

Access to secure, sustainable & affordable energy for all

Teaming up to tackle energy poverty in the EU

The Covenant of Mayors (CoM) and the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) are teaming up to address energy poverty. These two initiatives, funded by the European Commission, will support local and regional authorities across Europe in alleviating energy poverty by sharing knowledge and resources to build local capacities.

What is energy poverty?

[...] the inability to realise essential capabilities as a direct or indirect result of insufficient access to affordable, reliable and safe energy services, and taking into account available reasonable alternative means of realising these capabilities.¹

Energy poor households experience inadequate levels of some essential energy services, e.g. lighting, heating/cooling, use of appliances, transport... This is often due to a combination of high energy expenditures, low incomes, inefficient buildings and appliances, specific household energy needs, exposure to climate extremes, such as cold or heat waves, territorial planning, mobility infrastructures etc.

Energy poverty can have severe implications on the health, wellbeing, social inclusion and quality of life of citizens. For this reason, **energy poverty has to be taken into account in many policy areas** - including social, economic, climate and environmental policies, and can be best tackled at local level.

Key figures



57 million people in Europe cannot keep their homes warm²



104 million people in Europe cannot keep their homes comfortable during summer²



52 million people in Europe face delays in paying their energy bills²



10 million people need to walk more than 30 minutes to access public transport facilities³

1 - R.Day , G.Walker, N.Simcock, *Conceptualising energy use and energy poverty using a capabilities framework*, Energy Policy 93 (2016)
2 - <https://www.energy-poverty.eu/>
3 - [http://www.docutren.com/pdf/boletin/\[IIIA%201440\].pdf](http://www.docutren.com/pdf/boletin/[IIIA%201440].pdf)



How can Covenant signatories tackle energy poverty?

Policies & measures to alleviate energy poverty need to be adapted to the specific situation in terms of climate, housing quality, economy and the structure of energy costs, as well as mobility patterns. Here you can find some examples on how you can tackle energy poverty:

-  **Financing improvements** in the energy efficiency of households
-  **Minimum energy efficiency standards** in buildings
-  **Free of charge energy audits & advice** for low income households
-  **Reducing energy bills** via social tariffs or energy bill subsidies
-  **Disconnection protection** during the winter months
-  **Information & awareness raising** on energy & climate issues
-  **Improvement of the accessibility** to public transport connections
-  **Insulation of vulnerable facilities** to protect against cold & heat, possibly accompanied by green solutions at neighbourhood scale

How to get started?



Choose your target groups

(chronically ill, disabled, pensioners or children, poor families, ...)



Consider possible spatial patterns

(areas with poor quality buildings, poorly accessible areas, ...)



Analyse energy carriers and the related costs and efficiency

(e.g. heating oil, natural gas,...)



Define the type of policy

(building retrofitting, awareness raising, mobility improvements, financial support, ...)

Who can support you in defining your energy poverty policy?



The EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) is an initiative by the European Commission to help Member States in their efforts to combat energy poverty. It exists to improve the measuring, monitoring and sharing of knowledge and best practice on energy poverty | www.energypoverty.eu



The Covenant of Mayors Office with the support of the European Commission and of the Covenant Community is drafting a strategy on the *Access to Energy Pillar* and will increasingly provide guidance on this topic | www.eumayors.eu

