

# ADDRESSING NEW CHALLENGES

Article



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## Family and Demographic Policy in the Vector of Ensuring National Security of Russia

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**Abstract:** Based on the analysis of the main normative documents defining the directions of ensuring national security and development of Russia, the authors substantiate the need to form a strategic program and target document in this area, integrating the tasks of implementing demographic security and family policy of the State. The authors provide their understanding of the content of demographic security, which the authors consider as one of the components of the national security of the Russian Federation. The authors substantiate the conclusion that the main goal of demographic security in the context of modern challenges is to improve demographic indicators through the reproduction of indigenous population of Russia, reflecting an increase in fertility and a decrease in mortality. Russia's solution to the problem of depopulation is possible only through the implementation of systemic activities aimed at solving the problems of ensuring demographic security, by developing

a unified demographic policy aimed at stabilizing the processes of natural reproduction of the population at the expense of the indigenous population, where the family is the basic subject.

**Keywords:** constitutional development; national security; demography; demographic security; family protection; traditional values; Russian identity

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## I. Introduction

In the current century, the importance of the role of the demographic factor in the further socio-economic development of Russia is increasing. During the period of the first depopulation from 1993 to 2009, the total population of Russia decreased by more than 5 million 825 thousand people. In 2010, the trend of general depopulation was “reversed”, the population began to increase, largely due to the migration flow to Russia. Only in 2013, the birth rate exceeded the death rate, which indicates a natural population growth.

According to official data from Federal Statistics Service, since 2015 the natural decline of the population has been recorded again. The population is decreasing annually due to a decline in the total fertility rate, which suggests a significant decrease in the population after several decades. Regardless of the accuracy of forecasts, population decline has negative geopolitical and socio-economic consequences for Russia. The

negative dynamics of demographic indicators also has a negative impact on the development of certain Russian regions, some of which can be considered endangered, which allows us to talk about the demographic problem as a serious threat to Russia's national security.

In modern Russia, a search is underway for mechanisms to stabilize the population, stimulate fertility by introducing various socio-economic measures to support Russian families — families with children, young families, single parents, reducing mortality, improving public health services, including reproductive health, etc. Important achievements include the implementation of programs for the socio-economic development of the Russian Federation in the medium term in order to stabilize the demographic situation, housing construction programs, mortgage loans, maternal (family) capital, etc.

## **II. Demographic Security in the Vector of Constitutional Development of Russia**

The constitutional development of Russia presupposes protection of constitutional values expressed in ensuring the foundations of the constitutional system and state sovereignty in a multipolar world, protection of human and civil rights and freedoms, preservation and multiplication of the Russian nation — the multinational people of Russia. The stability of the constitutional state is ensured by an effectively functioning Constitution — the foundation of Russian statehood and the entire legal system that guarantees the implementation of the constitutional and legal status of the Russian Federation as a democratic, legal, social state. The Constitution of the Russian Federation defined the values and ideals of society, outlined the social conditionality of the development of the state and its legal system to the national and cultural traditions of the people and the ideals of law that are accepted by society (Komarova, 2019, p. 63). By consolidating the fundamental ideological principles of organizing the life of society and the development of the constitutional state, the Russian Constitution pays special attention to the protection of the family, motherhood, fatherhood, and childhood. The guaranteed implementation of the protection of the family as the most important social institution for stabilizing the population is

ensured, first, by the Constitution itself due to its direct effect and the highest legal force.

The constitutional reform initiated by the President of Russia in 2020 increased the importance of the institution of the family in the public consciousness. For the first time in Russian history, the institution of fatherhood received constitutional protection, the value content of the institution of marriage as a union of a man and a woman was indicated, and the protection of which was attributed to the joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and its constituent entities (Part 1 Art. 72 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation). The Constitution introduced a new direction for the implementation of state social policy — to preserve traditional family values, the implementation and provision of which is attributed to the authority of the Government of the Russian Federation (Part 1 Art. 114 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation).

