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## **An in-depth look at the Russian press, August 18**

### **Young Russians opt for careers in state administration**

Izvestia, August 18 (RIA Novosti)

Young Russians opt for careers in state administration Russian colleges and universities are considering the results of this summer's admission campaign. State and Municipal Administration is proving top of the list of most popular majors.

Of course one cannot ban young people from being interested in a career in the civil service. Yet this is hardly in line with the government's plans to reduce the inflated staff of state officials.

In the 1990s, many Russians dreamed of becoming entrepreneurs and business executives; they know better now. A businessman's life is not easy, and only one in ten is lucky enough to achieve real success. Now many Russians dream of carrying a briefcase and sitting in a comfortable office at a government agency. The number of people choosing this career is growing every year. According to a survey carried out by the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM), 42% of Russians, most of them young, consider civil service a desirable career.

As a result, this summer, the number of people who competed for one scholarship in state administration was as high as 160 in some regions. Why do they find civil service so attractive?

Pavel Salin, an analyst with the Center for Political Trends, an independent Moscow think tank, believes their motives are purely commercial. "Young people are attracted to sectors where they believe they could make a lot of money without much effort. State officials' incomes have grown significantly compared with ten years ago, especially regional officials. Their salaries alone (assuming they do not take kickbacks) are often higher than what employees of private companies make. For example, in the Ryazan Region before the crisis, a good salary in a private company was 25,000 rubles a month, and people were often expected to work weekends.

Moreover, their salaries were cut to 20,000 rubles during the recession, while a middle official in a regional government department continued to receive 40,000-45,000 rubles plus the 28-day vacation package. So state officials often make more money than business executives," he said.

This fall, the government is planning to start a major campaign to optimize its staff. The Finance Ministry has drafted a relevant resolution, envisaging a 20% cut in the number of state officials over the next three years. The optimization will include three stages: a 5% cut on the July 1, 2010 level by April 1, 2011; 10% by April 1, 2012; and 20% by April 1, 2013. After that, the plan is to refrain from increasing the ceiling number of civil servants until January 1, 2014.

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