



June 19, 2017

URGENT: Memo on UNHRC Protection on the Family Resolution

ISSUE: 2017 marks the fourth year that a resolution on the protection of the family will be voted on at the UN Human Rights Council. There currently are 70 countries cosponsoring the resolution with more expected to join.

In light of Hungary's strong position and leadership on the issue of preserving and protecting the family as the fundamental unit of society, as well as Hungary's intent to speak out internationally for the family as evidenced by its statement at the Budapest Family Summit, we are hopeful that Hungary can co-sponsor and vote for this year's protection of the family resolution.

TIMELINE: A vote on the resolution at the Human Rights Council is expected towards the end of this week, most likely on Thursday.

FAMILY RESOLUTION HISTORY: Three prior protection of the family resolutions have been adopted by the Human Rights Council (HRC). The theme of the original protection of the family resolution adopted in 2014 was the role of the family as the fundamental unit of society. In 2015, the resolution focused on the on the role of the family in preventing hunger and in achieving sustainable development. In 2016, the resolution added the emphasis on the role the family in helping those with disabilities. This year, the title of the resolution is "Protection of the family: role of the family in supporting the protection and promotion of human rights of older persons." (HRC 35, Agenda item 3).

Hungary co-sponsored the family resolution last year after it was adopted.

Here are the voting results on the previous protection of the family resolutions by HRC members:

2014 - 26 in favor, 14 against, 6 abstentions (Cuba was not present)

2015 - 29 in favor, 14 against, 4 abstentions

2016 - 32 in favor, 12 against, 3 abstentions

REASONS FOR HUNGARY TO SUPPORT THE 2017 HRC FAMILY RESOLUTION:

1. International law calls for States to protect the family as the fundamental unit of society. Five binding UN treaties as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights obligate UN

member states to protect “the family” as the fundamental unit of society. International law also specifies many measures in the areas of housing, work, health, education, etc. that governments are supposed to take to protect, support, and strengthen the family. (For a summary of those areas and the legal obligations to protect the family, see **Policy Brief on The Binding State Obligations to Protect the Family: Rationale for protection of the family resolutions**, available at:

http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybrief_Binding_Obligations.pdf

2. Hungary’s constitution is fully aligned with this resolution as it states, “The Republic of Hungary shall protect the institutions of marriage and the family.” (Article 15)

3. Despite extensive binding commitments made decades ago by Member States to protect the family, the HRC family resolutions are the only documents that specifically focus in any meaningful or comprehensive way on how States can do so.

4. When States insist that the protection of the family resolution must recognize “various forms of the family,” they are opening up the door to recognizing any kind of family. With the emergence of multiple controversial family forms detrimental to children (e.g., incestuous, polyamorous, polyandrous, group marriage families, etc.), it is now imperative that nations reject this ambiguous, undefined term in current UN document, unless it is clearly defined to **not** include family forms harmful to children. For example, recently the government of Hungary recognized the “marriage” of three men as a family form. (See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4602742/Colombia-s-THREE-man-marriage-legally-recognised.html#ixzz4kCLrHxYI>.)

5. Voting in support of this resolution is the right thing to do for children and society.

There are numerous peer-reviewed studies that show the extensive social and economic benefits from strengthening and supporting the family unit (available upon request).

CONCLUSION: For all of the above reasons we strongly encourage the Government of Hungary to:

1. To work within the EU to prevent the EU from having a common position in support of an amendment to the family resolution to recognize “various forms of the family.” (Note: While the tabled family resolution currently does not include "various forms of the family," nations have through Tuesday to propose such an amendment.)

2. To vote against any such amendment, should it be proposed and voted on by the Council.

3. To vote in favor of the family resolution and to cosponsor it.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. Policy Brief on The Binding State Obligations to Protect the Family: Rationale for protection of the family resolutions

http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybrief_Binding_Obligaions.pdf

2. Policy Brief on The Various Forms of the Family

http://www.familywatchinternational.org/fwi/documents/fwipolicybrief_Various_Forms_000.pdf