

Report:

# Young People and Energy Poverty in the EU

2024



Generation  
Climate  
Europe



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## Executive summary

- In 2022, over **41 million Europeans** were unable to keep their homes adequately warm.<sup>1</sup>
- **The EU Member States where energy poverty is more widespread are; Bulgaria, Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece and Portugal**, while Western and Northern European countries remain within or below the EU average.
- **An EU-wide definition of energy poverty was approved only in 2023** with the Social Climate Fund and the Energy Efficiency Directive.
- **Young people are very vulnerable to energy poverty** as they tend to be renters and have little control over the state of their accommodation and bills.

## Key messages

- The youth, meaning the group of people between 16 and 29 years old, have not been recognized as a vulnerable group by any of the official institutions.
- In general, the percentage of energy poverty amongst young people is similar to the trend in the whole population. The higher the share of energy-poor people in a country, the higher the share of energy-poor youth, and vice versa.
- There is a significant lack of publicly available data on energy poverty among youth.
- A survey launched by Generation Climate Europe found that 60% of surveyed young people are concerned about being able to satisfy their energy needs, including adequate warmth, cooling, lighting, and energy to power appliances.
- Young people can be guided to practically learn more about how they are handling their energy consumption and take concrete steps to identify and act to improve their situation.

# 1. Introduction

Energy poverty is an umbrella term used to describe various situations where a household is unable to access the energy it needs, adversely affecting the health and well-being of its residents<sup>2</sup>.

Since energy is ubiquitous in our current society and since it has an incredibly large array of uses, from heating up or cooling down a dwelling, to providing the electricity that is necessary for almost anything nowadays, there are multiple ways in which someone can be energy poor. For this reason, the EU did not have a clear definition of "energy poverty" until 2023, when it was finally defined in the texts of the Energy Efficiency Directive and of the Social Climate Fund Regulation. This is also why the existing literature on the topic mostly focused on the singular aspects that compose energy poverty rather than on the phenomenon as a whole<sup>3</sup>.

Energy poverty is, thus, hard to measure and it is even difficult to link it to a specific demographic group. Nevertheless, it is still a pressing issue in the EU for millions of European citizens; in 2022, over 41 million Europeans were not able to keep their homes adequately warm<sup>4</sup>.

Energy poverty is mainly driven by low incomes, low energy performance of buildings and appliances, and a high proportion of household expenditure spent on energy<sup>5</sup>. Young people are generally more likely to experience these elements in their lives compared to other demographic groups<sup>6</sup>. Thus, Generation Climate Europe (GCE) initiated a report on this subject to provide both the young people and the policymakers with clear recommendations on how to alleviate energy poverty levels among young people.

If you think that you or your friends, family or community are affected by energy poverty, read the rest of our report to find ways to help you to act against energy poverty.

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<sup>2</sup> EU Commission on energy poverty:

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumer-rights/energy-poverty\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumer-rights/energy-poverty_en)

<sup>3</sup> EU Parliament's briefing on energy poverty in the EU

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733583\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS_BRI(2022)733583_EN.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> EU Parliament's briefing on energy poverty in the EU

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733583\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS_BRI(2022)733583_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> EU Commission on energy poverty:

[https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumer-rights/energy-poverty\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/markets-and-consumers/energy-consumer-rights/energy-poverty_en)

<sup>6</sup> EYEN contribution to the 15th Citizens' Energy Forum

<https://youthenergy.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EYEN-Statement-Citizens-Energy-Forum-2023.pdf>

## 2. Energy Poverty in the EU

For years, the EU has been working to address many of the issues that contribute to energy poverty. Nonetheless, the EU primarily focused on the singular aspects of energy poverty rather than the overall problem as it was easier to address the individual aspects rather than their sum. It was only recently that European institutions began to pay more attention to energy poverty and all of its symptoms. This was prompted by the pandemic and then Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as the subsequent energy price increase as more people are affected by it.

Eventually, in 2023, an EU-wide definition of energy poverty was devised as part of the recast text of the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Social Climate Fund Regulation. This is important, as a unified definition will help the European Commission, as well as all member states to adequately implement measures to alleviate energy poverty, assessing their impact in a more standardised manner.<sup>7</sup>

*“Energy poverty is a household’s lack of access to essential energy services that provide basic levels and decent standards of living and health, including adequate heating, hot water, cooling, lighting, and energy to power appliances, in the relevant national context, existing social policy and other relevant policies, caused by a combination of factors, including but not limited to non-affordability, insufficient disposable income, high energy expenditure and poor energy efficiency of homes.”<sup>8</sup>*

But how many people are currently being affected by energy poverty in the EU?

As explained above, it is hard to measure this phenomenon partly due to its multifaceted nature and due to the fact that it is hard to track down energy-poor people because there is a certain degree of subjectivity involved. However, the European Commission identified four main indicators for energy poverty:

### 1. Arrears on utility bills

- a. This criterion means that a person or a household is not able to pay its energy bills on time due to financial difficulties.

### 2. Inability to keep home adequately warm

- a. This criterion checks if a person or a household can keep their home adequately warm. Another sub-indicator asks if a person can keep the house comfortably cool in the summer months.

### 3. Low absolute energy expenditure

- a. This criterion assesses if a person or a household consumes less energy than half of the national average energy consumption.

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<sup>7</sup> EU Parliament's briefing on energy poverty in the EU

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733583\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS_BRI(2022)733583_EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Article 2 (1) of the Regulation (EU) 2023/955 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 establishing a Social Climate Fund and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

#### 4. High share of energy expenditure in income

- a. This criterion means that a person or a household spends a bigger portion (twice as much as the national average) of their income on energy bills.<sup>9</sup>

An income and living conditions survey (EU-SILC) produced by Eurostat assessed the country's populations and whether people were able to adequately heat their homes. The survey found that in 2022, in countries like Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania and Bulgaria, more than 15% of the total population declared that they are unable to keep themselves warm during wintertime. The EU 27 average is almost 10%, meaning more than 40 million people.<sup>10</sup>

According to the same EU-SILC survey, 6.4% of EU 27 citizens had arrears on their utility bills in 2021, with countries like Bulgaria, Greece and Romania scoring well above 15% of their citizens.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, there is almost no recent data on the last two indicators, the most information is from 2015 so it is not relevant nearly ten years later. Nevertheless, on the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub's webpage, there are 21 additional indicators which complement the above-mentioned ones for energy poverty; they include indicators such as poverty and social exclusion risks, the number of people in the household, energy prices, etc. You can find these indicators and their explanation in the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub Report on Energy Poverty National Indicators.<sup>12</sup> Values for energy poverty levels tend to be considerably above the average in countries like Bulgaria, Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece and Italy, while in countries like Austria, Sweden and Finland they remain well below the EU average at around 2%.

