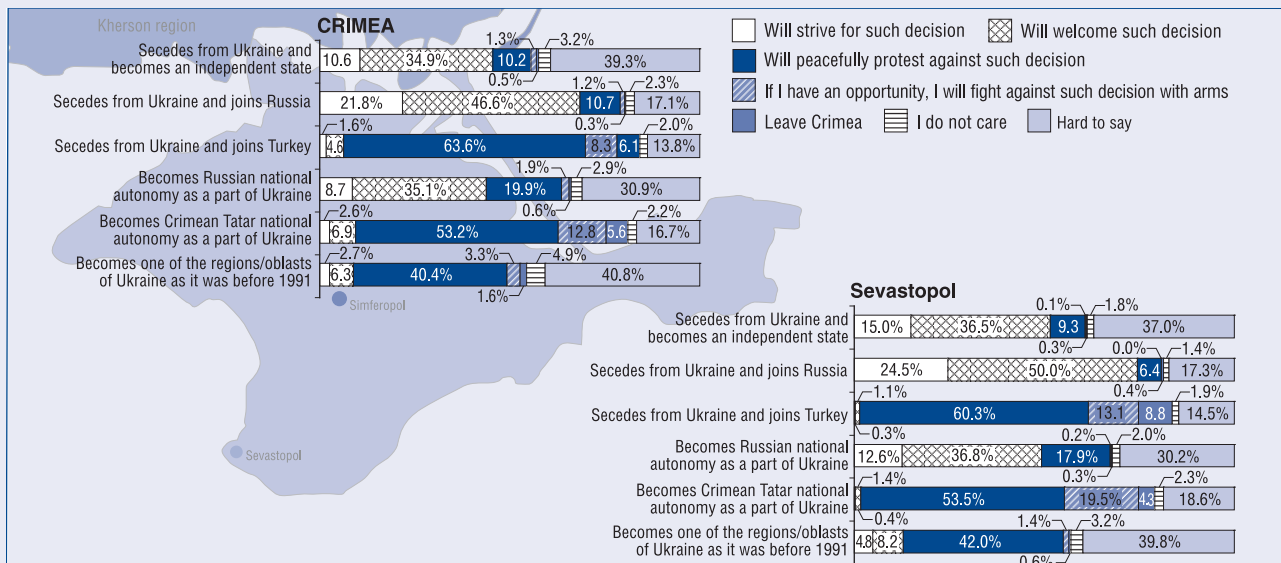
Would you like Crimea to...?
% of those polled