In fact, the updated Constitution consolidated the foundation of the Russian constitutional model of family protection, defining the role of civil society and the state in protecting the family, the vectors of law-making and law enforcement, which is especially relevant in modern conditions of the spread of anti-family ideologies by Western countries aimed at destroying the institution of the family. The fundamental foundations of protection of the institution of the family, outlined at the constitutional level, have been repeatedly outlined in the Annual Messages of the President of Russia to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, instructions to the Government of the Russian Federation, as vector directions for the development of the state with the socially oriented demographic policy.

In modern Russia, the above-mentioned priorities are reflected in strategic program and target documents adopted for the long term: The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation,<sup>1</sup> the Foundations of state Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of traditional Russian spiritual and moral values (Presidential Decree No. 809 dated 9 November 2022), Measures of social support for multi-child families (Presidential Decree No. 63 dated 23 January 2024), National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030

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<sup>1</sup> Presidential Decree No. 400 dated 7 July 2021. (In Russ.).

and for the future up to 2036 (Presidential Decree No. 309 dated 7 May 2024).

The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, approved by the President of the Russian Federation in 2021, defines the content of the categories “national security” and “national interests”. National security is understood through the state of protection of the national interests of the Russian Federation from external and internal threats, which ensures the realization of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, decent quality and standard of living, civil peace and harmony in the country, protection of the sovereignty of the Russian Federation, its independence and state integrity, socio-economic development of the country (Art. 5). The national interests of Russia, expressed in the objectively significant needs of the individual, society and the state for security and sustainable development, contain a list of tasks to ensure national security, the first among which is the task of saving the people of Russia and developing human potential.

We suppose Vadim M. Mamonov that national security is formed based on the national interests of the state in a specific historical period and represents “a set of internal and external conditions for the existence of an individual, society and the state, ensuring a decent life for citizens, protecting the interests of society, the sovereignty of the people, excluding the possibility of forcible change of the constitutional system” (Mamonov, 2004, p. 18). The constitutional value of ensuring national security forms the targets and priorities for the development of the legal system to ensure all levels of security: personal security, public security, and state security. In this context, demographic policy pursues the goals of ensuring demographic security, which is integrated into the national security system, as a source of all other types of security affecting constitutional and legal relations of vital importance to the individual, society, and the state (Kardashova, 2013, p. 23). In the context of declining demographic indicators for a number of years, demographic security has been a condition for ensuring national security. In this regard, we believe that the tasks of demographic policy should proceed from ensuring national security and the interests of Russia.

The similar approach to demographic security is reflected in the works by Leonid L. Rybakovsky, who considers demographic security as one of the components of a broader concept of “national security”, which includes other types of security (economic, environmental, financial, resource, food, demographic, etc.) (Rybakovsky, 2003, pp. 37–46). Demographic security, according to Rybakovsky’s approach, can be expressed through the state of demographic processes sufficient for the reproduction of the population without significant external influence and the provision of human resources for the geopolitical interests of the state. Developing this thesis, the scientist emphasizes that demographic security reflects “the functioning and development of the population as such in its age, gender and ethnic parameters, its correlation with the national interests of the state, consisting in ensuring its integrity, independence, sovereignty and preservation of the existing geopolitical status”. As noted in the scientific literature, at present “Russia is entering a long period of unfavorable demographic changes for its economy, cessation of population growth, reduction of the working age population and its aging, increase in the demographic burden on the able-bodied population. These factors will have a hindering effect on the development of the economy and will make it difficult to solve social problems” (Vishnevsky and Scherbakova, 2018, p. 50).

The basic threats to demographic security are as follows: declining birth rate and, accordingly, population decline, demographic expansion associated with a significant transformation of the ethnic structure of a number of regions (when undeveloped and devastated territories of Russia are filled with migrants from other countries, primarily with very high population density and conflict zones), the loss of historically dominant cultural values, religious, political, etc. positions, and the loss of part of the ancestral territory (Zolotareva and Nakisbaev, 2024, p. 155).