## 2.1. Energy poverty among youth in the EU

Youth, meaning the group of people between 16 and 29 years old, has not been recognized as a vulnerable group by any of the official institutions and the topic of energy poverty among young people has not been given any significant attention in the scientific literature, research institutes, think tanks and so forth. However, we have analysed the last available Eurostat data (see the chapter below) and have found that young people are slightly more affected by energy poverty (based on the inability to

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<sup>9</sup> EU Parliament's briefing on energy poverty in the EU

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)733583\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/733583/EPRS_BRI(2022)733583_EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, The "Inability to keep home adequately warm" indicator,

[https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/about-us/news/inability-keep-home-adequately-warm-indicator-it-enough-measure-energy-poverty-2023-02-03\\_en](https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/about-us/news/inability-keep-home-adequately-warm-indicator-it-enough-measure-energy-poverty-2023-02-03_en)

<sup>11</sup> Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, The "Inability to keep home adequately warm" indicator,

[https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/about-us/news/inability-keep-home-adequately-warm-indicator-it-enough-measure-energy-poverty-2023-02-03\\_en](https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/about-us/news/inability-keep-home-adequately-warm-indicator-it-enough-measure-energy-poverty-2023-02-03_en)

<sup>12</sup> Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, "Energy Poverty: National Indicators",

[https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/document/download/687479a2-de64-4e04-8449-77b9729cb8b3\\_en?filename=EPAH\\_Energy%20Poverty%20National%20Indicators%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/document/download/687479a2-de64-4e04-8449-77b9729cb8b3_en?filename=EPAH_Energy%20Poverty%20National%20Indicators%20Report_0.pdf)

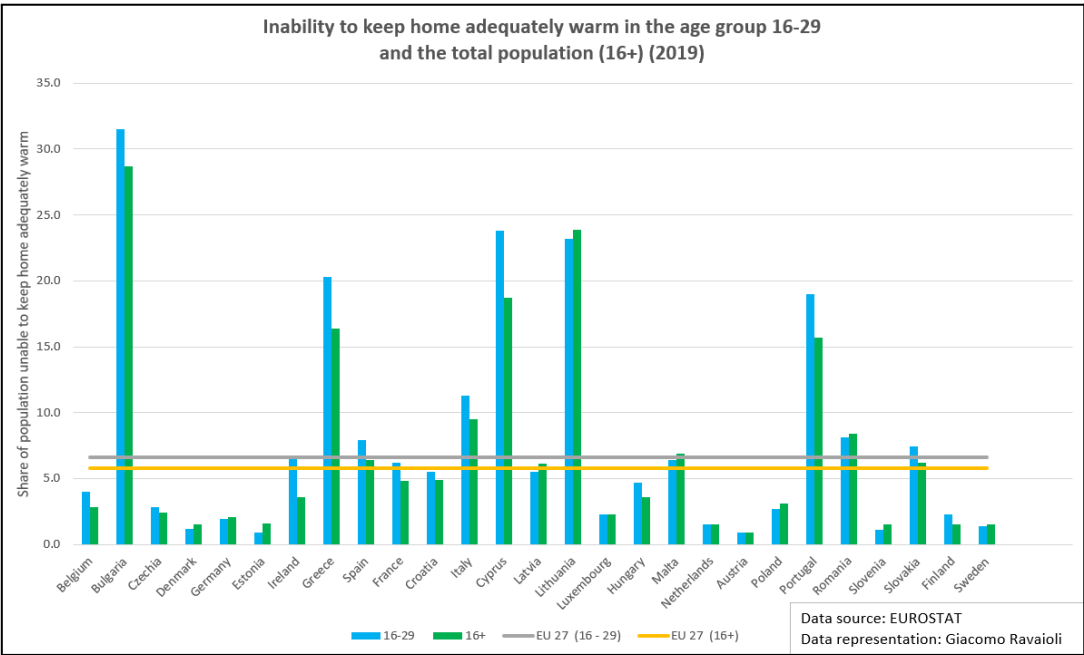
keep their household warm and arrears on utility bills) than the general population. Furthermore, the GCE Energy Poverty team produced a survey disseminated among young people which found that poverty among youth is a significant issue.

## Data

The EU-SILC database of EUROSTAT<sup>13</sup> provides datasets covering two of the principal indicators identified by The EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV), namely "Arrears on utility bills" and "Inability to keep home adequately warm". Until mid-2022, it was possible to compare the data for young people (aged 16-29) with those of the rest of the population (over 30), from all EU countries, except for 2020 where data for Italy was missing.

The significance of Italy's data was extremely high due to its relevance to energy poverty. Therefore, data from 2019 with all EU27 countries were chosen as the most recent ones. The resulting datasets are represented in Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 1.** Indicator "Inability to keep home adequately warm".



Source: Eurostat.

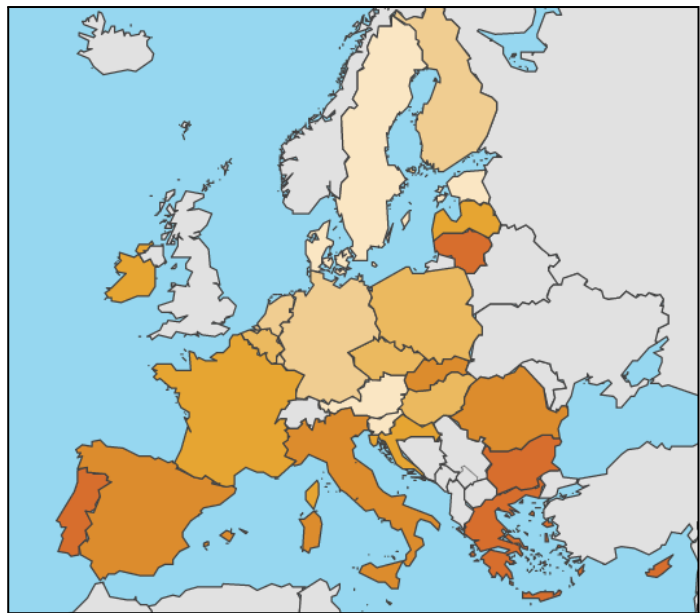
The map on the following page offers a visualisation of which countries had the highest share of people unable to warm their houses as of 2019. The darker the colour, the higher the share of energy-poor young people.

