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# PREFACE

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This is the fourth edition of the *Demographic Portrait of Hungary* – our three-yearly comprehensive report on the population changes in our country. This volume serves the same purpose as previous editions: to present scientifically grounded information and trends in a brief and concise manner, using figures and tables that will assist professionals and ‘laymen’ alike.

Although the structure is well established, there are still certain *novelties*. We essentially follow the topics and internal structure of the first edition (2009), which focused on the most important issues of population study. Consequently, separate chapters discussed partnerships and divorce, fertility, the family support system, health status and mortality, internal and international migration, family structure, ageing and the future of the population. Three years ago, the topic of intergenerational transfers was introduced; and this year we have devoted a separate chapter to *fatherhood*. Most chapters present and analyse fundamental processes; however, others – dealing with the family support system or intergenerational transfers, for example – focus rather on the characteristic features of the Hungarian system. Of course, we have also included the topic that probably most people wish to learn about: namely, the future of the population (population projections).

In fact, that chapter contains several new features.

Once again, we have tried to establish a uniform structure for the chapters; however, this has not always been possible on account of thematic limitations or lack of data. Whenever possible, we have allowed ample space for *international comparison*: we feel that such a perspective is essential to an understanding of domestic trends. We believe it is important to compare Hungarian trends and features not only with those of Western European countries, but also with those of post-communist states.

A word on the dimension of time: although we are primarily interested in the current situation – i.e. the past two or three years – it is very hard to interpret demographic phenomena without understanding long-term developments. Although the composition of the population is constantly changing, trends evolve slowly and are only felt over several years. Also, it should be noted that there may be exceptional, atypical years, and it is only in retrospect that we can decide whether or not they mark a change. In a break from previous editions, where we discussed developments from the change of regime, this time we start with the 2000s – although, if required, a longer timeframe may be presented for a given process. Of course, many important devel-

opments in trends did occur at the time of the change of regime, and we would direct those interested in the period before 2000 to the valuable information contained in the relevant chapters of previous editions of the *Demographic Portrait*.

We acknowledge that ensuring consistency with regard to topics and the time perspective inevitably requires repetition. In order to make sure that this volume can be read without knowing the content of the three previous editions (2009, 2012 and 2015), we have repeated ourselves on several occasions – after all, in demography, three years is rarely long enough for significant changes to occur that lead to fundamentally different interpretations. Consequently, several chapters contain relevant key indicators of earlier phenomena necessary for the discussion of a given topic, the illustration of trends and the analysis of updated tables. In many cases, however, the set of countries included for comparison has changed, and we have also sought to bring the reader significant new pieces of information and implications in each chapter.

It is a basic requirement of any demographic analysis to present changes not only in general, but also – whenever possible and if it leads to new revelations – by *age* and *sex*. In the current publication we have laid great emphasis on *gender differences* – and more specifically, we have sought to highlight the perspective of men. It is well known that in demography, and especially on the topic of setting up a family, it is the woman's perspective that is more decisive. But here we have tried to present the perspective of men – if not in its entirety, then at least fairly comprehensively. The separate chapter on fatherhood is a product of this focus. Finally, as in the most recent edition from three years ago, we have consistently presented differences according to *level of education*, which fundamentally affects social differences. However, in most chapters we have excluded the detailed discussion of *spatial*

*differences*, which were central to the 2012 edition.

Demographers are fortunate in that there is an abundance of data available for analysis, and processes are fairly obvious and can easily be interpreted in international comparison. In this volume, we have used three different types of data sources. With regard to births, marriages, divorces and deaths, the *vital statistics* regularly collected and published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) provide an accurate picture. The other important demographic data source is the *population census*, which is conducted every 10 years, and is supplemented by micro-censuses at the halfway point between censuses. Data from *representative population surveys* are also included. Analysis has been further enhanced by the crude data from the fifth wave of the *Turning Points of the Life-course* (the Hungarian Generations and Gender Survey), which are already available. Therefore, although longitudinal analysis has just begun, comparison of data from the first and the fifth waves of the survey has enabled us to present changes over a decade and a half in the case of certain subjective indicators. Use of the results of the above (and any other) data sources is always acknowledged in a reference. Those interested in the surveys and research mentioned can find out more from numerous sources (and in various ways); consequently, they are not presented in detail in these pages.

Following the tradition of reports intended for a wider audience, we have pared down the references to academic literature and do not provide references to all relevant theories and methods. We have made an exception to this only when reporting on the results of research conducted outside the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute. Those interested can gain additional information from other publications by the contributors. In this publication, we have sought to present the demographic changes in an

articulate manner and to make our current knowledge accessible to as many people as possible.

In keeping with the research traditions of the Institute, we believe that although *objective indicators* are the basis for the analysis of demographic tendencies, *subjective indicators* – that is, what those affected by the trends think and what their motivations and beliefs are – can also help us understand population processes better. Wherever possible, we have included these in this report.

A brief *glossary* can be found at the end of each chapter, since the terminology of demography (as with other sciences) is not always obvious to everybody. A glossary item is indicated by <sup>g</sup> when the term first appears. Following the structure of similar publications, a short summary appears at the beginning of each chapter, under the heading *Main Findings*.

When we launched the *Demographic Portrait* series, we were convinced that the

findings of our analyses would also be of interest to people not intimately involved in demography. Thus, in presenting the findings of our research to members of the wider public, we demographers are obliged to keep their requirements in mind. Special attention is devoted to presenting the results of our research in a readily comprehensible way on our easily navigable homepage ([www.demografia.hu/en](http://www.demografia.hu/en)), and we also take great pains over our visual aids, which try to present demographic and statistical correlations clearly.

We hope that this publication will meet the demands of several professions. We continue to count on the interest of policy makers, researchers, university teachers, students and the media, and feel confident that the general public curious about matters of demography will also find the *2018 Demographic Portrait* useful.

Zsolt Spéder