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Birth Rate Hits 10-Year Low in Russia

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Russia's birth rate has fallen to the lowest level in a decade, with just 1.69 million births recorded last year, despite government efforts to reverse the demographic trend, according to official data.

The government plans to spend $8.6 billion over three years to encourage Russians to have more babies starting this election year. The measures include mortgage subsidies and payments to new and growing families.

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The country's state statistics agency Rosstat registered 203,400 fewer births in 2017 compared to 2016, a drop of 10.7 percent, according to data published Monday. This marks the lowest birth rate since 2007 when 1.6 million births were recorded.

Despite a fall in the number of deaths by since last year, the population declined by 134,400 people in 2017. A year prior, Russia's population grew by 5,300 people.

“The number of potential mothers is small, so the number of births is also falling,” the RBC business portal cited social analysis expert Ramilya Khasanova of the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA).

Khasanova said birth rates would continue to fall in the next 15 years because the majority of women of child-bearing age were born in the 1990s, a period of extremely low birth rates.

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