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[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/search/-/search/estatsearchportlet\\_WAR\\_estatsearchportlet\\_INSTANCE\\_bHVzuvn1SZ8J?p\\_auth=5t2qa2gV&text=arrears+on+utility+bills](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/search/-/search/estatsearchportlet_WAR_estatsearchportlet_INSTANCE_bHVzuvn1SZ8J?p_auth=5t2qa2gV&text=arrears+on+utility+bills)

**The countries with the highest share of the young population unable to warm their house as of 2020 were:**

- **Bulgaria** (29.6% among youth vs. 27.5% in the total population)
- **Cyprus** (22.2% among youth vs. 21% in the total population)
- **Greece** (18.1% among youth vs. 17.1% in the total population)
- **Lithuania** (18.9% among youth vs. 23.1% in the total population)
- **Portugal** (17.8% among youth vs. 17.5% in the total population)



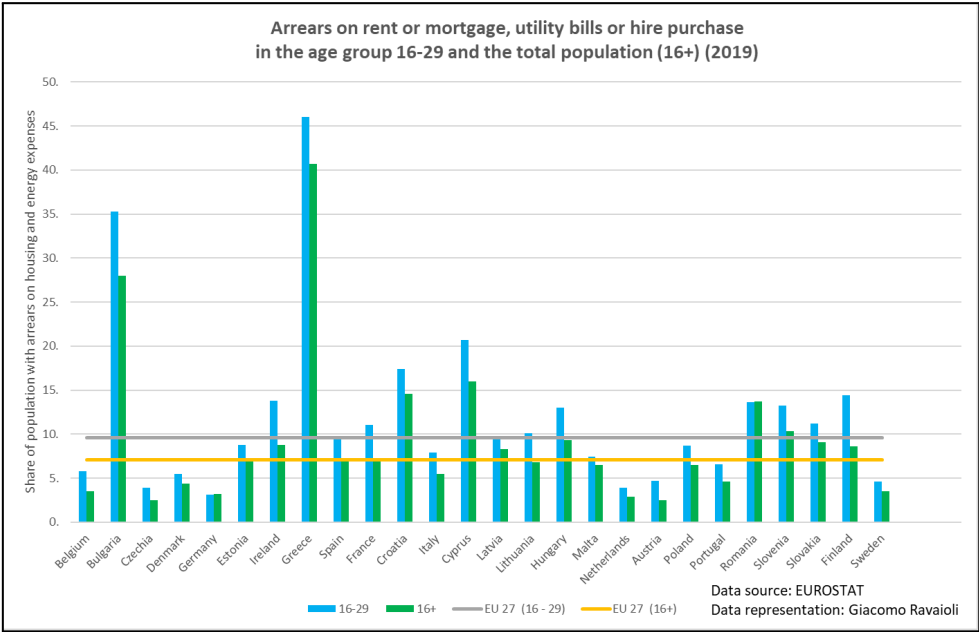
Those with the **lowest share** were:

- **Austria** (1.3% among youth vs. 1.5% in the total population)
- **Denmark** (1.4% among youth vs. 3% in the total population)
- **Netherlands** (1.6% among youth vs. 2.4% in the total population)
- **Estonia** (1.7% among youth vs. 2.7% in the total population)
- **Finland** (2.1% among youth vs. 1.8% in the total population)

In general, the percentage of energy poverty amongst young people is similar to the trend in the whole population. **The higher the share of energy-poor people in a country, the higher the share of energy-poor youth**, and vice versa. Furthermore, in the countries more affected by energy poverty, **young people are slightly more affected** than the general population. In the less affected countries, however, the share of energy-poor young people is even lower than that of the general population.



**Figure 2.** Arrears on rent or mortgage, utility bills or hire purchase.



Source: Eurostat.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to highlight that Eurostat data presenting how energy poverty affects various age groups has only been available until mid-2022. Since then, it has not been possible to analyse this data, as it has not been collected further. Young people are particularly vulnerable to energy poverty as energy bills tend to occupy a larger share of their monthly income compared to older social groups. They also tend to have little control over the state of their accommodation and energy contracts. The combination of these three factors makes them more likely to experience energy poverty.

Because of the lack of data on this specific age group, the GCE’s Energy Poverty Working Group designed and launched an online survey to gather information in order to understand how and how much energy poverty affects the youth, what are young people’s experiences with it and what the youth think should be done to address this issue at the institutional and policy level. The aim of the survey was to make the voices of our generation heard and considered. The answers to this survey aim to contribute both towards the redaction of a position paper and our dialogue with EU institutions to ask for renewed ambition on the strategy and greater inclusion of youth in the policymaking process. The survey serves as a good basis for further research related to the effects of energy poverty among youth.

The survey conducted by the Energy Poverty Working Group of GCE sought to better understand how young people in the EU are coping with rising electricity prices. The survey rationale was developed in collaboration with NOVA University of Lisbon. It

<sup>14</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/search/-/search/estatsearchportlet\\_WAR\\_estatsearchportlet\\_INSTANCE\\_bHVzuvn1SZ8J?p\\_auth=5t2qa2qV&text=arrears+on+utility+bills](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/main/search/-/search/estatsearchportlet_WAR_estatsearchportlet_INSTANCE_bHVzuvn1SZ8J?p_auth=5t2qa2qV&text=arrears+on+utility+bills)

consisted of 42 questions and was divided into 19 sections, exploring demographics, access to energy-related services and support, awareness of energy poverty and future perspectives, energy efficiency and conservation, energy consumption and affordability and current living conditions. A total of 111 participants aged 18-29 completed the survey. Participants spanned over Italy, Bulgaria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Finland, the Netherlands, France, Poland, Germany, and Czech Republic.

