

# **Sustainable Consumption in Hungary - what is small-footprint-living and can we make it attractive?**

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## **Main reason for this paper...**

- Uncertainty about sustainable and small-footprint lifestyles: do they mean less happy lifestyles? Also, is it possible to do them without moving 'back into caves'?
- So, if we want people to live more sustainably, we need to make these lifestyles attractive... and prove that they are 'doable' for the average person!

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## What am I going to talk about?

- What does small-footprint-living mean?
- Footprints, consumption and well-being in Hungary vs. rest of Europe
- Can we achieve small-footprint-living?  
The lessons learnt from the Small Footprint campaigns
  - How could small-footprint-living be made more attractive?
- Conclusions and issues to take forward



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## What is small-footprint living?

- Strong sustainability / strong sustainable consumption
  - Staying within planetary limits (overall and per capita)
  - Includes a reduction/degrowth element
- Equity dimension of small-footprint living
- Recognition of responsibility for households and communities
- Continuous and step-by-step process (degrowth towards sustainable footprint...)
- Diversity of implementation approaches acknowledged



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## What is small-footprint living? (2)

- Challenges:
  - Population size has an impact on available resources
  - Household size has an impact on footprint
  - Variation in footprint in **different years** (e.g. *buying a car, going on an overseas holiday*) as well as in **different life stages** (e.g. *uni student, own family, pensioner...*)
  - Variation in available resources between regions (within countries) and between countries
    - ethics!
- People in general do not like this uncertainty and find it hard to deal with it



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## Footprints in Hungary: ecological footprint

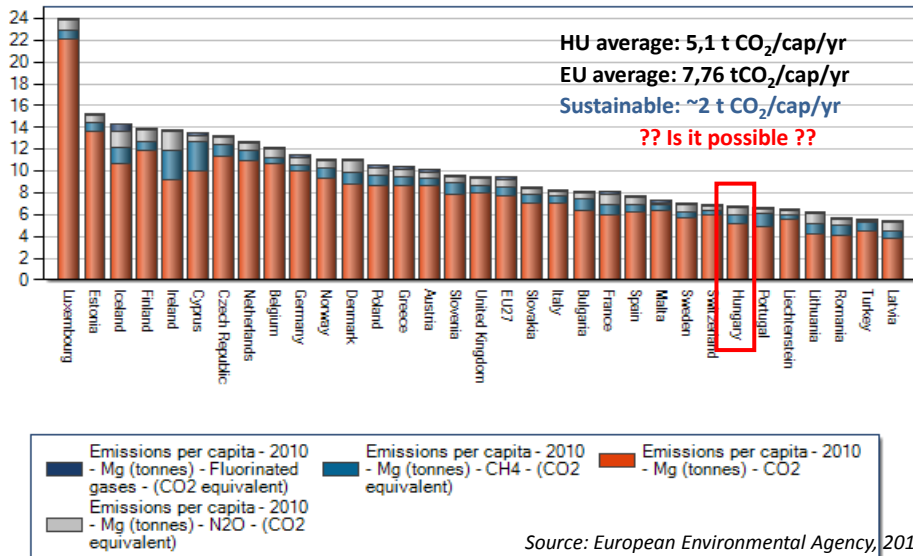
EU	4.72
Austria	5.29
Belgium	7.11
Bulgaria	3.56
Czech Republic	5.27
Denmark	8.25
Estonia	4.73
Finland	6.21
France	4.91
Germany	4.57
Greece	4.92
Hungary	3.59
Ireland	6.22
Italy	4.52
Latvia	3.95
Lithuania	4.38
Netherlands	6.34

- Comparatively small in the EU (3rd lowest), but larger than world average and what would be sustainably available

Poland	3.94
Portugal	4.12
Romania	2.84
Slovakia	4.66
Slovenia	5.21
Spain	4.74
Sweden	5.71
United Kingdom	4.71

