The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Urges Businesses to Encourage Employees to Have More Children

February 19, 2026



kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin has urged businesses to play a "key role" in meeting Russia's demographic goals by encouraging their staff to have larger families, as the country continues to grapple with falling birthrates.

Speaking at a supervisory board meeting at the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) on Wednesday, Putin said companies should call on staff to "build bigger, multi-child families."

He noted that the number of employee children under age six would be taken into account in the recently approved Corporate Social Capital Standard (SOKB), an adapted set of international business practices that describes itself as a system on which "the future of the country" rests.

The Economic Development Ministry has said the SOKB will assess a company's real impact on public well-being and determine how much government support they receive.

Its 95 indicators include the number of children per employee, the share of employees with multiple children, the share of employees who are married and the number of war veterans employed, as well as company spending on programs to support families and the promotion of "traditional Russian spiritual, moral, cultural and historical values."

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

Putin first proposed the SOKB in May 2024, saying businesses should be incentivized to strengthen technological sovereignty, create jobs, care for employees and support Russian soldiers fighting in the Ukraine war.

The new mechanism is seen as part of broader measures aimed at addressing Russia's ongoing demographic crisis.

Russia recorded 1.222 million births in 2024, the lowest since 1999.

Births fell to 288,000 in the first quarter of 2025, marking the lowest quarterly total since the late 18th-early 19th centuries.

State statistics agency Rosstat has since stopped publishing birth data.

Russia's total fertility rate, the average number of children per woman, fell to 1.374 in 2025, a decrease from 1.4 the previous year and the lowest level since 2006.

Despite Putin's calls for families to have eight to 10 children, the fertility rate for third and subsequent children fell to 0.362 in December, below pre-war levels of 0.364 in 2021

Rosstat projects that Russia's population will decline by about 500,000 per year, dipping below 138.8 million by 2046.

Read this story in Russian at The Moscow Times' Russian service.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/02/19/putin-urges-businesses-to-encourage-employees-to-have-more-children-a92004