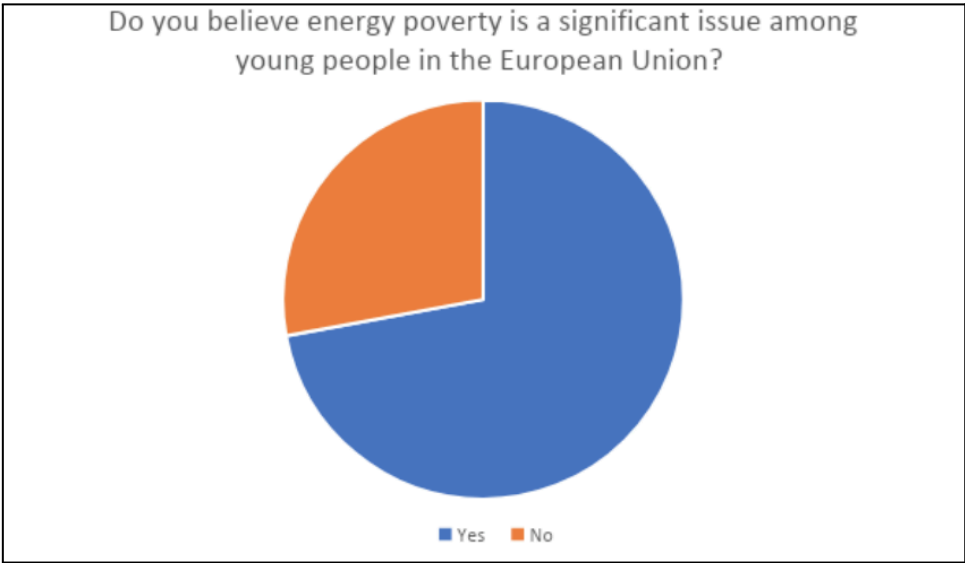
**Living conditions**

More than half of respondents reported living in a rented flat in multi-apartment buildings older than 20 years. About 60% of respondents report having been concerned with their ability to satisfy their energy needs, including adequate warmth, cooling, lighting, and energy to power appliances.

**Perceptions of energy poverty**

75% of participants reported that they think energy poverty is a significant issue among young people in the European Union.

**Figure 3.** Perceptions of energy poverty among young people.



Young people participating in the survey state that they generally restrict their electricity consumption based on three reasons – 1) because of high energy costs, 2) due to external pressure and 3) for sustainability concerns.

The results from the survey indicate that young individuals concerned about the rising prices of energy and their quality of life are often affected by the low energy efficiency of their homes. More than 80% of respondents report that there is need for more support to alleviate energy poverty and that they are generally not aware of the support available as of April 2024. Continuous financial assistance, as well as specific

schemes targeted at young individuals based on their needs, will be helpful to improve their situation. Moreover, there should be more information available regarding energy poverty, and said information should be available publicly. This information should be presented in an understandable manner and in multiple languages in order for it to be accessible by non-nationals of the specific country.

Energy poverty among youth has far-reaching consequences that necessitate targeted policy interventions. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses social, economic, and environmental considerations.. Implementing these policy implications can contribute to creating a more equitable and sustainable energy landscape for the youth in society.

### 3. Youth Action to Alleviate Energy Poverty

While energy poverty among young people is an important issue, it has been omitted by most researchers and policymakers. Therefore, we have come up with a few simple solutions and recommendations for young people and youth groups who want to raise awareness about this issue both on national and European level, and try to act against it. If you think that you have observed or experienced energy poverty and you want to target that issue, then here are a few steps which can guide you through this process.

1. **Understand the complexity of energy poverty and check if you or your community are experiencing energy poverty.**
  - a. It is firstly very important to understand the complexity of energy poverty and its various indicators. There was a reason why the European Union could not agree for such a long time on a definition of energy poverty. Energy poverty has many faces and is experienced very differently in different regions, social and age groups.
  - b. The first step would be to check if there is a definition of energy poverty in your own country and if your state provides any special indicators to recognize energy poverty as a phenomenon. You can find a list of countries which have an energy poverty definition in the **Annex to this Report**.
  - c. If there is no such definition, you can use the definition provided by the European Commission (see the first chapter) and check the indicators provided by the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub<sup>15</sup>. There is no clear criteria or a calculation method to assess whether a circumstance or situation

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<sup>15</sup> Energy Poverty Advisory Hub, "National Indicators", [https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/observing-energy-poverty/national-indicators\\_en](https://energy-poverty.ec.europa.eu/observing-energy-poverty/national-indicators_en)

can be described as energy poverty. Most indicators are based on subjective assessment, therefore, if the situation at hand seems to fit into the definition of energy poverty and a few of the indicators are relevant in that situation, then most probably it is energy poverty.

## **2. Identify and engage the right stakeholders involved.**

- a. It is important to identify and engage relevant stakeholders.
- b. Firstly, try to understand if there are more people in your neighbourhood, or region who also might be affected by energy poverty. If there are more people in the same situation, it helps you to build a stronger case and you can also help more people with the same struggles.
- c. Secondly, try to find representatives of the local authorities who might be dealing with social issues including energy poverty. If there are designated officers for that, they should help you with diagnosing the level of energy poverty, providing you with available help and solutions to solve the issue. If there are no responsible people on the local level, try to check in the regional level.
- d. If there are no dedicated officials in your country dealing with energy poverty, then you can look for think-tanks, activist organisations, and NGOs who might be dealing with energy poverty or similar social issues and they can provide you with more help and support.
- e. Once you have identified and contacted all relevant stakeholders, you can engage them to raise awareness about energy poverty and try to build a case to local, national or European authorities and try to draw attention to the issue.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> European Commission, *Young Energy Ambassadors*  
[https://sustainable-energy-week.ec.europa.eu/partners/young-energy-ambassadors\\_en](https://sustainable-energy-week.ec.europa.eu/partners/young-energy-ambassadors_en)

**3. Identify steps you can take on local, national or European levels to act to alleviate energy poverty.**

<b>International and European level</b>		
<b>Young Energy Ambassadors</b>	Become a next Youth Energy Ambassador or contact current youth energy ambassadors from your country and bring your issue to their attention. <sup>17</sup>	
<b>Youth Advocacy Groups</b>	Join one of many youth advocacy groups that is working on the topic of just transition or energy poverty.	EYEN - Have a look at EYEN's Energy Consumer Task force and collaborate with them on energy poverty projects. <sup>18</sup>
		GCE - Join GCE's energy poverty team <sup>19</sup>
<b>National and local level</b>		
<b>Consultations with local governments</b>	National Social Climate Plans	<p>Social Climate Fund Regulation is part of the Fit for 55 package and is meant to ensure that the climate transition will be fair and inclusive. Each country will have to provide National Climate Plans in which they will provide a list of concrete and targeted measures to address energy and mobility poverty. These plans have to be prepared by Member States through very meaningful stakeholder engagement and youth has to be included in the public consultations. Therefore, it is an excellent opportunity to get engaged in the policymaking process of your country.</p> <p>Most Member States are still in the process of designating the authorities entrusted with the implementation of the Social Climate Plans (SCPs) and the allocation of the related responsibilities and functions. Once this process is completed, they will probably</p>