2008



		AGE (CRIMEA)					GENDER (CRIMEA)		CONFESSIONAL (CHURCH) AFFILIATION (CRIMEA)					NATIONALITY (CRIMEA)		
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and over	Male	Female	UOC	UOC-KP	Islam	Other	Non-believers	Ukrainians	Russians	Crimean Tatars
Secede from Ukraine and join Russia	Yes	60.0	62.6	64.2	64.5	67.5	62.3	64.9	71.2	59.1	7.3	70.5	59.3	55.2	75.9	13.8
	No	26.4	24.1	22.6	25.2	19.9	26.2	21.4	14.8	30.4	75.1	18.6	26.5	29.7	13.6	68.5
	Hard to say	13.6	13.3	13.2	10.3	12.6	11.5	13.7	14.0	10.5	17.6	10.9	14.2	15.1	10.5	17.7
Preserve its current status of the autonomy as a part of Ukraine with expanded rights and powers	Yes	52.1	52.7	57.4	56.4	51.8	54.5	53.3	46.9	47.2	56.9	56.8	53.5	54.7	53.0	57.6
	No	28.7	27.2	24.7	25.7	27.8	27.9	26.2	31.6	11.2	31.5	27.0	25.4	22.8	28.3	29.7
	Hard to say	19.2	20.1	17.9	17.9	20.4	17.6	20.5	21.5	41.6	11.6	16.2	21.1	22.5	18.7	12.7
Become Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine	Yes	34.0	32.8	36.2	36.1	36.1	34.4	35.6	36.7	44.8	3.0	43.0	25.1	32.3	40.1	5.9
	No	39.9	40.2	37.5	40.0	39.5	41.6	37.7	36.7	28.7	82.6	32.2	46.5	40.7	33.7	75.5
	Hard to say	26.1	27.0	26.3	23.9	24.4	24.0	26.7	26.6	26.5	14.4	24.8	28.4	27.0	26.2	18.6
Secede from Ukraine and become an independent state	Yes	37.3	32.9	35.2	35.5	31.7	34.5	34.6	29.3	53.1	22.4	37.8	32.1	35.2	34.7	30.1
	No	36.1	38.8	38.9	39.7	40.8	40.3	37.5	39.0	33.2	49.2	36.8	41.1	43.4	35.5	46.8
	Hard to say	26.6	28.3	25.9	24.8	27.5	25.2	27.9	31.7	13.7	28.4	25.4	26.8	21.4	29.8	23.1
Preserve its current status of the autonomy as a part of Ukraine with existing rights and powers	Yes	23.2	19.7	21.2	23.3	21.7	21.6	22.1	18.3	31.8	23.4	22.8	20.1	27.9	17.9	28.3
	No	49.3	49.3	48.2	49.8	48.9	50.9	47.6	55.0	31.5	56.9	47.3	49.7	42.7	51.5	53.3
	Hard to say	27.5	31.0	30.6	26.9	29.4	27.5	30.3	26.7	36.7	19.7	29.9	30.2	29.4	30.6	18.4
Become one of the regions/oblasts of Ukraine as it was before 1991	Yes	7.0	7.8	8.1	7.2	9.1	7.6	8.1	7.1	33.9	3.0	7.1	6.8	13.9	4.8	5.3
	No	66.9	66.4	67.0	68.1	67.2	69.2	65.3	68.4	35.7	73.0	70.1	64.2	57.2	72.0	68.3
	Hard to say	26.1	25.8	24.9	24.7	23.7	23.2	26.6	24.5	30.4	24.0	22.8	29.0	28.9	23.2	26.4
Become Crimean Tatar national autonomy as a part of Ukraine	Yes	8.6	8.6	8.3	7.8	5.3	8.9	6.5	1.7	3.1	55.4	5.6	5.5	5.8	2.0	49.4
	No	81.7	81.8	81.2	83.7	86.3	82.0	83.9	90.8	85.0	29.5	87.4	81.6	81.3	91.9	33.9
	Hard to say	9.7	9.6	10.5	8.5	8.4	9.1	9.6	7.5	11.9	15.1	7.0	12.9	12.9	6.1	16.7
Secede from Ukraine and join Turkey	Yes	6.6	6.7	6.4	5.9	3.8	6.1	5.6	2.2	4.2	27.1	5.5	4.4	5.5	2.1	27.7
	No	84.8	85.6	86.6	88.5	91.0	87.7	87.1	92.1	88.5	53.0	89.4	87.8	87.2	93.1	55.3
	Hard to say	8.6	7.7	7.0	5.6	5.2	6.2	7.3	5.7	7.3	19.9	5.1	7.8	7.3	4.8	17.0

