

Russian Pop Song 'Sigma Boy' Becomes a Viral Hit While Sparking Controversy

By [Moscow Times Reporter](#)

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Sveta Chertischeva (Betsy) and Masha Yankovskaya. [@Marialankovskaia](#)

A Russian pop song called "Sigma Boy" has become a viral sensation on social media with millions of views worldwide — while also drawing criticism from European politicians and Russian Orthodox traditionalists alike.

Released in October 2024, the track was written by successful animated film composer Mikhail Chertishchev and performed by his 11-year-old daughter Svetlana Chertishcheva — known by her stage name Betsy — and 12-year-old Maria Yankovskaya.

The song quickly spread worldwide, accumulating 66 million views on [YouTube](#) in just three months, [reaching](#) No. 7 on Billboard's Hot Dance/Pop Songs chart and becoming popular on TikTok.

The song refers to a "sigma boy," a term used in internet culture to describe a particular type

of young man who is successful, self-sufficient and does not conform to societal expectations.

The earworm-filled track has drawn criticism in both Russia and Europe.

German politician Nela Riehl alleged that the song introduces “patriarchal and pro-Russian worldviews” and could be an example of “Russian infiltration of popular discourse through social media.”

“Do you know 'Sigma Boy'? If you are an 11-year-old girl in, for example, Germany or even Ukraine, you probably do,” Riehl [said](#) to the European Parliament.

“Russia has understood how to embed these ideas in a society: target young Ukrainians on their phones, change the stories of Ukrainians telling their own society,” she said.

Embed:

Russian officials were quick to react to Riehl’s statement.

“The West cannot calm down in its rejection of all things Russian. Now European politicians are afraid of Russian children,” [said](#) lawmaker Leonid Slutsky, the head of the State Duma’s International Affairs Committee.

“The soft power of Russian culture is triumphing on the global pop scene,” Slutsky said.

Grigory Gurov, the head of the federal youth affairs agency Rosmolodezh, [asked](#): “What kind of freedom do European politicians talk about when they ban pop culture and the creativity of our children?”

But the controversy expanded when the ultra-conservative Russian Orthodox movement Sorok Sorokov accused the song’s creators of sexualizing children and asked the Russian General Prosecutor’s Office to review it.

“The song contains rather romantically explicit content, which is not typical for children aged 12-13. It talks about romantic relationships that are usually associated with adults,” Sorok Sorokov said.

Chertishchev, meanwhile, [told](#) the RTVI media outlet that Sorok Sorokov should be scrutinized for perceiving something inappropriate in the song.

“We’re not promoting children in that direction at all. If they saw something, I think the question should be directed at them — what exactly did they see and why do they even perceive things that way?” Chertishchev said.

He said the artists remained calm regarding the backlash surrounding the song’s global success.

“I think this works in our favor anyway because anything that gets banned only becomes more intriguing to listeners — people start paying even more attention to the artists,” Chertishchev said.

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