<sup>17</sup>European Commission, *Young Energy Ambassadors guidelines*

[https://sustainable-energy-week.ec.europa.eu/youth-engagement/young-energy-ambassadors-guidelines\\_en](https://sustainable-energy-week.ec.europa.eu/youth-engagement/young-energy-ambassadors-guidelines_en)

<sup>18</sup> EYEN, *Young Energy Consumers* <https://youthenergy.eu/young-energy-consumers/>

<sup>19</sup> GCE, *Just Transition* <https://gceurope.org/work-areas/climate-justice/>

		start opening public consultations. We will observe this process closely and share more information on this topic when they are available.
	National legislation	<p>Check if your government is working on any new legislation on energy poverty and if there are public consultations open. If so, you can try to sign up to participate in the meetings or send your comments via online platforms.</p> <p>You can also join a <b>citizen participation group</b>. In many countries, groups of citizens which bring different social issues to the policymakers exist. For example, in Poland, there is a citizens group on energy prices which brings this issue to the policymakers.</p> <p>Energy Poverty Advisory Hub - <b>Convent of Mayors</b></p> <p>Check if your local mayor is part of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and approach them regarding the local policies and bring your issues and ideas to them.</p>
	Local youth governments and councils	Join a local youth government or council. These are usually advisory bodies to local governments on topics related to youth. Very often they can also bring different topics to the attention of policymakers.

#### 4. Things you can bring to the table, once you are already at the table.

##### An overview of various policy measures on energy poverty across the EU

Once you have completed the previous steps and engaged in discussions about policy measures with national authorities, NGOs, policymakers, or other stakeholders, it is important to understand what different countries have done to assist those facing challenges with energy costs. Our research has shown that many

of these national measures indirectly disadvantage young people. They often target homeowners or specific groups, yet most young people are unable to afford their own homes. Instead, they typically share accommodations with roommates or their parents. Unless they fall into other categories such as single-parent households or households with incomes below a certain threshold, they are not typically considered eligible for the assistance.

Below, you will find examples of measures taken by several European countries and our suggestions on how these policies could be improved to also benefit young people.

Policy measure	What worked well?	What could be improved from the youth point of view?
<p><b>Warm Apartment programme (Poland)</b> - run by municipalities, this programme supports owners of apartments in multifamily buildings<sup>20</sup></p>	<p>The program focuses on the core issue - energy inefficiency of buildings and helps to improve the heating and insulation of buildings.</p>	<p>The program supports only the flat owners or people renting a flat in communal (state-owned) buildings. The issue is that many young people rent flats, mostly from private people, thus, they are mostly not eligible for this support.</p>
<p><b>Electricity and gas bonus (Italy)</b></p>	<p>A structural measure against energy poverty has existed in Italy since 2009: the electricity and gas bonus. In its essence, the bonus consists of a social tariff for electricity and gas for the most economically vulnerable households; in other words, it is a subsidy that is deducted directly from the bill, through an agreement between the state and the relevant</p>	<p>The policy targets families with an annual ISEE (Indicator of the Economic Condition of the Family) not exceeding 9,530 euros for those with four children, and 20,000 euros for others. Additionally, it includes individuals receiving the Reddito di Cittadinanza, an Italian measure addressing labour participation and poverty alleviation.<sup>21</sup> Yet, it overlooks young people who could benefit from such assistance. It would be beneficial to either extend the current policy to include them or</p>

<sup>20</sup> Bankwatch Network, *Tackling energy poverty in EU Member States*  
[https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023\\_06\\_02\\_Tackling-energy-poverty-in-EU-Member-States-2.pdf](https://bankwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023_06_02_Tackling-energy-poverty-in-EU-Member-States-2.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Celestina Dominelli. *Bollette Luce e Gas: Cosa succede al Bonus Sociale con la Fine degli Aiuti.*  
<https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/bollette-luce-e-gas-cosa-succede-bonus-sociale-la-fine-aiuti-AEQZ7v6C>

	operator	develop a new one specifically tailored to their specific needs.
<b>New Green Savings Light programme (Czechia)</b> - supports owners of single-family homes and permanently occupied holiday homes who receive an old-age pension or a third-degree disability pension or housing benefit.	Provide support for roof insulation, floor insulation, window replacement and entrance door replacement or the purchase of thermal or photovoltaic systems for water heating. Does not reduce electricity costs. A notable aspect of the programme is that applicants are not required to have saved money beforehand	Young people are usually not able to own their houses.
<b>Community Energy for Energy Solidarity (CEES) - (Italy)</b>	By defining sound social criteria, public institutions can ensure that only genuine, citizen-led communities benefit from the process.	It prioritises the well-being of vulnerable groups but youth are usually not aware of the opportunity to create a community. It would be interesting to work on awareness in places accessible to youth.
<b>Green for Households subsidy scheme (Slovakia)</b>	Disadvantaged households affected by energy poverty. The government created field consultations and application support to help persons in need of this service who couldn't apply the regular way.	
<b>Social tariff rate (Belgium and Portugal)</b>	The programme provides to persons who need monetary assistance in accordance with the Law on Financial Social Assistance.	



## European Youth Energy Network (EYEN) recommendations for energy poverty policies

Awareness of existing national policies and opportunities for improvement is crucial. Providing recommendations with a youth perspective for specific policies can be highly effective and well-received by policymakers. However, there is a wide variety of measures that can be advocated for and recommended. In most cases, one policy alone will not bring significant change. It typically requires a combination of various measures spanning education, community engagement, and specific subsidy initiatives. Colleagues from the European Youth Energy Network (EYEN) have developed recommendations across five key domains: the development of tenant-centric housing standards, the implementation of incentive initiatives, the active involvement of NGOs, the fostering of community Engagement, and advocating for a Systemic Shift in energy poverty alleviation strategies for Youth. Their detailed recommendations can be found in their publication "EYEN contribution to the 15th Citizens' Energy Forum<sup>22</sup>." Below is a brief summary of their recommendations on tenant-centric housing standards and incentive initiatives.