What will you do if Crimea...?
% of those polled



		AGE (CRIMEA)					GENDER (CRIMEA)		CONFESSIONAL (CHURCH) AFFILIATION (CRIMEA)					NATIONALITY (CRIMEA)		
		18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and over	Male	Female	UOC	UOC-KP	Islam	Other	Non-believers	Ukrainians	Russians	Crimean Tatars
Secedes from Ukraine and becomes an independent state	Will strive for such decision	10.9	10.9	10.6	11.5	9.5	10.7	10.5	8.0	36.0	5.1	11.6	7.7	13.1	9.1	10.3
	Will welcome such decision	36.3	33.2	35.4	35.0	34.0	35.2	34.6	36.5	25.2	26.8	34.4	38.3	31.3	37.8	28.6
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	9.1	11.1	10.6	10.6	10.1	10.8	9.7	6.8	11.9	17.4	11.0	9.1	13.9	8.0	15.1
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.3	2.2	1.1	1.4	3.1	0.3	0.0	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.1	0.6
	Leave Crimea	0.3	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.0
	I do not care	3.1	3.7	2.8	2.6	3.5	3.1	3.2	3.8	4.5	5.6	2.0	4.0	4.5	2.3	5.1
	Hard to say	39.6	39.2	38.9	38.4	40.5	38.5	40.2	41.5	21.4	45.1	39.4	39.5	34.5	41.4	40.3
Secedes from Ukraine and joins Russia	Will strive for such decision	20.3	21.5	21.9	21.4	23.9	20.8	22.7	23.8	27.4	1.0	28.9	11.4	17.0	27.0	2.9
	Will welcome such decision	44.5	44.1	47.3	49.1	48.0	47.1	46.2	53.5	37.9	8.6	44.5	55.1	43.1	53.2	14.3
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	11.2	13.0	10.0	12.3	8.0	11.8	9.8	3.3	15.8	51.4	9.3	8.5	14.3	4.1	42.3
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.1	0.0	0.4	5.8	1.5	0.6	1.2	0.3	6.5
	Leave Crimea	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.8	0.1	0.0
	I do not care	2.6	2.9	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.5	2.0	2.5	5.3	1.4	3.5	3.3	1.6	4.0
	Hard to say	20.2	17.2	17.5	13.6	16.0	16.5	17.4	17.1	14.9	27.9	14.1	20.6	20.3	13.7	30.0
Secedes from Ukraine and joins Turkey	Will strive for such decision	1.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	1.3	1.9	1.4	0.5	1.0	9.3	1.5	1.0	1.1	0.4	10.4
	Will welcome such decision	5.6	5.5	4.7	4.5	2.9	5.1	4.1	1.6	6.3	20.4	4.0	4.2	5.2	2.1	17.5
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	59.2	61.2	62.6	67.8	67.4	62.5	64.5	62.3	58.4	30.5	69.0	62.8	63.9	69.6	31.5
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	9.4	8.3	8.8	7.2	7.5	9.5	7.3	7.9	15.0	0.5	9.2	7.7	8.6	8.6	1.4
	Leave Crimea	6.2	6.6	7.0	5.7	5.1	5.4	6.6	9.5	8.0	0.5	5.7	5.0	6.5	6.3	1.1
	I do not care	2.6	2.4	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.9	2.1	2.2	0.3	4.5	1.1	3.1	2.0	1.5	4.6
	Hard to say	15.9	14.0	13.4	10.9	14.2	13.7	14.0	16.0	11.0	34.3	9.5	16.2	12.7	11.5	33.5
Becomes Russian national autonomy as a part of Ukraine	Will strive for such decision	8.3	7.4	10.2	8.5	9.0	8.8	8.6	10.9	8.4	0.3	10.0	6.5	9.6	9.6	1.0
	Will welcome such decision	33.4	33.3	35.8	37.9	35.5	35.5	34.8	34.9	46.7	6.3	36.2	37.6	34.4	38.9	11.5
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	20.0	20.9	17.3	21.3	20.1	21.4	18.6	11.6	15.8	55.3	19.8	18.6	22.0	15.2	45.5
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	1.6	2.2	2.4	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.8	1.0	2.5	6.5	2.0	1.1	1.9	0.8	7.3
	Leave Crimea	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.9	1.2	0.3	0.0
	I do not care	3.3	3.8	2.3	2.4	2.9	3.0	2.9	4.2	1.8	3.8	1.7	4.3	4.0	2.4	4.0
	Hard to say	32.6	32.0	31.7	27.1	30.6	28.7	32.8	36.9	24.1	27.8	29.8	31.0	26.9	32.8	30.7
Becomes Crimean Tatar national autonomy as a part of Ukraine	Will strive for such decision	2.7	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.5	3.2	2.1	0.5	1.7	21.2	1.8	1.6	1.1	0.4	20.1
	Will welcome such decision	8.0	8.2	7.7	7.2	4.0	7.9	6.0	2.6	2.8	51.1	4.3	5.6	5.5	1.9	43.9
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	49.0	52.7	52.7	56.2	56.1	51.9	54.3	57.5	42.5	5.3	55.6	58.3	54.8	60.5	8.8
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	13.1	11.8	13.6	11.9	13.0	13.9	11.9	10.9	27.2	0.0	15.6	9.6	13.2	13.9	2.4
	Leave Crimea	6.6	5.4	6.4	5.5	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.3	10.5	0.5	5.2	5.2	5.9	5.3	1.3
	I do not care	2.8	2.5	1.4	2.3	1.9	1.9	2.4	2.9	1.7	2.5	1.4	3.2	3.0	1.6	2.9
	Hard to say	17.8	16.4	15.6	14.5	18.5	16.2	17.3	18.3	13.6	19.4	16.1	16.5	16.5	16.4	20.6
Becomes one of the regions/oblasts of Ukraine as it was before 1991	Will strive for such decision	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.6	21.0	0.3	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.6	0.6
	Will welcome such decision	4.8	6.7	7.0	6.9	6.4	5.8	6.6	6.7	16.4	4.5	5.5	6.2	10.1	4.4	5.9
	Will peacefully protest against such decision	40.6	37.6	39.9	42.7	40.6	41.5	39.4	45.9	17.8	46.4	42.7	34.0	32.8	44.3	38.0
	If I have an opportunity, I will fight against such decision with arms	3.9	2.9	3.2	2.8	3.6	3.6	3.1	1.4	2.1	0.0	5.2	2.3	3.8	3.2	2.1
	Leave Crimea	1.1	2.6	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.6	0.8	0.7	1.8	2.1	1.3	2.0	1.2	2.2
	I do not care	5.7	5.7	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.4	5.2	4.7	7.0	4.8	3.4	7.5	6.5	3.9	5.9
	Hard to say	41.2	41.9	41.6	38.8	40.9	40.5	41.5	37.9	35.0	42.2	39.3	46.9	39.9	41.4	45.3

