

PRESS RELEASE – ENGLISH VERSION (TRANSLATION)

Please note: the German version of this press release is authoritative.

Embargoed until: Monday, 17 August, 10.00 a.m. CEST

“Strengthen the middle class, so that a family of four can make ends meet on one income” – in the largest citizen dialogue on family policy, the Swiss population sets its own priorities

Cham/Zurich, **17 August 2026**. 1,758 people took part in the citizen dialogue “Deine Schweiz. Deine Familie.” (“Your Switzerland. Your Family.”) run by 20 Minuten and BrainE4, contributed 1,635 ideas of their own and then weighted these themselves. 20 Minuten published the results on 15 August 2026. The picture is clear: the population is calling for financial relief, for compensation of the pension gaps caused by care work, and for genuine freedom of choice in the family model. For the Swiss technology company BrainE4, the project also marks a successful public market launch in Switzerland.

Switzerland’s birth rate stands at 1.28 children per woman, the lowest level since records began in 1876. The causes have been debated for months – mostly over the heads of those affected. The citizen dialogue “Deine Schweiz. Deine Familie.” has now recorded their perspective systematically for the first time. Neither the editorial team nor the political sphere provided any answers in advance: the 1,635 ideas came exclusively from the participants, and they were rated exclusively by the participants.

What the population is calling for

The statement given the highest weighting is of remarkable simplicity: “One income should be enough for a family.” Participants qualified this to mean that it need not necessarily be one parent working full time – “a 100 per cent salary should be enough for a family to live well – or two 50/50 salaries”.

The remaining priorities can be summarised in five findings:

- **Costs in the aggregate.** It is not individual items that weigh on families, but their sum: housing, healthcare, childcare and retirement provision. Health insurance premiums are mentioned particularly often, coupled with the demand that children be exempted from premiums.
- **Part-time work without penalties.** Both parents should be able to work part time without financial losses and without career disadvantages. Participants also call for an easier return to work and flexible working-time models.
- **Parental leave and allowances.** Maternity leave of at least six months and higher child allowances meet with broad approval.
- **Closing pension gaps.** Those who reduce their working hours to care for children lose salary and contribution years in the AHV state pension and in the occupational pension scheme. Participants call for compensation – for instance by recognising care work as working time.
- **Recognition and freedom of choice.** The statement “Society needs to rethink. Children are our future.” receives very high approval. The state and the business community should not favour any one family model.

What the dialogue does not show is equally revealing: when it comes to choosing a partner, financial considerations clearly recede. What is decisive is trust and the willingness to genuinely share the work of raising children.

Why a dialogue shows more than a survey

In BrainE4’s Idea Duel method, participants contribute their own arguments anonymously and on an equal footing, and then assess the arguments of the others in direct comparison. Thousands of such

duels produce a mathematically stable ranking. Votes are weighted according to four criteria: gender, age, party affiliation and income. The method was developed in an Innosuisse project together with OST (Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences) and ZHAW.

Christoph Strauss, Professor of Applied Mathematics at OST and a partner of BrainE4, told 20 Minuten that the model makes it possible “to render even controversial arguments visible”; the way it determines consensus is “unique worldwide”. His colleague Lin Himmelmann, Professor of Data Science and Statistics, added: “Unlike a classic survey with predefined answers, here you obtain ideas directly from the participants.”

A successful market launch in Switzerland

The citizen dialogue was the first public application of the method in the Swiss media market. Before that, the BrainE4 stakeholder dialogue had proven itself in more than 60 organisations – including at Denner, in the municipality of Schwyz with the first digital Landsgemeinde (open-air citizens’ assembly) in central Switzerland, and at the medical technology company Medartis. With “Deine Schweiz. Deine Familie.”, the method has now held up at national level and under public scrutiny for the first time.

Andreas Seonbuchner, founder and CEO of BrainE4: “We did not simply poll people; we had them argue and set their own priorities. The result is more precise than any predefined list of answers – and it has been validated by the population itself. What has proven itself in more than sixty organisations now also stands up to public scrutiny.”

Results publicly available

The detailed analysis of the citizen dialogue is publicly accessible and was published by 20 Minuten on 15 August 2026 ([LINK to the results](#)). The results are available to the political sphere, public administration, associations, business and the media as a well-founded basis.

BrainE4 – collective intelligence from Switzerland

BrainE4 closes the gap between classic data collection and robust decision-making. The Idea Duel makes collective intelligence usable in real time: anonymous, egalitarian, scientifically grounded and weighted according to freely selectable criteria, for representative findings on the population as a whole. The method was developed with two professors of the OST Eastern Switzerland University of Applied Sciences in an Innosuisse project. It is used for leadership, culture, customer and citizen dialogues. BrainE4 is 100% Swiss Made and based in Cham (canton of Zug).

Further information and detailed analysis:

www.braine4.com

[LINK to the results](#)

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