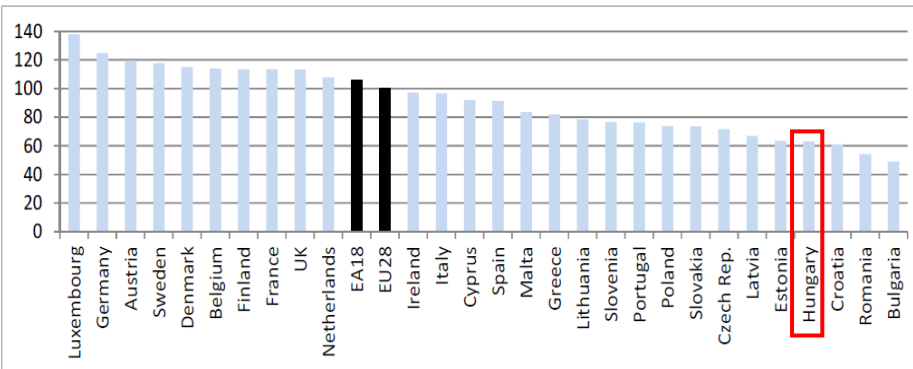
Source: LPR, 2012

## Footprints in Hungary: carbon footprint

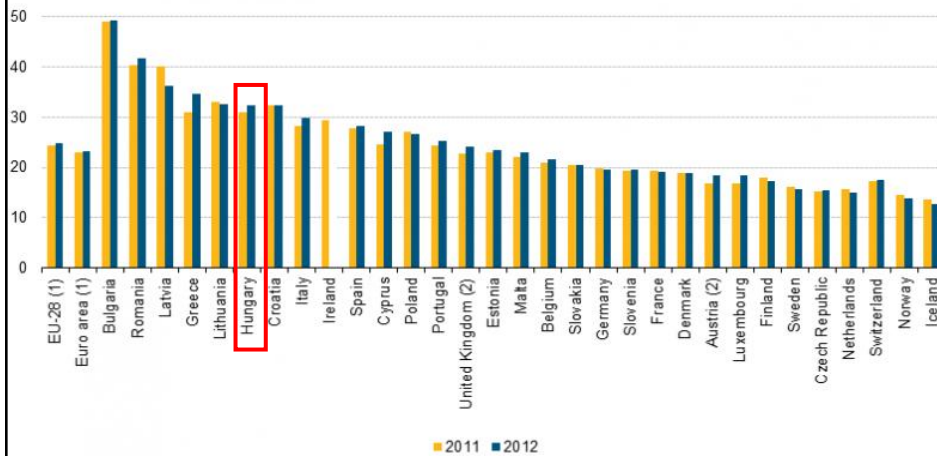


## Consumption in Hungary

Actual individual consumption per capita in PPS in 2013, EU28 = 100



## People at risk of poverty or social exclusion



(1) Estimated data, 2012

(2) Break in time series, 2012

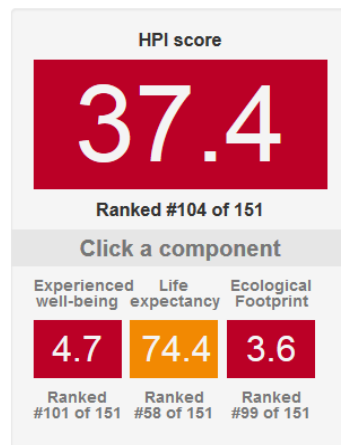
IE: data not available, 2012

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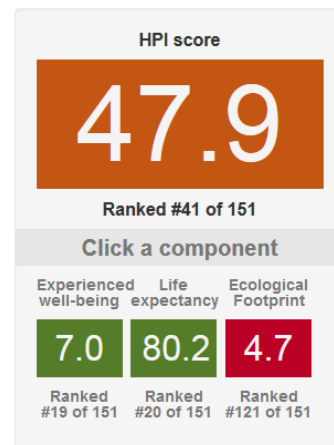
Source: Eurostat, 2014