### **Tenant-Centric Housing Standards:**

Consider advocating for Minimum Energy Performance Standards for Rental Properties. This would ensure that landlords upgrade their properties to meet energy efficiency criteria, making your homes more comfortable and your energy bills more manageable. Another option to explore is pushing for policies that allow Early Lease Termination if energy-related issues aren't promptly resolved, safeguarding your well-being as tenants. Additionally, you might want to look into advocating for Subsidies for Energy Retrofitting. This could incentivize landlords to make energy-efficient upgrades, ultimately reducing costs and environmental impact. Plus, advocating for your right to choose your Energy Providers can allow you to opt for more sustainable options, contributing to a greener future.

### **Incentive Initiatives:**

You have several options to consider in terms of incentive initiatives. For instance, you could rally for Energy Company Discounts tailored to young individuals and shared living arrangements. These discounts could alleviate your financial burden and make sustainable energy more accessible. Additionally, consider campaigning for government subsidies to cap energy bills. This ensures that everyone, regardless of income, has access to essential energy. Furthermore, pushing for Green Job/Education Incentives could promote youth involvement in the green sector, providing both career opportunities and a chance to make a difference in environmental sustainability.

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<sup>22</sup> European Youth Energy Network, EYEN contribution to the 15th Citizens' Energy Forum 8 th of November 2023, Dublin, <https://youthenergy.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EYEN-Statement-Citizens-Energy-Forum-2023.pdf>

## 4. Inspirational case studies

### Youth-Centred Energy Poverty Initiatives

#### 1. Italy

- **Progetto Energia Giovani (Youth Energy Project):** This project, supported by various Italian government agencies and local authorities, promotes the involvement of young volunteers raising awareness about energy poverty and promoting energy-saving behaviours. Youth ambassadors organise educational activities, energy audits, and community projects to empower vulnerable households to reduce energy costs and improve their living conditions.
- **Giovani per l'Energia (Youth for Energy):** As part of Italy's National Energy Strategy, the "Youth for Energy" initiative encourages young people to actively shape energy policies and initiatives to address energy poverty. Youth forums, workshops, and campaigns are organised to engage young citizens in advocating for equitable access to affordable and sustainable energy resources across Italy.

#### 2. Germany

- **Energy Scouts:** The program, launched nationwide in Germany in 2014 by the German government and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), educates junior staff about energy-related matters. While not exclusively for youth, it often involves young apprentices in identifying energy-saving opportunities and implementing efficiency measures within their workplaces. This program provides valuable training and hands-on experience for young people while contributing to efforts to combat energy poverty.<sup>23</sup>
- **Youth Climate Protection Program (Jugendklimaschutzprogramm):** The German government funds various projects and initiatives under the Youth Climate Protection Program, which aims to engage young people in climate action and environmental sustainability efforts. While not specifically focused on energy poverty, these projects may include activities related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, and social justice, providing opportunities for youth to contribute to broader sustainability goals.

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<sup>23</sup> Eurokai. Apprentices turned "Energy Scouts." <https://www.eurokai.eu/fr/Media/Blog/energy-scouts>

### 3. Belgium

- **Energy Scouts (Energieke Scouts):** Belgium's Energy Scouts program involves young people in identifying energy-saving opportunities and implementing efficiency measures in schools, community centres, and public buildings. Scouts receive training in energy management and collaborate with local authorities and businesses to reduce energy consumption and combat energy poverty.<sup>24</sup>

### 4. Portugal

- **Youth Energy Ambassadors (Embaixadores da Energia):** Portugal's Youth Energy Ambassadors program trains young volunteers to educate their peers and communities about energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions. Ambassadors organise outreach events, energy-saving competitions, and neighbourhood energy audits to address energy poverty and promote sustainable energy practices.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Energy poverty is increasingly affecting young people, making it essential for both policymakers and youth to work together in addressing this pressing issue. Policymakers must open their doors and create incentives for youth engagement in policy making at local, regional, national, and European level.

The Social Climate Fund, which mandates consultations with youth organisations, is a promising start. However, policymakers need to ensure that young people are better equipped to participate in such consultations and contribute to the implementation of the measures as part of the fund.

This report serves as a crucial first step in empowering youth with the knowledge and tools they need to engage effectively. Possible solutions involve advocating for energy-efficient upgrades in rental properties, creating support programs for young renters, implementing tenant-centric housing standards, and promoting green jobs and education incentives. By fostering meaningful youth involvement and collaboration, we can work towards a fair, sustainable, and energy-secure future for all.

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<sup>24</sup> Scouts en Gidsen Vlaanderen. Afval en energie.

<https://www.scoutsengidsenvlaanderen.be/leiding/ondersteuning/groepsleiding/lokalen-en-materiaal/afval-en-energie>

<sup>25</sup> Reverter. Formação dos embaixadores da energia do Projeto REVERTER.

<https://renovar.coimbra.pt/formacao-dos-embaixadores-da-energia-do-projeto-reverter-coimbra/>

## Annex 1: Overview of energy poverty definitions in the European Union (EU)

EU Member State	Energy Poverty Definition
Austria	<p>Households are energy poor if they are at risk of energy poverty and at least three of the following seven disadvantages apply to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 1 disadvantage in the area: quality/equipment of living space and energy use</li> <li>• at least 1 disadvantage in the area: energy costs/energy debts</li> <li>• <b>Area:</b> Quality/equipment of living space and energy use</li> <li>• <b>Access to energy:</b> If there is no uninterrupted access to heating or electricity, e.g. B. non-functional heating system (defective or access not possible due to a shutdown), no electricity available, no hot water available.</li> <li>• <b>Structural quality of the living space:</b> If the structure of the living space has serious defects, e.g. B. leaky windows and/or doors, moisture in the walls, mould growth, inadequate insulation.</li> <li>• <b>Heating:</b> If the room temperature in the household is not comfortable for the residents, e.g. B. 21° in the living room and/or 18° in other rooms.</li> <li>• <b>Electrical appliances:</b> If the household has a basic set of electrical appliances (refrigerator, stove, washing machine, lighting and entertainment electronics, e.g. television and radio).<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>
Belgium	<p>This is how the Poverty Alleviation Forum in Brussels ("Forum Bruxellois De Lutte Contre La Pauvreté" in French) defines energy poverty or fuel poverty. In other words, a household is energy poor if paying its heating or electricity bills puts it in financial difficulty.<sup>27</sup></p>
Bulgaria	<p>A formal definition has been included in national energy legislation, as well as basic criteria for the categorisation of a household as "energy-poor". As of 29 November 2023, the Council of Ministers has approved an ordinance on energy</p>

<sup>26</sup> Bundesministerium für Soziales, Gesundheit, Pflege und Konsumentenschutz. "Studie zur Eruiierung einer Definition von Energiearmut in Österreich aus Sicht der Sozialwirtschaftlichen und Energie-Wirtschaftlichen Praxis."

