

Muscovites Embrace Avant-Garde Baby Names

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The political turmoil that defined 2014 may have given rise to the budding trend of avant-garde baby names in Russia, news agency TASS reported Tuesday.

Such unconventional names as Sevastopol, Byzantium, and Jazz emerged in 2014, according to the report.

Irina Muravyeva, the head of Moscow's civil registration office, said at a news conference Tuesday that at least six couples had opted for such unusual baby names, a move she said was "probably connected with the political events in the world," the news agency reported.

"This is not the first time that Moon and Dawn have been registered with us, but Sevastopol, Jazz and Byzantium have been registered for the first time," Muravyeva was quoted as saying.

It was unclear what political events may have inspired the name Jazz, but Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian port city of Sevastopol in March reinvigorated national pride among many

Russians.

The choice of Byzantium also appears to be a product of increased national pride, as the name alludes to the notion of Russia as the "Third Rome," or the modern-day successor to the legacy of ancient Rome.

Despite the unique new names registered, the vast majority of parents stuck with tradition: The most popular name for boys, Alexander, came in first place for the tenth year in a row, Muravyeva said. The name Sofia claimed top place for girls' names in 2014.

Muravyeva also noted that there had been a spike in the number of marriages registered in 2014, with an increase of 3,800 compared to the previous year. About 15,000 marriages with foreigners were recorded, she said, one-third of them involving Ukrainians.

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