## Well-being and ecological footprint: the Happy Planet Index

### Hungary



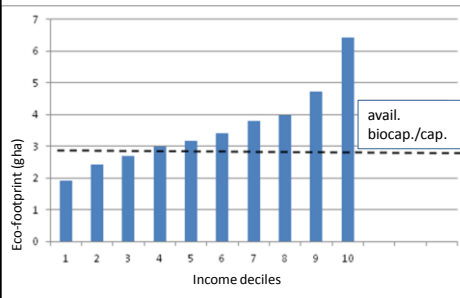
### the United Kingdom



Source: nef, [www.happyplanetindex.org](http://www.happyplanetindex.org), 2014 (data for 2012)

## Are there people living within available biocapacity? (statistics)

### Hungary



Source: Csutora et al., 2011

### the United Kingdom

- Carbon footprint data is available in a similar fashion
- Even the lowest deciles are well above the available capacity

Source: Gough, 2013

## Messages based on the data

- There is potential for lower-footprint-living in Hungary
  - The HU society as a whole needs to reduce material consumption
  - At the individual household level there are some that still/already live within nature's means
  - Valuing and promoting **current** and **existing** lower-footprint lifestyles and practices would be very important (not quirky but trendy...)
- Ways to develop need to be found that increase well-being and equity without an increase in footprint



## The Small Footprint Campaigns

- National campaigns in two consecutive yrs in HU
- Objectives:
  - Promote small-footprint lifestyles
  - Connect everyday life and routines to global problems
  - Help households recognize their responsibility and take action
- Methods based on research of best practice



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## Small Footprint methodology

(selected elements – focus on 'making attractive')

- helping people develop a positive attitude towards small-footprint living through various means, e.g. community events;
- organizing informal and involving training events where households can recognize that they already have small-footprint practices and share them;
- training and assisting volunteers to become change agents in their local community;



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- assisting people in measuring the impact of their households and giving feedback (DIY audit, online calculator, creative tasks,);
- assisting people in becoming trendsetters for their peers through publishing and presenting their case stories;
- engaging the mainstream media and convincing them to report on small-footprint living and related good practice.



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## Some results - numbers

SF campaigns average per capita carbon footprint		Average Hungarian per capita carbon footprint*	Average EU per capita carbon footprint*
Large Family – SF, average of 21 winning households	SF, average of 25 winning households		
2 t/yr	2.65 t/yr	5.1 t/yr	7.76 t/yr

\* Source: EEA, <http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/>, data for 2010

Notes:

Only CO<sub>2</sub> emission related carbon footprint was considered.

The calculator developed for the SF campaigns only includes emissions related to direct energy use in the home, diet, travel and holidays; however, direct energy use is based on consumption in winter months.



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## Other results and outcomes

- Good media coverage - press releases issued
  - Numerous media stories, news items, radio and TV interviews
  - National women's weekly ran a small footprint series, including introduction of families from the programme
  - 2 families introduced even on national TV demonstrating good practice (filming in their homes)
- **!** People are often ashamed of small-footprint lifestyle practices – association with poverty -, but through informal training, community events, awards, etc. this can be changed



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## Conclusions

- Small-footprint living is possible
- Establishing a positive picture of/attitude to small-footprint lifestyles is important and possible
- Importance of
  - **Groups** (challenging and establishing social norms, providing support and pressure, etc.)
  - **Voluntary coordinators** (change agents)
  - **Longer projects** (several years long!)
    - Behaviour change to happen and become embedded
    - Change agents to emerge, gain self-confidence and get established in their niche
- Cooperation between stakeholders is needed for success
  - Researchers, practitioners, mainstream **media**, etc.



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## **Issues to keep in mind... and investigate further**

- People are often not aware of the size of their footprints and their capacity to influence it
- People are not usually aware that their footprint is not constant
- Metrics are important for people and communities to assist change – need to develop them further
- Different approaches in different countries are needed, e.g. discover existing examples
- Finding small-footprint solutions to poverty and exclusion is important



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## **Thank you for your attention!**

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