The priorities of saving people, improving the quality of life of families with children, and preserving the Russian nation as a strategic direction of state policy have been repeatedly emphasized by the President of Russia in annual messages to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation due to the understanding of the role of the multinational people as a source of power and bearer of sovereignty,

keeper of cultural and historical heritage and the foundation for further development of the country. Saving the people of Russia, developing human potential, improving the quality of life and well-being of citizens, preserving and strengthening traditional spiritual and moral values of Russians, strengthening social support for a large family all the designated priorities of state policy are directly related to demographic policy. Addressing the nation in February 2024, the President of Russia outlined the leading role of the family in the development of Russian society and the state, stressing that “the main purpose of the family is the birth of children, the continuation of the human race, the upbringing of children, and, therefore, the continuation of our entire multinational people. Supporting families with children is our fundamental moral choice. A large family with many children should become the norm, the philosophy of society, the guideline of the entire state strategy”.

Demographic security is aimed at ensuring Russia’s national security. We agree that the demographic security can be defined as the central and unifying element of national security that ensures the interplay of all other elements of national security – military, economic, social, cultural, personal, etc. (Sidorenko, 2019, p. 10). Being the basis of national security, demographic security sets the task of ensuring a balance in the population, which is the result of effective state policy (social, economic, socio-cultural) and the mainstay of economic, military, personnel, migration, scientific and other policy directions to overcome national threats.

There are two main approaches to the definition of demographic security among scholars: instrumental and value-based. According to the first, demographic indicators directly determine the socio-economic development of the state; according to the second, demographic processes are aimed at maintaining and preserving the Russian nation, culture and traditions. We agree that in relation to the Russian Federation, the reduction in the number of permanent population, and primarily the number of the titular Russian nation, is a threat to its geopolitical position that hinders its development as a great power (Glushkova and Khoreva, 2014, p. 16). It can be noted that human capital determines the prospects for the development of a modern state, and the main demographic threat is depopulation – a real or possible reduction in the population.

### **III. The Problems of Implementing the Conceptual Approach to the Formation of Demographic Policy**

At the level of state policy objectives, demographic tasks for stabilizing the population began to be set relatively recently, in the early 2000s despite the fact that experts noted a decrease in demographic indicators since the 1990s, after the USSR collapsed, due to the economic crisis of this period that resulted in the low standard of living of the population.

In the first Concept of National Security approved in 1997, the national security of the Russian Federation was understood as “the security of its multinational people as the bearer of sovereignty and the only source of power in the Russian Federation”. Sharp decrease in the birth rate and average life expectancy in the country, deformation of the demographic and social composition of society undermining labor resources as the basis for the development of production, weakening of the fundamental unit of society, namely, families, a decrease in the spiritual, moral and creative potential of the population were named among the main threats to national security. The designated threat is stated in subsequent conceptual documents in the field of national security.

The next Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation approved in 2000 still insisted on the deformation of the demographic and social composition of Russian society, a sharp decrease in the birth rate and average life expectancy in the country as the consequences of a deep social crisis.<sup>2</sup>

For the first time in 2000, the President of Russia Vladimir V. Putin drew attention to demographic problems in his Annual Message to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation stating that “...the country’s population is decreasing by an average of 750 thousand people annually [...] if the trend continues, the survival of the nation will be at risk”.

The first Concept of Demographic Policy approved in 2001 in order to ensure national security until 2015, outlined priorities and tasks in the field of regulating demographic processes, which consisted of

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<sup>2</sup> Presidential Decree No. 24 dated 10 January 2000. (In Russ.).



three directions: 1. strengthening health and increasing life expectancy; 2. stimulating fertility and strengthening the family; 3. regulating migration and resettlement of the population. The goals of the country's demographic development outlined in the document include: stabilization of the population and the formation of prerequisites for subsequent demographic growth that were achieved by strengthening health and increasing the duration of active life of the population; improving reproductive health and stimulating fertility; strengthening the creation of the family and institutions of social support for families with children; creating conditions for self-realization of the youth; regulating migration flows in order to create effective mechanisms to replace the natural loss of the population; improving the efficiency of using migration flows by achieving compliance of their volumes, directions and composition with the interests of socio-economic development of the Russian Federation; ensuring the integration of migrants into Russian society and the formation of a tolerant attitude towards them.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that the tasks were not fully solved, as stated by the subsequent Concept of Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 (hereinafter the Concept), adopted in 2007 (Presidential Decree No. 1351 dated 9 October 2007), where the main goals were still designated stabilization of the population by 2015 at the level of 142–143 million people and the creation of conditions for its growth to 145 million people by 2025, as well as improving the quality of life and increasing life expectancy to 70 years by 2015, and to 75 years by 2025 (Part 3).

