



PERMANENT MISSION OF HUNGARY
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

**Panel discussion on the occasion of
International Day of Parents**

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**Intervention by
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Permanent Representative**

Distinguished Panellists and Participants,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, **Happy International Day of Parents** for all of you. This is an important day for Hungary and I believe for all of us, and this event is really the best possible way to celebrate this international day. I would like to thank the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See and the Universal Peace Federation for organising this important panel.

Children are our future and the common treasure of our societies that we all have to protect, nurture and support in reaching their full potential. Good parents and a well-functioning family can provide the **care and protection of children** no-one else can. That is why **we have to protect and support** not only the children themselves, but **the family, as a basic unit of the society**, enshrined in our Fundamental Law. A supportive family is the best guarantee for children to grow, thrive and become healthy, stable and successful members of our societies. Hungary is suffering from an ageing population, and to **change the demographic trends**, we need to partner with families and parents to enable them to undertake the important and often challenging task to fund a family and raise kids. This should be supported by are to be highly supported by stable and predictable, long-term **family policy** and family supporting system, which is one of the most important priorities of the Government.

The Government is committed to providing our children with all their age-appropriate help for their mental, psychic and physical development, with special regard to disadvantaged and vulnerable children. The **quality of family relationships and care** is cardinal for the wellbeing of children and society as a whole. We intend to **strengthen marriages**, the stability of families with children and gender equality by **educating** young people on responsible relationships and to marriage. For couples in crisis, we develop a network of supporting services, in partnership with civil society and churches.

Families in vulnerable situations sometimes find it hard to provide the physical, emotional, mental and social development of their children – due to poverty, substance abuse or decease. Such cases require strong **child protection** policies, and the Government **prioritises including parents** in the solution and services, through trainings to make families more resilient and function better for the best interest of the child. **Alternative care** is only the ultimate solution, and we strive to provide for family-like environment for children instead of institutionalisation. Family-oriented **programs** planned include psychotherapy and counselling on strengthening positive parenting, conflict resolution and communication and social skills; awareness-raising and education on drug prevention, as well as trainings for parents with children in alternative care or those at risk of having to be taken out of the family – to facilitate re-insertion of child into their natural family.

We know that all parents have different circumstances and personal choices when it comes to balancing work and family responsibilities. We would like to enlarge their choices and help them **make decisions without financial pressure** and balance work and family commitments. With carefully crafted **allowances and benefits**, child catering and free textbooks, we make sure that those who would like to have children have the best possible circumstances to do so. Parents (either mother or father) are entitled to **paid childcare leave for three years** and return to their workplace. They get **extra holidays** per year after every child.

We enable **mothers** to choose whether they would like to become full-time mothers or return to the labour market. For those who decide to have a family and also have a carrier, our laws guarantee that they can return to their original workplace, and can work in **part-time** with high quality and affordable, flexible **childcare**. We also encourage employers with tax benefits to hire parents with children. **Fathers** play an important role in the upbringing of their child, and so they should be encouraged **to be present more actively** in the life of their families, including in providing care and sharing household work. This is proven to be good for not only the family and the children, but also for fathers' physical and mental health and life expectancy. After 40 years of work, women can retire, so that **grandmothers** can partake in the care for their grandchildren.

These policies have brought outstanding results during the past 8 years (2010-2017). The number of **marriages** increased from 35.000 to 50.000; the number of **divorces** decreased from 24.000 to 18.000; total **fertility rate** rose from 1,23 to 1,50; the number of **abortions** decreased from about 40 thousand to 28 thousand per year, and female **employment** (age 15-64) increased from 50% to 61,3%.

The future of our children is in our hands: it is **only in partnership with parents** and policies addressing the needs of the family as a whole that we can ensure the best future for our children. Thank you for your attention.