did not support different options of Crimea staying a part of Ukraine (preservation of the current status, an autonomous republic with expanded powers, a Russian or Crimean Tatar national autonomy or one of Ukrainian regions). Such respondents made 23% of all those polled¹.

The overwhelming majority of representatives of that group wish Crimea to be part of Russia (88.1%), 39% would also support the status of an independent Crimean state. At that, 30.1% support both options at a time, which may witness that they tend to see the status of an independent state mainly as an “intermediate stage” before joining Russia. Only 5% of “separatists” want Crimea to join Turkey. Only 1.8% simultaneously supported independence of Crimea and joining Turkey.

Although the overwhelming majority of “separatists” want Crimea to join Russia, only 24.3% reported readiness to do something for that. That is, **“separatist” political preferences normally do not involve the resolve to take active political steps**. Furthermore, “separatists” see it extremely urgent to avoid “Crimea becoming a zone of an armed conflict” (4.89 points on a five-point scale), and to “guarantee inter-ethnic peace in Crimea” (4.85).

The attitude of “separatists” to the Ukrainian authorities is even worse than among Crimean residents as a whole. For instance, 93.8% of “separatists” “most likely” or totally disapprove the activity of the President of Ukraine (among all Crimeans – 87.6%), the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (respectively, 89.4% and 82.7%), the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (respectively, 87.9% and 81.8%). They also reported lower support than all Crimeans for Crimean authorities: the activity of the Verkhovna Rada of the autonomy is “most likely” or totally disapproved by, respectively, 73.2% and 63%, of the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea – respectively, 77.5% and 66.2%.