To achieve these goals, the document sets the following tasks that need to be solved during the designated period of the Concept: reducing the death rate, primarily in working age; strengthening public health (including reproductive) and increasing active life expectancy; creating conditions and motivation for a healthy lifestyle; increasing the birth rate due to birth in families of the second child and subsequent children; strengthening the institution of the family, revival and preservation of spiritual and moral traditions of family relations; attracting migrants in accordance with the needs of demographic and socio-economic

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<sup>3</sup> Government Executive Order No. 1270-R dated 24 September 2001. (In Russ.).

development, taking into account the need for their social adaptation and integration. Obviously, in terms of its goals, the document mostly reproduces the provisions of the previous Concept, the tasks are still reduced to the three previously identified areas.

The lack of a comprehensive strategic task for their implementation seems to be a great disadvantage of both Concepts (2001, 2007). Like any conceptual document, Concepts in their legal content are not strategic planning documents; they reflect a set of views on the demographic situation in the country, a list of tasks that need to be solved in this area, goals and objectives of demographic policy, as well as prospects for their further solution. As follows from the content of the documents, the Concepts were adopted in order to consolidate the efforts of federal government authorities, state authorities of constituent entities of the Russian Federation, local governments of municipalities, organizations and citizens of the Russian Federation to ensure conditions for sustainable demographic development of the country. Thus, the Government of the Russian Federation was instructed to approve an action plan for its implementation on the coming years (with subsequent prolongation).

The lack of a list of entities responsible for the implementation of the documents forms another significant disadvantage of the Concepts. This list is contained in the plans approved by the Government of the Russian Federation for the implementation of the Concepts.

Thus, according to the version of the Plan valid until 2025,<sup>4</sup> federal executive authorities, executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, state and non-state foundations, public organizations, whose activities are reflected in the annual report to the Government of the Russian Federation, participate in the implementation of demographic policy within the framework of the Demographic Policy Concept until 2025. The degree of participation is determined by the powers and competences of these bodies, the results of their activities in this area are reflected in reports to the Government of the Russian Federation.

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<sup>4</sup> Government Executive Order No. 2580-R dated 16 September 2021. (In Russ.).

It should be noted that, in accordance with the constitutionally established powers of the Government of the Russian Federation, ensuring demographic policy is not attributed to the powers of the Government of the Russian Federation. This gap was not filled in 2020, when the constitutional reform significantly updated the norms of the Constitution aimed at realizing the social status of the state and ensuring the sovereignty of the Russian state.

We believe that it would be logical, both from the point of view of the content of the assigned government powers, and based on their requirements for the legal formalization of constitutional provisions, to attribute them to the powers of the Government of the Russian Federation, enshrined in the provisions of Part 1 Art. 114 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, along with ensuring a unified financial, monetary, credit policy (Para. b), and socially oriented state policy in the field of “culture, science, education, health care, social security, support, strengthening and protection of the family, preservation of traditional family values [...]” (Para. c), the authority to ensure demographic policy. This approach is justified by the fact that, in terms of its principles, content, methods and guarantees of implementation, demographic policy does not fully coincide with the social policy of the state, primarily due to the fact that it includes elements of migration policy, which directly follows from the tasks outlined in the Concept of Demographic Policy.

Demographic policy is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, more precisely, one of its structural divisions — the Department of Demographic and Family Policy established in 2020. The Department, within the framework of its powers, carries out activities aimed at developing and implementing the state policy and normative regulation in the field of demography and gender equality, social protection of the family, women and children, income policy and living standards of the population.<sup>5</sup> We believe that such an approach to solving the demographic situation in the country is clearly insufficient, since demographic policy is complex and cannot be limited by the powers of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.

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<sup>5</sup> Decree of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation No. 583 dated 8 September 2020. (In Russ.).

