How citizens are fighting energy poverty

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Energy Poverty in the EU

Energy poverty impacts the most vulnerable populations first:

- Elderly
- Children
- People living with chronic disease
- Single-parent households (women representing 80% of them).
Energy poverty can be explained by three interconnected causes:

- High energy prices
- Low incomes
- Energy inefficient housing
- Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy has been identified as one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Energy poverty is increasingly recognised by European institutions: it was included in European legislation in 2009 and in the Commission’s 2030 Clean Energy for All Europeans package in 2016.
- Awareness is also increasing at national levels, as more and more public bodies, organisations and social movements deepen their understanding of the specificity of energy poverty.
Background

EPSU Congress resolution in 2014:
Fighting energy poverty was identified as a priority action.

Joint publication in 2017: EPSU and EAPN
- The Right to Energy for all by introducing concrete EU legislation banning disconnections for vulnerable consumers
- Stop the phasing out of regulated prices in the energy sector for domestic households and support social tariffs for vulnerable customers
- Assign an ambitious share of public investment in energy efficiency towards measures targeting low income households ensuring no additional costs in housing or bills for these households
Right To Energy Coalition

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO ENERGY FOR ALL EUROPEANS

https://righttoenergy.org/
https://twitter.com/RightToEnergy
MANIFESTO

European Parliament election

OUR ENERGY SYSTEM ISN’T WORKING.

50 million Europeans cannot afford to keep their homes warm in the winter.

100 million Europeans cannot keep their homes cool in the summer.

7 million Europeans receive disconnection notices every year.

Our energy system is wasteful, polluting, and unfair. Due to high costs, low incomes and low-quality homes, millions of Europeans cannot adequately heat or cool their homes. As a result, up to 100,000 people die every winter due to living in cold homes. Energy poverty also impacts the most vulnerable first: the elderly, children, people living with chronic disease, and single-parent households (80% of them headed by women).

Tackling energy poverty is a social emergency. We demand bold political action to defend the right to clean, affordable energy and decent housing for all. Action to reduce energy poverty can defend human rights. Save energy, create quality local jobs and tackle climate change at the same time.

**BAN DISCONNECTIONS**

To ensure access to energy for all: a recognised human right. Disconnections are a harsh and extreme procedure: they should be banned.

**INSULATE HOMES**

Million of Europeans live in indecent homes, that waste energy, inflate energy bills, and contribute to climate change. Massive renovation programmes would provide decent housing for all, cut energy bills and emissions.

**ENERGY IN PEOPLE’S HANDS**

Local community energy projects alleviate energy poverty by enabling energy savings and through solidarity initiatives. Everyone should have the opportunity to take ownership of the energy transition.

**FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HOUSEHOLDS**

With increases in energy prices, bills are a heavier burden for low-income households, who already pay proportionately more for energy. Financial support must be provided as an immediate solution.

ACCESS TO CLEAN AFFORDABLE ENERGY IS A HUMAN RIGHT. LET’S MAKE IT A REALITY!

END ENERGY POVERTY

#EndEnergyPoverty - @RightToEnergy
http://righttoenergy.org
Access to energy is a right!

It's time to tackle energy poverty.

1. **Ban disconnections**
   to protect low-income households

2. **Renovate home**
   to cut emissions and energy bills

3. **Put energy in people's hands**
   energy democracy is part of the solution
Stakeholders against energy poverty in Belgium

Lydie Gaudier, Coordinator RISE at CEPAG/Walloon FGTB
Energy poverty is a distinct form of poverty associated with a range of adverse consequences for people’s health and wellbeing – with respiratory and cardiac illnesses, and mental health, exacerbated due to low temperatures and stress associated with unaffordable energy bills. In fact, energy poverty has an indirect effect on many policy areas - including health, environment and productivity. Addressing energy poverty has the potential to bring multiple benefits, including less money spent by governments on health, reduced air pollution, better comfort and wellbeing, improved household budgets, and increased economic activity.

–EU Energy Poverty Observatory
Energy poverty in Belgium

It is estimated that more than 50 million households in the EU are experiencing energy poverty (1)

One Belgian in five is in a situation of energy insecurity (21% - declining since 2012)

◦ Especially in Wallonia and Brussels (27,8% in W, 28,3% en B)
◦ Single-persons and single parents more affected
◦ Private and social housing tenants more affected
◦ Clear link between poor health and energy poverty

(1): EU Energy Poverty Observatory
Budget meters in Wallonia

Figures for electricity

End of 2016, there were 155 833 budget meters (electricity) in Wallonia. It means that around 1 out of ten households was equipped (1) (Half are desactivated)

20.5% of customers had a 100€ debt load when the meter has been placed (even less) and 67% had a less than 500€ debt load

Budget meters as a social measure costs to the community 43 million € each year

(1) Commission wallonne pour l’Energie (2016)
How neighbourhoods hold the key to fighting energy poverty?

THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PUBLIC, COOPERATIVE AND SOCIAL HOUSING
Content

❑ The role of social, cooperative and public housing sector in energy efficiency gains and the ecological transition
❑ What does scale matter? The role of the neighbourhood approach
❑ What policy actions at EU level do make sense?
Why is social housing a driving force in the ecological transition?