The consciousness of some representatives of that group bears traits of “ideological ambivalence”: 16% of its representatives called themselves patriots of Ukraine, 25.1% see Ukraine as their Motherland. Those who do not consider Ukraine their Motherland are only in a relative majority – 48.4% (the rest could not answer the question).

Regarding their views of Crimean socio-economic problems, **representatives of that group somewhat more often mentioned “ethnically sensitive” problems** (such as the impracticability of getting education in the native language – 24.5%, against 15.5% for Crimea as a whole). The problem of restriction of the Russian language use was called extremely urgent, respectively, by 61.6% and 48.2%. Representatives of that group more often report that their cultural needs are not satisfied: for instance, to watch TV programmes in the native language (“rather” or entirely not met – 76%, among all Crimeans – 62.3%); to get education in the mother language (respectively, 52.3% and 43.5%).

Although “separatists” statistically more often than all residents of Crimea noted problems in inter-ethnic relations (respectively, 18.4% and 15.4% reported the existence of rather

acute problems in relations among different ethnic groups), numerically, the difference is not big enough to say that their assessment of the state of inter-ethnic relations might be the factor inspiring separatist spirits. The share of those who believe that Crimea may witness an acute inter-ethnic conflict in that group is lower than among all those polled (respectively, 20.7% and 24.4%). Similarly, fewer people there encountered cases of ethnic discrimination at employment or study (respectively, 7.1% and 11.1%).

There is a notable “cultural distance” between that group and representatives of Ukraine’s regions. This primarily refers to the Western regions – the average mark of assessment of cultural kinship with their residents is only 3.33 – much lower than for the whole array (4.18 points).

By political sympathies, representatives of that group little differ from the rest of the autonomy residents – they more trust the Party of Regions (27%) and CPU (11.4%), among public organisations – the Russian Community of Crimea (13.7%).

“Separatists” produced a higher than Crimean population in general share of ethnic Russians (respectively, 60.1% and 70.8%), while the shares of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars were lower (Ukrainians, respectively, 24.9% and 19.6%; Crimean Tatars – respectively, 9.1% and 4.8%).

Although 19.6% of “separatists” claimed to be Ukrainians, only 1.5% associated themselves with the Ukrainian cultural tradition (8.6% in the whole array). The overwhelming majority of them reported the Russian cultural tradition (higher than among all residents of Crimea – respectively, 67.7% and 55.5%). Only 2.8% associated with Crimean Tatar cultural tradition (in the whole of Crimea – 8.3%). **One should also note the very little share of followers of the Soviet cultural tradition among “separatists”** (only 2%, while among all Crimeans – 14.6%). This may witness that “Soviet” socio-cultural stereotypes hardly go together with “secessionist” political ideas.

Command of the Ukrainian language among “separatists” is much worse than among Crimean population in general – 62.6% of the former either do not know that language at all, or only understand but cannot speak it, while among Crimeans in general – 43.4%.

By confessional affiliation, “separatists” have a higher share of UOC believers than Crimean population in general (respectively, 27.7% and 18.7%).

It may be stated therefore that on one hand, the group of people with separatist ideas in Crimea is numerous enough to influence the socio-political life of the autonomy. On the other, secessionist spirits of the overwhelming majority of representatives of that group do not involve the resolve or readiness to act for the attainment of their goals.

Ideologically, separatism in Crimea mainly rests on the ideas of reunification of Crimea with Russia. Meanwhile, secessionist spirits do not seem to be motivated by the danger of inter-ethnic conflicts or ethnic discrimination.

¹ By age, sex, education, “separatists” do not differ from the rest of Crimeans. They, however, produced a higher share of city residents (respectively, 67.5% and 62.1%).