

FACTS

10% of EU citizens had arrears on utility bills in 2014, while 37% of the population in Greece was struggling with the same problem and in 7 Member States more than 20% of the population faced arrears

More than 10% of EU citizens were unable to keep their home adequately warm in 2014. 40% of the population in Bulgaria reported inability to heat their homes and 5 other Member States were above 20%

Almost 16% of the EU population was living in dwellings with leaking roofs, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor in 2014, while in Portugal 33% of people was effected and 5 other Member States were above 20%

Energy poverty is a growing concern all over Europe as our society is becoming more dependent on energy consumption and inequality is growing. More and more people are suffering from inadequate housing conditions, arrears on utility bills, and as a consequence health problems caused by damp dwellings and the inability to heat the house. More than 50 million people face various forms of energy poverty and we believe it will increase without direct and targeted measures at the European and Member State level.

It is getting harder and harder for people to escape from energy poverty because it would require a large up-front investment and because our society is becoming extremely energy dependent. Proper heating, lighting, cooking, warm water is needed for the most basic activities: to perform well in school, to find a job and simply to stay healthy.

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Photo: Bence Járdány

Eliminating energy poverty in the European Union



OUR PRIORITIES

Helping the most vulnerable people in crisis

- 1** **European winter heating disconnection moratorium** should be introduced in all Member States to decrease the level of excess winter death in the EU. No customer should be penalised for being poor and unable to pay for energy bills.
- 2** We would like to have all governments and the EU seeing energy as a **basic human entitlement** where no citizen can be deprived of the minimum service.
- 3** Providing immediate relief for the most deprived households by **installing** in a large scale **low cost renewable energy resources and efficient off-grid devices** such as solar panels to meet their basic needs and to prevent intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Decreasing social inequality in the society

- 1** Since the energy poor households cannot afford the needed upfront investment more **European funds** such as European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, and Cohesion Fund should target these households and regions with higher level of energy poverty.
- 2** The **European Rural Development Fund** scheme should improve the LEADER programs to better target energy poor households in the countryside.
- 3** The **Energy Efficiency Directive** should oblige Member States to include social aim in their energy efficiency schemes.
- 4** The **European Performance of Buildings Directive** should prioritise energy efficient renovation of existing building stock especially of energy poor households.

Strengthening the economy

- 1** Member States and the EU should provide **microcredits or interest free loans** to households to support them in the upfront investment in renewables or energy efficiency. **Green employment provides decent jobs** and revitalises the local labour market.
- 2** **European Minimum Income Directive** should specify those criteria which Member State level minimum income schemes should meet in order to provide adequate income to households in severe material deprivation and energy poverty. Increasing income of poor households immediately **increases internal demand**.
- 3** Investment in **green renovation of the housing stock of the most deprived European regions** and households supports the local economy, creates green jobs as well as increase the regional mobility of people.

Defining Energy Poverty and its indicators on the European level

A definition should equally tackle the three main aspects of energy poverty (income, cost, efficiency) to make sure all low income households with relatively high energy costs and inefficient housing will be considered energy poor.

We have to make sure that the definition covers the energy consumption of **adequate heating, cooling, lighting, cooking and warm water**.

We need to define the level of minimum needs in these resources by indexing them to **health standards** and minimum consumption levels to ensure a **decent life** and prevent the **intergenerational transmission of poverty**.

The definition and indicators should be suitable to **identify individual energy poor households** to create the basis for targeted policy measures on the European, Member State or local level.



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