#### **IV. Family and Demographic Policy as a Condition for Ensuring Demographic Security**

Russia's solution to the problem of depopulation is possible only through the implementation of systemic activities aimed at solving the problems of ensuring demographic security, through the development of a unified demographic policy aimed at stabilizing the processes of natural reproduction of the population, where the family is the fundamental element. We tend to share Sinelnikov's standing that the problem of depopulation (natural population decline) can be solved through a properly designed demographic policy of the state (Sinelnikov, 2019, p. 85). The constitutional vector of Russian Federation development presupposes a systematic approach to the formation of state policy based on understanding the importance of the institution of the family for society and the state, supporting the family in raising children, strengthening the institution of marriage, providing protection for families with children and families with many children, which is consistent with the constitutional and legal status of Russia as a social democratic rule-of-law State.

It is true that "the family is the only possible option for preserving the ecology of the nation, harmonizing the moral and ethical climate of society, it is the unconditional primary society for the education of new generations, socialization and development of an individual, as well as the basis of public consciousness of the future society and the state" (Dorodonova, 2023, p. 119). It is in the family that the value attitudes of an individual are formed. Then they are passed on from generation to generation, they form the spiritual and moral immunity of society to modern challenges, determine the all-Russian civil identity and form a single cultural sociocode of the Russian nation determined by the traditions and identity of the peoples of Russia in their historical development.

The importance of the institution of the family for the state is expressed in the fact that it is one of the historically proven forms of population reproduction, stability and development of statehood. The interaction of the family, society, and the state is realized on the basis of a historically established set of socio-cultural norms, values, ideals,

patterns of behavior, specifics of mentality, and all their immanent characteristics. The protection of the family and family values should be considered among the priorities of ensuring Russia's national security, the solution of which is aimed at preserving the all-Russian identity, sustainable development of the state, and preservation of socially significant spiritual and moral values.

In order to ensure the most complete protection of the family and family values in the vector of ensuring the national security of the Russian state, we believe it is necessary to focus on solving the problem of ensuring demographic security. Taking into account that two basic documents in this area — the Concept of State Family Policy and the Concept of Demographic Policy expire in 2025, we consider it advisable to develop and adopt a strategic program and target document by an act of the Government of the Russian Federation, which will combine the directions of demographic and family policy.

Currently, at the federal level, the Ministry of Labor of the Russian Federation, together with representatives of the scientific and expert community, has developed a draft Action Strategy for the implementation of family and demographic policy, support for large families in the Russian Federation until 2036 (hereinafter referred to as the draft Strategy). The proposed Strategy is aimed at stabilizing the population, increasing life expectancy, increasing fertility, protecting reproductive health, juvenile health, supporting and strengthening the family as the foundation of Russian society, preserving traditional family values, improving conditions and quality of life of families, preventing and overcoming family problems.

The designated draft Strategy was repeatedly discussed at meetings of the interdepartmental working group led by Olga Yu. Batalina, First Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, with the participation of co-author Tamara K. Rostovskaya, a member of the interdepartmental working group.

The draft of the Strategy designates several goals for its implementation, including several areas of its implementation, namely:

— saving people based on an increase in life expectancy, saving public health, increasing fertility, active longevity, including based

on improving the quality of life of the population, active longevity, stabilization of the population;

- ensuring the sustainability of the population on the basis of strengthening the institution of the family and marriage as a union of men and women, traditional Russian spiritual, moral and family values;
- an increase in the number of large families;
- support and protection of the family as the fundamental basis of Russian society based, among other things, on improving the well-being of the family; protection, preservation, promotion and encouragement of traditional spiritual, moral and family values, family lifestyle in society.

Among the key measures of the draft Strategy aimed at supporting multi-child families for the period up to 2036, it is necessary to highlight the strengthening of the institution of the family, including extended families, protection, preservation, and promotion of traditional Russian spiritual, moral and family values and family lifestyle, improvement of social support for families with children. In this regard, the authors draw attention to a special type of family of a prosperous large family as an ideal family model. This model correlates with the “prosperous family” model, developed under the guidance of Tamara K. Rostovskaya in 2007, within the framework of the Concept of State Policy towards a young family (Rostovskaya, 2024, p. 10; 2025, pp. 16–17). It should be emphasized that the status of a large family approved by the Decree of the President of Russia in 2024 will allow for a unified socially oriented state policy at the national level in the field of support for large families.

