

ELFAC PAPERS

European Large Families Confederation

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More children - a greener future

A summary of the research entitled 'The Environmental Attitude of Large Families in Europe and Hungary'

Social changes - population and consumption growth - have made a significant contribution to climate change, with a strong link between the ecological crisis and the demographic crisis. Climate change also poses a threat to birth rates in developed countries. Conscious childlessness is a negative effect of climate change, which is still little talked about in Hungary today, but the conscious juxtaposition of climate protection and childbearing is gaining more and more space west of us. According to some studies, the most effective way to reduce CO2 emissions is, among other things, to have one less child.

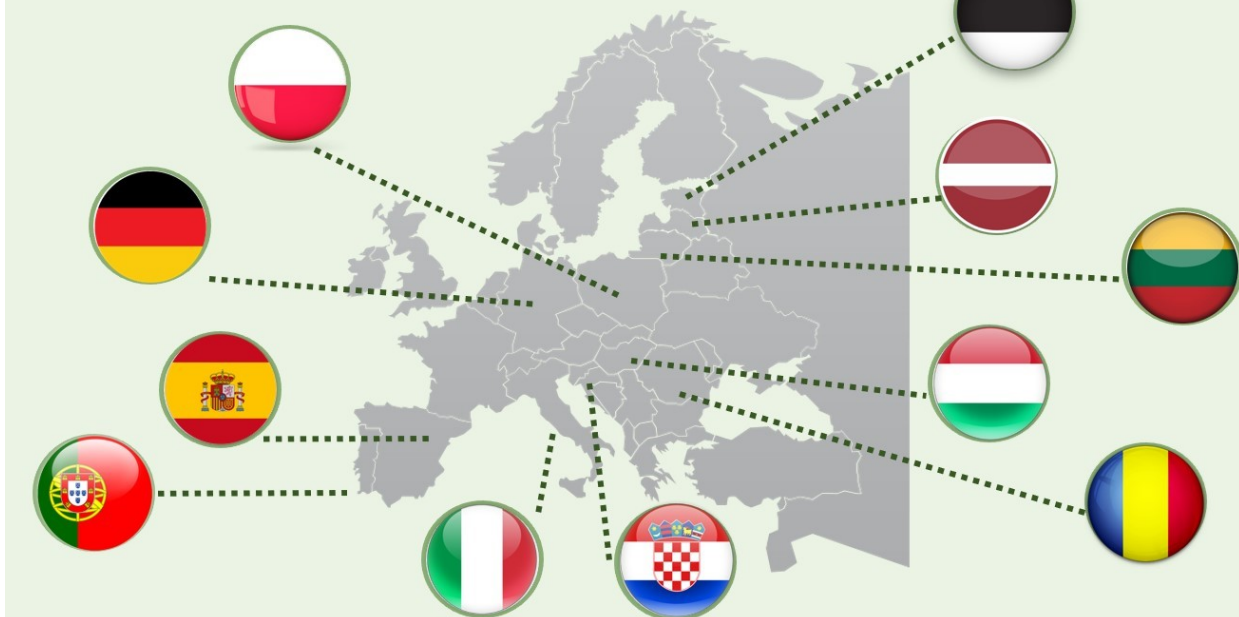
However, instead of the theory of opposing having children to climate protection, educating in an environmentally conscious manner and developing an environmental protective

attitude provides an effective and sustainable solution. If we live in a way that respects the environment, there is an opportunity that right patterns of behaviour may be inherited between generations. A previous successful example in Hungary that has greatly helped families become more environmentally conscious is the "Small Footprint" program launched in 2011 by the Green Dependent Association for Sustainable Solutions and NOE (Hungarian National Association of Large Families).

The aim of the project was to raise climate and energy awareness, to promote a carbon-free lifestyle and to provide the related necessary information. The program also served as an excellent practice to show that large families can do efficiently for the environment and lead a less wasteful life-



Participating countries



style than an average Hungarian household.

As a prelude to this year's environmental research among large European families, in the spring of 2020, the Mária Kopp Institute for Demography and Families (KINCS) examined the environmental awareness of average Hungarian families in a representative survey of 1,000 people. The research found that 65% of families with children were actively committed to environmental protection, compared to only 42% of childless adults. It can be said that Hungarian families are generally aware of the problems threatening our environment and are willing to take active steps to protect the environment for the future of their children.