1. **Because it already drives the renovation efforts**: The average energy performance in the SCP housing sector is better than the total average, i.e. Fr 190 / 250 kWh/m²a, Ge 130 / 155 kWh/m²a. In France for 7 renovations in SH, there is only 1 in the private sector. In the Netherlands, the dwelling stock of housing corporations has to have an average energy label of min. B in 2020 vs min. 80% of dwellings from private landlords in 2020 need to have at least energy label C in 2020. There are no goals or agreements at all on improving the energetic performance for homeowners.

2. **It promotes neighborhoods approach focusing on Co2 emissions**: ZEN

3. **It promotes renewable energy**: self-consumption and energy cooperatives
Some facts about the energy transition in the social, cooperative and public housing sector


Durchschnittliche jährliche Veränderungen des Endenergieverbrauchs in Haushalten (pro Kopf und pro m²) und im Verkehr

Quelle: Übersicht zu Emissionsminderungen und nationalen Klimapolitiken im NichtETS-Sektor in der EU. Studie von econs und adelphi im Auftrag des BMU. 2018. Eigene Darstellung: [link to source PDF file]
4. Einschätzung zur Verminderung des Endenergieverbrauches in Haushalten in den Niederlanden und in Deutschland

(Achtung: Verfügbare Daten beziehen sich nicht auf exakt dieselben Jahre)

Greenhouse gas emissions by IPCC source sector, EU-28, change from 1990 to 2016
(million tonnes of CO2 equivalent and % change)

Note: fuel combustion as a source of GHG emissions is indicated by the grey background shading
Source: EEA, republished by Eurostat (online data code: emc_air_gge)
Chart — Drivers for change in energy consumption per dwelling in households

- Consumption per dwelling: -2.4%
- More appliances: 0%
- Larger homes: 0.8%
- Efficiency progress: -3.6%
- Behaviour, others: -0.8%
Residential final energy consumption, EU-28, 1990-2016

(million tonnes of oil equivalent)

1990

2016

- Solid fuels
- Total petroleum products
- Gas
- Derived heat
- Renewable energy
- Electrical energy

Note: waste (non-renewable) has been excluded as the values are negligible for residential final energy consumption.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: nrg_110a)
Why does scale matter? The role of the neighbourhoods
Various forms of zero emissions neigbourhoods— 1. City of the Sun (NL)

- 1600 housing units, 14% social housing
- more than 40,000 solar panels with 2.45 MegaWatt generation capacity, energy efficient building orientation and construction, three wind turbines on the outskirts of Heerhugowaard, and the planting of trees in the "Huygendijkbos" woodland park
2. Eco life Venning – Kortrijk (BE)
3. Renewable self consumption in social housing, Bordeaux (F)

60 new units at 50kWh/m²/y
260 m² PV
Savings due to self consumption = 50-70 €/y/household
« the facilitator approach »

- Energiesprong/Stromversnelling: they have created Market Development Teams that help to bring together housing providers and construction/renovation companies. Those teams (now in FR and UK) pushes companies to offer packaged solutions for the renovation of social housing. The UK government is currently discussing about how to have such facilitators for the renovation of public buildings.

- Energie positIF in France is a public third party financing entity in the Paris Greater Region which providers homeowners with advice, subsidies for audits, and loans
What policy actions at EU level do make climate sense?

1. Focus on CO2 emissions at neighbourhood level → promotion of RES (self consumption and DHC)
2. Circular economy (ex: E+C- in France)
3. Climate resilience (facing heat waves and floods)
4. Investing in hard and soft measures (the importance of skills)
5. Activate social support : « the facilitator approach »
Example of E+C-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amélioration de la performance énergétique</th>
<th>Déploiement des EnR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Énergie 1 Sobriété</td>
<td>Énergie 3 Recours aux énergies renouvelables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Énergie 2 Efficacité</td>
<td>Énergie 4 Production d'électricité renouvelable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Limité les besoins du bâtiment (Bio) |
- Limité les consommations (Cep) |
- Les consommations NR/R du bâtiment |
- Enveloppe, orientation etc. |
- Systèmes, équipements |
- Énergie utilisée |
- Production du bâtiment |

RT 2012
Carbone 1

- Les leviers de réduction de l'empreinte carbone sont à répartir entre les consommations énergétiques et le choix des matériaux
- Aucun mode constructif ni vecteur énergétique n’est exclu

Carbone 2

- Ambition renforcée sur le CO₂ avec le respect à minimum du niveau Energie 1
- Pour atteindre ce niveau il faudra renforcer le travail de réduction de l’empreinte carbone du bâtiment en travaillant à la fois sur l’énergie consommée et le choix des matériaux
- Le bonus de constructibilité sera octroyé sur la base du niveau 2
How does this fit into the EU long term strategy for a net zero CO2 emissions Europe by 2050?