<sup>27</sup> [Energyprice.be](https://energyprice.be)

	<p>poverty.<sup>28</sup> The purpose of the definition is to cover all citizens and households who suffer in one way or another due to a lack of affordable, reliable and safe energy services, so that these people can receive the necessary support. Inevitably, however, individual citizens, as well as entire communities, are at risk of being left out of this definition and therefore not assisted.</p> <p>Energy poverty is defined in relation to the disposable average monthly income of household members, typical energy consumption expenditure and energy performance of the dwelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vulnerable household customer is, for example, a person over 65 living alone or with others over 65 with a disposable income after reduction by energy consumption less than or equal to the officially declared poverty line.</li> <li>• Vulnerable people are those with a 50 per cent or more permanent disability after a reduction in energy consumption less than or equal to the officially declared poverty line.</li> <li>• These are people who received monthly social benefits and/or targeted heating assistance under the Social Assistance Act for the previous heating season.</li> </ul>
<b>Croatia</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Cyprus</b>	<p>"The condition where 'consumers may be in a difficult position' for attaining necessary levels of energy services due to personal circumstances and low incomes (as evidenced by their tax declarations)."</p> <p>Vulnerable consumers are those receiving financial stipends related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum guaranteed income (Welfare Providence Management Services)</li> <li>• Public aid (Social Welfare Services)</li> <li>• Allowance for heavy bodily disability (Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities)</li> <li>• Allowance for retired individuals with very low incomes</li> </ul>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.strategy.bg/PublicConsultations/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=7908>

	<p>(Welfare Providence Management Services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allowance for paraplegic individuals (Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities)</li> <li>● Allowance for quadriplegic individuals (Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities)</li> <li>● Allowance for blind individuals (Department for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities)</li> <li>● Large families (5-person or higher) receiving child support (Welfare Providence Management Services)</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the ministerial order also states a set of measures aiming to tackle energy poverty and support vulnerable consumers. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A special electricity tariff</li> <li>● Additional benefits to promote schemes for net metering</li> <li>● Additional benefits to promote schemes for residential energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy sources (RES)</li> <li>● Disconnection protection - only available to vulnerable consumers with serious medical conditions, subject to examination by a relevant medical board.<sup>29</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Denmark</b>	No formal definition as of 2019. <sup>30</sup>
<b>Estonia</b>	<p>While there is no explicit definition of energy poverty, there is a definition for individuals experiencing energy poverty.</p> <p>The Energy Sector Organization Act defines 'vulnerable energy consumers' as persons living alone for the purposes of the Social Welfare Act or families whose monthly income per family member during the last six months does not exceed the minimum wage and 'person suffering from energy poverty' as a person living alone for the purposes of the Social Welfare Act, or a family who has, at least once during the last six months, received a subsistence benefit and whose income per family member in the last month does not exceed the minimum</p>

<sup>29</sup>

[https://www.cera.org.cy/Templates/00001/data/nomothesia/ethniki/hlektrismos/Diatagmata/kdp2015\\_289.pdf](https://www.cera.org.cy/Templates/00001/data/nomothesia/ethniki/hlektrismos/Diatagmata/kdp2015_289.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.ft.dk/samling/20191/almdel/kef/spm/88/svar/1617446/2122273/index.htm>.

	wage. <sup>31</sup>
<b>Finland</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>France</b>	"[...] is in a situation of energy poverty a person who experiences particular difficulties in their home in having the energy supply necessary to satisfy their basic needs due to the unsuitability of their resources or their conditions of habitat." - Grenelle 2 Law (July, 2010). <sup>32</sup>
<b>Germany</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Greece</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Hungary</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Ireland</b>	"Energy poverty can be described as a situation whereby a household is unable to attain an acceptable standard of warmth and energy services in the home at an affordable cost." <sup>33</sup>
<b>Italy</b>	"The difficulty of purchasing a minimum basket of energy goods and services or, alternatively, access to energy services that involves a distraction of resources, in terms of expenditure or income, exceeding a normal value." <sup>34</sup>  <b>The Osservatorio Nazionale della Povertà Energetica</b> is the local administration addressing energy poverty, and is tasked with monitoring the issue and proposing measures to the Ministry and regulatory authorities to combat energy poverty. Additionally, it supports the development of the national strategy against energy poverty. <sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.riiqiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/502092016001/consolide/current>

<sup>32</sup> Ministère de la Transition Écologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires. Lutte contre la précarité énergétique: Chèque Énergie, Aides à la Rénovation Énergétique.

<https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/lutte-contre-precarite-energetique-cheque-energie-aides-renovation-energetique#:~:text=%C2%AB%20Est%20en%20situation%20de%20pr%C3%A9carit%C3%A9,ses%20conditions%20d'habitat%20%C2%BB.>

<sup>33</sup> Ireland's Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. Residential Energy Efficiency.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/ffe6c5-energy-efficiency/>

<sup>34</sup> National Energy Strategy. SEN 2017.

<https://www.mimit.gov.it/images/stories/documenti/Testo-integrale-SEN-2017.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sicurezza Energetica. Osservatorio nazionale della povertà energetica.

<https://www.mase.gov.it/energia/consumatori-energetici/osservatorio-nazionale-della-poverta-energetica>.

