

# Access to 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.<sup>1</sup>*

Energy poor households experience inadequate levels of some essential energy services, e.g. electricity, heating and transport. This is often due to a combination of high energy expenditures, low incomes, inefficient buildings and appliances, specific household energy needs, 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 and environmental policies, and can be best tackled at local level. Alleviating energy poverty can enable Covenant signatories to make more inclusive SECAP plans.

### KEY FIGURES



**57 million** people in Europe cannot keep their homes warm <sup>2</sup>



**104 million** people in Europe cannot keep their homes comfortable in the summer<sup>2</sup>



**52 million** people in Europe face delays in paying their energy bills<sup>2</sup>



**10 million** people need to walk more than 30 minutes to access public transport facilities <sup>3</sup>

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;
- 🍃 **Free of charge energy audits & advice** for poor households;
- 🍃 **Reducing energy bills** via social tariffs or energy bill subsidies;
- 🍃 **Disconnection protection** during the winter months;
- 🍃 **Information and awareness raising** on energy issues to generate relevant behavioural changes;
- 🍃 **Improvement of the accessibility** of poorest areas of the city to public transport connections.

## HOW TO START?



Choose your target groups (*chronically ill, disabled, pensioners or children, poor families, ...*)



Consider possible spatial patterns (*areas with poor quality buildings, not-accessible areas, ...*)



Analyse energy carriers and the related cost and efficiency (*e.g. heating oil, natural gas, ...*)



Define the type of policy (*building retrofitting, awareness raising, mobility improvements, financial support for energy services, ..*)

## WHO CAN SUPPORT YOU IN DEFINING YOUR ENERGY POVERTY POLICY?

### European Energy Poverty Observatory



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](http://www.energypoverty.eu)

### The Covenant of Mayors Office



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](http://www.eumayors.eu)