1. Maximise the benefits from Energy Efficiency including zero emission buildings
2. Maximise the deployment of renewables and the use of electricity to fully decarbonize Europe’s energy supply
3. Embrace clean, safe and connected mobility
4. A competitive EU industry and the circular economy as a key enabler to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
5. Develop an adequate smart network infrastructure and inter-connections
6. Reap the full benefits of bio-economy and create essential carbon sinks
7. Tackle remaining CO2 emissions with carbon capture and storage
Some take aways

- When there is no public/social housing, there is no renovation, no sustainable housing
- When there is no neighbourhood approach, there is no lasting impact on CO2 and no ownership of the energy transition
- Neighbourhood approach helps drive private sector as well
- Neighbourhood approach helps addressing the issue of public transports and e-mobility
- The future should be ZEN → effect on CO2 (Potsdam) and social inclusion (Lindängen)
- Reduction of energy consumption + comfort allow for adequate rent increase
- Role of Renewable Energy is key: first experience of self consumption in France
Energie Solidaire

Fostering new forms of solidarities amongst energy stakeholders
Context

Partnering with the French green energy supplier ENERCOOP

- a network of local cooperatives strengthening links with consumers, producers, helping energy savings and implementing local energy transition

- 11 local cooperatives including all stakeholders in the governance (consumers, producers, cities, employees, founders and partners)

- an aggregator developing bilateral contracts with renewable energy producers

75 000 clients
41 000 members
190 employees
246 producers
Les Amis d’Enercoop

A think & do tank engaged in citizen led energy transition

**Investment fund** enabling citizens to invest in renewable energies

**Fostering energy savings** by providing adequate services to Enercoop clients

**Helping engage all** Enercoop stakeholders in fighting energy poverty

2008 2014 2018
Fuel poverty in France

Main measures/support programs, issues & solutions

- **Curatives measures**: in the form of small amounts of money provided to poor households in order to help them pay their energy bills

- **Preventive measures**: Helping energy poor households invest in the renovation of their households (up to 50% of total costs)

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Curative measures need repeating each year as they don’t deal with the root of the problem

- Are too often invisible to those eligible
- Impossible to mobilize for households needing them the most

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Complementary energy poverty mitigation programs carried by local non-profit organizations can help overcome these issues.

**However, recent severe budget costs are undermining their ability to do so.**
Our solution - 1
Micro-donations on energy bills

By subscribing to Énergie Solidaire, Enercoop clients have the possibility to donate 1 cent per kWh consumed:

A household consuming 3 000 kWh/year

Donates 30 € per year, (10 € after tax reduction)

Energie Solidaire then redistributes the money to local fuel poverty mitigation NGO’s

Projected increase in the collection of micro-donations amongst Enercoop clients
- 2020: 240 000 €
- 2021: 450 000 €
- 2022: 750 000 €
Our solution - 2

Energy donations

1. The energy surplus is given for free to Enercoop

2. Enercoop transfers the value of the energy received to Énergie Solidaire

3. Énergie Solidaire identifies & redistributes the money collected to NGO’s operating locally

Our solution - 2

Energy donations

1. Producers donate a % of their benefits

2. Énergie Solidaire identifies & redistributes the money collected to NGO’s operating locally

Self & collective self consumption producers

All renewable energy producers
Fuel Poverty Action
Our Approach

Our issue areas:
- Prices and affordability
- District heating systems
- Cladding and insulation
- Resisting regeneration
- Clean, community owned energy

Our tactics:
- *Giving people access to the corridors of power*
- Direct action
- Advocacy
Who FPA works with

Residents and tenants
Pensioners
Trade Unions
MPs and Local Councillors
Academics
Other campaign groups
  - E.g. Reclaim the Power, the All African Women’s Group, Poverty, Disabled People Against Cuts
A tale of two estates

District heating in **Myatts Field North** and **Myatts Field South**
A tale of two estates

District heating in Myatts Field North and Myatts Field South

Does this story have implications for accountability in EU funded projects?

How can planners, funders, and builders better listen to citizen demands?

There are ways to ensure green-minded projects like district heating systems do not increase fuel poverty.
Energy rights and energy prices

Fuel Poverty Action’s Energy Bill of Rights

1. We all have the right to affordable energy to meet our basic needs. Everyone should be able to cook food and keep warm when it’s cold.

2. We all have the right to energy that does not harm us, the environment, or the climate. This means shifting from fossil fuels and nuclear power to renewable energy from the sun, wind, and waves.

3. We all have the right to energy that does not threaten health, safety, water, air or the local environment of a community. This means no fracking and no unwanted oil and gas pipelines through communities.

4. We all have the right to a fair energy pricing system that does not penalise those who use less. The standing charges should be abolished. People should not pay more per unit when they cut down the energy they use.

5. We all have the right not to be cut off from our energy supply. We should not be disconnected because we cannot afford to pay our bills or top up our meters.

6. We all have the right not to be forced to have a prepayment meter. Energy companies should have no right to break into our homes to install them against anyone’s will.

7. We all have the right to energy that is owned by us and run in our interests. Energy should not be run in the interest of big business and shareholders. There is an important role for both local community ownership and democratic, public energy.

8. We all have the right to properly insulated, well repaired housing that does not waste energy. This must include protection for tenants who demand it from their landlords who may fear eviction if they approach their landlords in pursuit of this right.