<b>Latvia</b>	<p>No definition of energy poverty in national law.</p> <p>Definition of a household affected by energy poverty - one that meets at least one of the following 2 criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recognized as a poor or low-income household and receives material support to cover expenses related to the use of housing;</li> <li>• It rents a residential space or a social apartment owned or leased by the municipality in accordance with the law "On assistance in solving apartment issues" or the law "On social apartments and social residential houses."<sup>36</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Lithuania</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Luxembourg</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Malta</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Netherlands</b>	<p>Definition of energy-poor households:</p> <p>"Energy-poor households are households that have a low income in combination with a high energy bill or a home of (very) poor energy quality." - Energy Poverty Monitor 2020 from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS).<sup>37</sup></p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>Energy poverty refers to a situation in which a household run by a single person or by several persons jointly in a self-contained dwelling or in a single-family dwelling in which no economic activity is carried out, cannot secure sufficient heat, cooling and electricity to power appliances and for lighting.</p> <p>In addition, for the conditions for a household to be considered to be in this type of poverty, the following conditions must be met together:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• earning a low income,</li> <li>• incurring high energy expenses,</li> <li>• residing in a dwelling or building with low energy</li> </ul>

<sup>36</sup> Likumi. Law on Social Services and Assistance.

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/68488-socialo-pakalpojumu-un-socialas-palidzibas-likums>.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Mulder, Anika Batenburg and Francesco Dalla Longa. Energiearmoede in Nederland 2022.

<https://publications.tno.nl/publication/34640439/KjLV5U/TNO-2023-energiearmoede.pdf>.



	efficiency. <sup>38</sup>
<b>Portugal</b>	"Inability or difficulty to obtain an adequate level of essential energy services, due to a combination of several factors, such as income, housing energy performance and energy prices." <sup>39</sup>
<b>Romania</b>	"The impossibility of the vulnerable energy consumer to cover its minimum energy needs", with the related definitions: - vulnerable energy consumer: single person / family who, due to health, age, insufficient income or isolation from energy sources, needs social protection measures and additional services to ensure at least their minimum energy needs - minimum energy needs: the minimum energy consumption of an individual / a family for lighting, optimal home cooling and heating, cooking and hot water preparation, for using communication means that need to be plugged-in or for powering medical devices used for life support or for improving people's health. <sup>40</sup>
<b>Slovakia</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.
<b>Slovenia</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.  Definition of the criteria that characterise energy-poor households: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● material risk: income below the poverty risk threshold,</li> <li>● low energy efficiency of the household premises: the heat required for heating the premises amounts to more than 150 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> per year,</li> <li>● inadequate living conditions: roof leaks, damp walls, floors or foundations, broken window frames or floors and the like,</li> <li>● a large share of energy expenditure from disposable income, or exceeding the average share of energy expenditure: the share of energy expenditure exceeds</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/download.xsp/WDU20220000001/T/D20220001L.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Direção-Geral de Energia e Geologia. Estratégia Nacional de Longo Prazo para o Combate à Pobreza Energética 2023-2050.

<https://www.dgeg.gov.pt/pt/areas-transversais/relacoes-internacionais/politica-energetica/estrategia-nacional-de-longo-prazo-para-o-combate-a-pobreza-energetica/>.

<sup>40</sup> Legislatie Guvernul Romaniei. EGE Nr. 226 din 16 Septembrie 2021.

<https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/246430>.

	at least 50% of the household's disposable income. <sup>41</sup>
<b>Spain</b>	"Energy poverty is the situation in which a household cannot meet its basic energy needs, as a result of insufficient income, and which, if applicable, may be aggravated by having an energy-inefficient dwelling." <sup>42</sup>
<b>Sweden</b>	To the best of our knowledge, there is no formal definition.

## Annex 2: Examples of National Authorities and their actions to alleviate energy poverty, as well, as civil society groups which also deal with energy poverty

EU Member State	National Energy Poverty Authorities and their energy poverty oriented programs	National Energy Poverty Civil Organizations
<b>Poland</b>	<p><a href="#">POWERYOUTH</a> - program led by a network of Polish municipalities focused on empowering youth in participation in energy transition.</p> <p><a href="#">Zespół do spraw ograniczenia ubóstwa energetycznego w Polsce</a> - an organ of Polish government, focused on minimising energy poverty in Poland</p> <p><a href="#">Overview of existing national and local programs and initiatives to minimise impact of energy poverty</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Narada Obywatelska o kosztach energii</a>: a civil society group focusing on energy prices. Organises dialogues with local stakeholders and brings the results to the government.</p>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	There is an existing plan for a reform to establish an Energy Poverty Observatory in Bulgaria (€2.3 million) as part of the National Recovery and Resilience	Bulgaria is a partner in the <a href="#">POWERPOOR project</a> , which aims to support programmes to empower energy poor citizens and to encourage the use of joint

<sup>41</sup> Uradni List. Electricity Supply Act.

<https://www.uradni-list.si/glasilo-uradni-list-rs/vsebina/2022-01-3199/uredba-o-merilih-za-opredelitev-in-ocenjevanje-stevila-energetsko-revnih-gospodinjstev>

<sup>42</sup> Gobierno de España Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica. Estrategia Nacional contra la Pobreza Energética 2019-2024.

[https://www.miteco.gob.es/content/dam/miteco/es/ministerio/planes-estrategias/estrategia-pobreza-energetica/estrategianacionalcontralapobrezaenergetica\\_tcm30-502982.pdf](https://www.miteco.gob.es/content/dam/miteco/es/ministerio/planes-estrategias/estrategia-pobreza-energetica/estrategianacionalcontralapobrezaenergetica_tcm30-502982.pdf).

	<p>Plan (NRRP). There is no information, however, as to the progress of the reform.</p>	<p>energy initiatives leveraging innovative financing schemes (e.g., establishing energy communities/cooperatives, using crowdfunding).</p>
<p><b>Italy</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Osservatorio Nazionale della Povertà Energetica</a>: The Osservatorio plays a crucial role in monitoring, understanding, and addressing energy poverty in Italy, with the goal of ensuring that all citizens have access to affordable and sustainable energy resources.</p>	<p><a href="#">Banco dell'Energia</a>: was established to assist people in economic and social difficulty by implementing projects aimed at combating energy poverty. These projects range from paying energy bills from any energy operator, to providing education on conscious energy use, to interventions for improving home efficiency, and to the creation of renewable energy communities.</p> <p>In 2024, Banco dell'Energia will provide support to over 2,000 families facing energy poverty in Italy.</p>

## 6. About us

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**About Generation Climate Europe:** Generation Climate Europe (GCE) is the largest coalition of youth-led networks on climate and environmental issues at the European level, uniting the largest youth-led networks in Europe, and bringing together 381 national organisations across 46 countries in Europe.

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