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Belgorod Bans St. Valentine's Day

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Official festivities for St. Valentine's Day were banned in the Belgorod region by the local governor, who reportedly said the holiday goes against Russian cultural traditions, Rusnovosti.ru reported.

Yevgeny Savchenko introduced the ban last year with the blessing of the local archbishop, Ioann, the news agency reported late Thursday.

A new degree, signed this year by Savchenko's first deputy, Oleg Polukhin, reiterated the ban for the sake of “spiritual safety,” the report said.

"The society has to think about the consequences” of St. Valentine's Day celebrations, Grigory Bolotnov, a spokesman for the governor's office, told the news agency Friday.

He did not elaborate on the consequences, but added that “we could just as well have introduced a Vodka Day.”

But the ban only concerns state agencies, Bolotnov said.

The local zoo had to cancel discounts for couples ahead of the St. Valentine's Day, and a senior representative of the Belgorod university told Rusnovosti.ru on condition of anonymity that students were also banned from celebrating the holiday.

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