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World Population Day

Migration is not the solution to demographic problems

11 July, 2023

In recent weeks, new plans to resettle migrants have emerged at EU decision-making levels, all the while the negative ramifications of misguided immigration policies have never been more evident. It has become very clear that migration is not the solution to Europe's demographic problems; despite the waves of large-scale immigration in recent years, the birth rate in Europe is falling and the number of children born to parents with immigrant background is also falling.

Europe's share of the world's population is shrinking: fifty years ago, Europeans accounted for a fifth of the world's population, but now they make up less than a tenth. Today, only 5.6% of the world's population lives in the European Union.

In 2021, 4.09 million children were born the European Union, half a million fewer than in 2010. The total fertility rate also shows a decline, from an average of 1.57 in 2010 to 1.5 in 2020. Only ten EU Member States saw an increase in fertility between 2010 and 2021, with Hungary showing the largest improvement of 29%.

In countries where fertility levels were at or close to the replacement level of 2 in 2010, there was a decline everywhere: Sweden saw fertility rates fall by 16 per cent, Ireland by 13 per cent and France by almost 10 per cent, to a TFR of around 1.7-1.8. There are significant differences between the fertility rates of the native and immigrant populations, for example in France, mothers from a migrant background have twice as many children, with an average fertility rate of 3.4 compared to 1.7 for native French mothers.

While there are fewer children in the EU, on average one in five new mothers is of foreign background, three quarters of whom come from outside the EU. In 2021, one in six children were born in the EU to a mother of foreign nationality, a proportion that is rising rapidly, up from one in eight in 2013. In 2021, two thirds of births in Luxembourg were registered to a mother of foreign origin, while one in three births in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Cyprus and Malta, one in four in France, Spain and Ireland, and one in five in Italy, Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal will be to immigrant parents. In Hungary, the same figure is only 4%.

These figures also show that migration is not a solution to the demographic crisis in the vast majority of countries, but rather exacerbates it. The words of the world-famous Hungarian demographer Pál Demény now seem to ring even more true: "Mass immigration as a solution is an illusion - a temporary remedy that leaves behind bigger problems, as it radically changes the social and economic characteristics, ethnic and cultural composition of the host countries' populations." Instead of fast and easy migration, which in the long term causes significant social hardship, Hungary has chosen the hard way: supporting families. It has now proved to be the more successful way, not only from a demographic perspective.

