



European Economic
and Social Committee



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”EU climate action: Engaging families for sustainable change,,

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Climate action in the European Union – EU climate goals

- ▶ Green Deal: the world's first **climate-neutral continent** (by 2050) coupled with competitiveness and just transition
- ▶ Promoting a **circular economy**: e.g. through „right to repair”
- ▶ **Renewable energy** transition: wind and solar power (22.3% of electricity in 2022)
- ▶ Result: **shift in consumer attitudes towards sustainability** - increasing awareness of climate change and environmental degradation
- ▶ Many families adopt **eco-friendly practices** in their daily lives

Citizen support for climate action

- ❖ Vast majority of respondents have taken **concrete actions**
- ❖ Climate change remains among the **top three concerns** of Europeans
- ❖ Robust **support for ambitious climate targets**
- ❖ Influence of gender and family status?



Challenges faced by families and households in Europe

Vulnerable populations affected by poverty, in particular, will find it challenging to implement the necessary changes in their behaviour given the limited resources available to them.

- ▶ Contraction in income + growing cost of adaptation = financial burden of climate-related challenges may **further exacerbate existing inequalities**
- ▶ Just transition: „**no one left behind**”

Birthplace of sustainability is family

Citizen engagement

- ▶ Establishment of dedicated policies for **ecological investments** and the provision of **financial incentives for those negatively affected** by the green transition, coupled with the **general social approval** - importance that **citizens assume ownership of the change**.

Family engagement

- ▶ The **family unit**, by shaping the attitudes, behaviours and aspirations of its members, acts as a conduit for intergenerational knowledge transfer, **fostering a sense of responsibility**, respect for the environment and the importance of community engagement.



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

POSITIVE answers

2021 ELFAC

81%



2021 NOE

84%

- Environmental protection is important for European and Hungarian large families, primarily because of the future of their children - 81% and 84%, respectively



What type of waste do you collect separately in your home?

2021 ELFAC

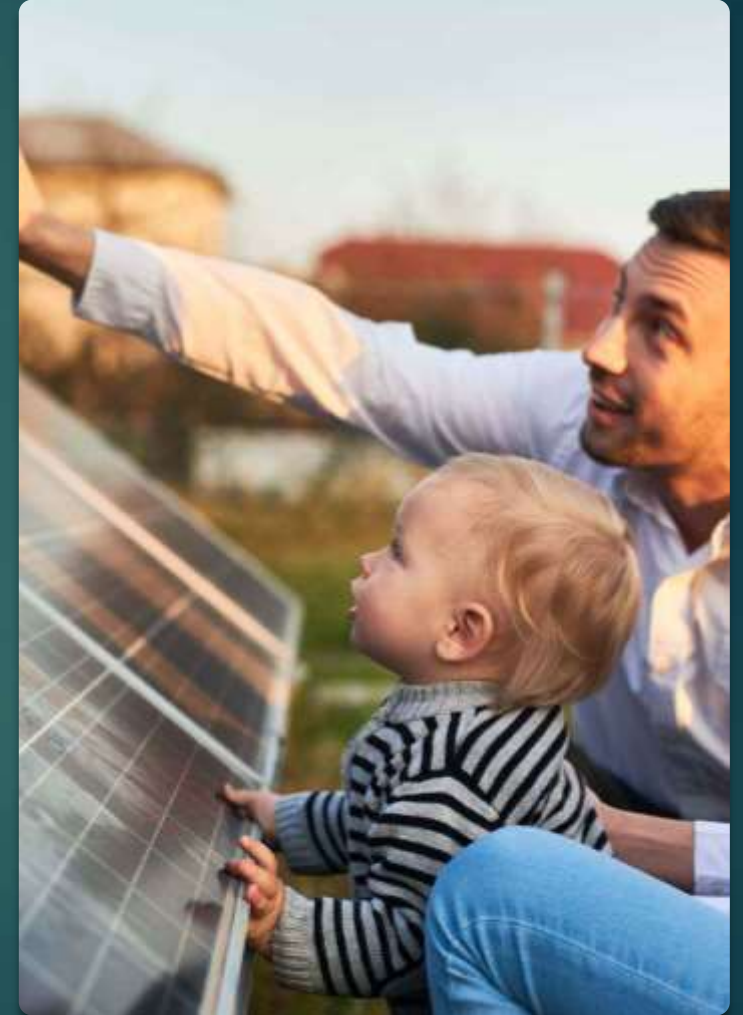
2021 NOE



- Most collect plastic and paper separately, and respondents least recycle used clothes and shoes
- However, in the case of Hungarian respondents, the selective collection of paper and not plastic, came first

Children, youth and families as active agents in advancing positive change

- **Children and youth inspire their parents** to pursue character goals aligned with their values.
- Supporting **young people** in assuming their **future leadership role**, primarily through education and training.
- Encourage **young people** to channel their **creativity and entrepreneurial spirit towards sustainable solutions**.
- **Families as 'prosumers'** - not only in terms of their ability to e.g. consume and produce energy but also in terms of their social and cultural wealth



Recommendations

1. Involve **youth and families and their organisations as key agents in shaping a sustainable future.**
2. Embrace the **dual role of families as both consumers and producers** to foster a more sustainable and inclusive society.
3. Ensure **targeted support for families**, particularly those in **vulnerable situations**, to address the financial challenges posed by climate change impacts.
4. Expand **tax incentives for green technologies**, products, and services to incentivize their adoption and promote sustainable consumption.
5. Advocate for **policies that promote product longevity** and sustainability as e.g. „right to repair”.



Thank you for your attention!

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