The proposed Strategy is consistent with the objectives set out by the President of the Russian Federation in Presidential Decree No. 309 “On the National Development Goals of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 and in the perspective up to 2036” and other program-targeted documents. The Strategy is aimed at realizing a systematic approach to the formation and implementation of the state policy in the field of demography, protection of the family and family values of Russian society, strengthening the institution of marriage, support for families with children and large families, protection of reproductive health of the population, which is consistent with the constitutional and legal status of Russia as a social democratic rule of law state.

The goals of the Strategy implementation formulated by the authors in Section III deserve a positive assessment, including:

- preservation of the population by increasing the birth rate, strengthening maternal, child, and reproductive health of the population, and promoting the implementation of family-oriented demographic policy in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation with due regard to national and sociocultural peculiarities;

- protecting, supporting and defending the family as the foundation of Russian society by improving the well-being and quality of life of the family and improving its support in special life situations, creating conditions for the harmonious combination of work and education of parents with the birth and upbringing of children, and developing family-oriented infrastructure;

- strengthening the institution of family and marriage as a union of a man and a woman on the basis of preserving and promoting traditional family values, including countering destructive ideologies aimed at destroying the value of a strong family, marriage and large families.

The document pays great attention to the formation of the national idea of respect for the institution of the family, responsible parenthood, the value of preserving reproductive health, maintaining a family lifestyle and intergenerational communication. The formation of public consciousness in this direction involves educational and awareness-raising programs and information campaigns, including the involvement of non-profit and educational organizations in the upbringing of children and young people.

Separate areas of the Strategy elucidate the formation of a system of motivation among the population to lead a healthy lifestyle and the creation of conditions for timely prevention of diseases, protection of maternal and child health, and strengthening reproductive health.

Among the measures of the social block aimed at reproducing the population, supporting families with children, creating additional incentives for the birth and upbringing of children, the authors propose both traditional measures of material and financial support, and various forms of organizational guarantees, involving assistance in the successful combination of family and professional realization of individuals through the development of public services, as well as corporate support for employees with children.

The Strategy implementation may result in a gradual increase in demographic indicators of the indigenous population of Russia, due to an effective system of measures aimed at improving public health, increasing life expectancy, reducing mortality, increasing fertility, improving the status of families with children.

The draft Strategy proposed by the authors-developers has the main goal of consolidating the efforts of public authorities at all levels and civil society institutions (scientific, business community, non-profit organizations) in stabilizing the population, increasing life expectancy, increasing fertility, protecting reproductive, maternal and child health, supporting and strengthening the family as a foundation of the Russian society, preservation of traditional family values, improvement of conditions and quality of life of families, strengthening the prestige of a socially prosperous large family, reducing the divorce level, prevention and overcoming of family problems. Along with socio-economic measures, it is important to support the family, the formation of a public idea about the importance of the family as a value in itself, expressed in responsible support of the family lifestyle, a value attitude towards the creation of a large family, respect for the elderly, public support for extended families, public condemnation of the refusal to marry and raise children.

## **V. Conclusion**

The study of the state of family and demographic policy in the vector of ensuring national security of Russia allows us to state the need to solve domestic demographic problems based on systemic solutions. They presuppose the implementation of a consistent multifaceted policy based on constitutional values and ideals of the importance of man and family and protection of family relations. This approach is justified by the significance of the interaction of both legal factors that determine the regulatory provision for curbing demographic crises and population growth declines, and measures of a general social nature. The latter include large-scale activities of state bodies and civil society institutions, whose activities collectively solve the tasks of social salvation from population growth declines, the need to increase



the share of young people in the total population of the country, the cultivation of spiritual values of a strong and prosperous family, which in turn involve information and educational activities focused on the formation of the consciousness of the modern youth of the values inherent in Russian society, identification of morally oriented patterns of behavior of young people. The family, strengthening of marriage, systemic care of the state and social control in the field of protection and ensuring the protection of families with children and large families remain the main social institution ensuring the solution of the tasks of modern demographic policy. It is this approach that is able to confirm the constitutionalized essence of the Russian state as a social, legal, and democratic State.

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