

Russians Deride 'Western Excess,' Declare Love for Putin on Valentine's Day

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While much of the world is celebrating Valentine's Day with cards, chocolates and flowers, some in Russia have seized on current geopolitical tensions to undermine the romantic holiday and paint it as an example of Western "excess."

Soon after being disqualified from the presidential election, Communists of Russia party chairman Sergei Malinkovich [urged](#) lawmakers to "launch a legislative attack on the excessive and dubious holiday," according to the RTVI broadcaster.

Like [officials](#) before him, Malinkovich claimed that Valentine's Day was "imposed by Western media" while Russian businesses "impose their tasteless products on citizens."

"We can't allow traders to sell hearts on every corner, a human heart is not a commodity," he was quoted as saying in a letter to the lower-house State Duma.

Related article: [Celebrate St. Valentine's Day the Traditional Russian Way, With Gingerbread](#)

The state-run TASS news agency [quoted](#) several religious leaders as saying that the holiday is “alien to Russia.”

“Feb. 14 according to the Western European calendar is the moment when spring arrives,” said Hieromonk Macarius from the Russian Orthodox Church.

“That’s why the date was associated with family and marriage. Then they forgot about marriage and it all became associated with extramarital relations,” he added.

But the day of love was not lost on the republic of Tatarstan, where car enthusiasts organized a mini rally in honor of President Vladimir Putin.

Three white BMWs were [filmed](#) crossing the frozen Volga River with the phrase “We Heart Putin” spelled out in letters taped to their roofs.

Meanwhile, the regional branch of the far-right Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) [invited](#) the public to speed-date its younger members in a week-long marathon that wraps up on Valentine’s Day.

The speed-dating event poster bore the image of LDPR leader Leonid Slutsky, who was famously accused of sexual harassment in 2018.

Speed dating was also initially [planned](#) at a popular public space in the neighboring republic of Bashkortostan’s capital Ufa.

But organizers scrapped it at the last minute in favor of a dance party, prompting local media to [question](#) whether critics of Valentine’s Day had a hand in the change of plans.

The Siberian city of Tyumen [replaced](#) St. Valentine’s Day with St. Tryphon Day, honoring the patron saint of gardeners and winegrowers.

On Feb. 17, Tyumen’s Peasant Life History Museum plans to organize folk games, dances and sledding to replicate “Lover’s Day” celebrated in medieval Russia under the Kyivan Rus’.

Public polling [indicates](#) that less than 40% of Russians planned to celebrate Valentine’s Day.

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