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Matviyenko Urges Russians to Rethink Their Views on Early Parenthood as Demographic Crisis Deepens

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Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko. **Roman Naumov / URA.RU / TASS**

Federation Council speaker Valentina Matviyenko said in an interview published Tuesday that Russians need to rethink their attitudes toward early parenthood, reframing it as the "norm" amid government attempts to reverse the country's population decline.

"I believe the most important challenge when it comes to demographics is changing our mindset," Matviyenk told the pro-Kremlin tabloid Moskovsky Komsomolets. "A successful person should be seen as someone who has a good, close-knit, large and strong family."

"Having children should be considered fashionable. It should be the norm to have children as soon as possible after reaching adulthood, not at 28 or 29 as is common now," the Federation Council speaker added.

Russia is currently facing a falling birth rate, natural population decline and rising male

mortality. In 2024, 1.22 million people were born in Russia, only slightly more than the record low of 1.21 million in 1999.

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Authorities have implemented various measures to address the demographic crisis, including boosting state financial support for child-rearing, introducing restrictions on abortion and promoting so-called "traditional values" among young people. Despite these policies, the trend of decline has shown no sign of reversing.

Since July, Matviyenko has overseen a so-called "demographic special forces unit," a group of officials tasked with developing initiatives to address the issue of falling birth rates.

Matviyenko admitted in the Moskovsky Komsomolets interview that there are limits to the financial incentives the government can provide to have children. In her view, officials must take a more holistic approach that includes "systematic efforts to cultivate and reinforce traditional values and proper moral and spiritual guidelines."

"Without this, it simply won't work," she said.

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