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## International Day of the Family

15 May, 2023

In 1994, the United Nations designated 15 May as the "International Day of the Family". The initiative draws attention to the family as the most important unit of our society. The Fundamental Law of Hungary protects the institution of marriage as a commitment between one man and one woman, based on voluntary consent, and the family as the foundation of national existence. The family relationship is based on marriage and the parent-child relationship. The mother is a woman, the father a man.

Family policy and demography are not just one of the national strategic issues, but a common mission that defines our future in Hungary and in the world in the long term. 2010 truly marked a watershed in Hungary—that year marks the beginning of the times in which families have become the nation's most important asset. Predictability is of high importance for having and raising children, which is why it is important that the government introduces new family support measures every year. Domestic family policy measures try to provide support for all life situations, so that everyone can find the best one for them.

Most support is designed to help families to move forward using their own strengths and labour. Family policy helps to ensure that in Hungary there is no financial obstacle to starting a family or having another child. This is why a wide range of measures to balance work and family life are promoted, with mothers in particular being supported and given priority.

In 2010, the number of marriages was at a historic low and in 2011, the fertility rate likewise reached a never before seen depth. However, by 2021, the number of those desiring children as expressed in the fertility rate, was almost 30% higher and the number of marriages had doubled compared to 2010. Moreover, Hungary has moved from among the last into the middle ground among the EU states with the largest increase in both marriage and childbearing rates over this period.

In 2022, there was a small decline due to the uncertainty caused by the war and sanctions, but not as large as in many other countries.

The number of abortions has almost halved in the last decade. While in 2005, one abortion was performed for every two births, by 2022 it will be "only" one in four.

The rise in the number of marriages is also reflected in the proportion of children born within marriage: the trend, which had been steadily declining over the past decades, was reversed in 2015. Childbearing within the bonds of marriage has become a virtue again, with just over half of all children born within marriages between 2013 and 2015, but three quarters (73%) of children in 2022. This trend stands in contrasts with other European examples.

It is no wonder that, given these figures, Hungarian family policy is a model for many European countries, and many are interested in Hungarian solutions, elements of which have already been adopted in several countries, such as Poland and Latvia. In the US, the Hungarian model of student loan waiver, which in Hungary is linked to the birth of a child, is highly valued. The domestic family policy has more and more friends in the world—even countries in the Far East have shown interest in adopting some of those. Contrary to the trends in the developed world, our fertility rate has increased, and not as a result of migration, but as a result of a predictable and active family policy. . . . .



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Without laying down the foundations and promoting a family-focused political thinking, without the protection and support of families as well as without a proper understanding of possible pathways to a demographic turn, it is inconceivable to build our common future and make a halt to population decline. Our children are the key to our future, so our most important task remains supporting and protecting families in having and raising children. At KINCS, we work for the accomplishment of these goals to serve every family.