The research revealed that **large families are most likely to consider their lifestyle to be environmentally conscious**, and those who do not have children are the least likely to believe so. **94% of Hungarian families raise their children in an envi-**

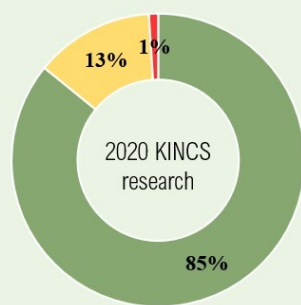
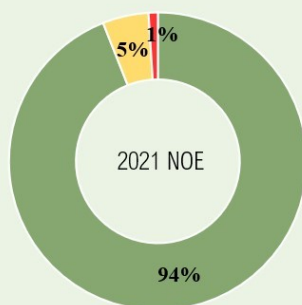
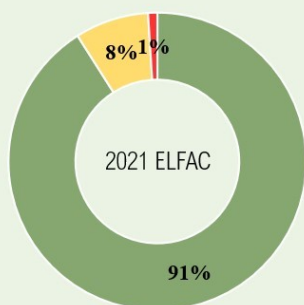
ronmentally conscious manner, and this is also an attitude mostly typical of large families. In light of this, we felt it was important to look specifically at the environmental awareness of large families in Europe in a new study.

In an online survey conducted by the European Large Family Association (ELFAC) and KINCS in the spring of 2021, we were interested in how large families across Europe feel responsible for protecting our environment and how interested they are in sustainability. **In the course of the research, nearly 3,000 completed questionnaires were received from 11 countries (Croatia, Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain), of which 835 large families from Hungary have completed the online questionnaire.** In the research, we asked about the attitude related to environmental protection, the environmentally conscious forms of behavior. Among other things, we explored the global problem of environmental protection, indi-



How interested are you in protecting the environment?

Interested Somewhat interested Not interested





KINCS
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FOR DEMOCRACY
AND FAMILIES



Why do you think environmental protection is important?
Because of the future of our children



European
Large
Families
Confederation

POSITIVE answers

2021 ELFAC

81%



2021 NOE

84%



KINCS
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AND FAMILIES



I raise my children in an environmentally conscious way



European
Large
Families
Confederation

POSITIVE answers

2021 ELFAC

96%

2021 NOE

98%

2020 KINCS research

84%



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AND FAMILIES



Those having children have a greater sense of responsibility towards environmental protection



European
Large
Families
Confederation

POSITIVE answers

2021 ELFAC

88%

2021 NOE

83%

2020 KINCS research

73%

vidual responsibility, and good practices and customs that protect the environment.

Both European and Hungarian large families are interested in environmental protection (91% and 94%), and most of them show special interest in the topic (58% and 61%). Environmental protection is important to them primarily because of the future of their children (81% and 84%).

Large families are not only interested in the topic of environmental protection, but also strive for an environmentally conscious way of life. **The more children a family raises, the more they think it is their own task to protect the environment.**

A higher proportion of Hungarian respondents consider themselves more environmentally conscious than others

(63%) compared to large families in other European countries (49%).

Large families consider the environmental problems affecting the Earth to be very serious, but primarily think of the threat as a global one, feeling it less threatening in their immediate environment. **The biggest problem in their living environment, they say, is littering and illegal dumping**, followed by air pollution and global warming.

Both Hungarian and European respondents **have identified excessive consumption, factories and multinational companies as the main actors responsible for environmental problems.**

Large families strongly agree that those having children have a more responsible attitude towards the environment. Hun-

garians were the least able to identify themselves with the statement that it is not worth bringing a child into this world because of the climate catastrophe, but other large European families also strongly reject such a linkage between having a child and the environmental catastrophe.



Environmental awareness in practice

- More than 90% of European and Hungarian large families collect waste selectively, most collect plastic and paper separately, and respondents least recycle used clothes and shoes.
- In most large family households, selective waste collection is not a novelty, as the vast majority has been collecting waste separately for at least 5 years and almost half of them for more than 10 years
- Domestic large families compost at a much higher rate

arately. In most large family households, selective waste collection is not a novelty, as the vast majority has been collecting waste separately for at least 5 years and almost half of them for more than 10 years.

The average Hungarian family and

Hungarian large families raise their children as environmentally consciously as the European average. The more parents raise their children in an environmentally conscious way, the more they believe that individual responsibility is important to the Earth.

More than 90% of European and Hungarian large families collect waste selectively, most collect plastic and paper sep-

Hungarian large families in last year's survey think similarly about environmental awareness. **Domestic large families in Hungary have been collecting waste selectively for a longer period of time and at a higher rate than average,** and the proportion of those composting is much higher, with many also having "green" household appliances.

Large families expressed a somewhat more critical opinion regarding the Hungarians' attention to environmental protection.

*All in all, European and Hungarian large families are aware of the problems that threaten our environment and are most concerned about the future of their children, and to this end they are willing to do and will do for the environment. Those **who raise more children are more responsible towards the future generation, so families are a guarantee of the preservation of our natural values.** Families are building a livable future, it is important for families to allow their children to grow up in a healthy environment, in as much harmony with nature as possible, and to see the values offered by nature that their parents have seen.*



Source: VectorStock