

Warm homes for all

How to tackle the challenge of our generation

Housing Europe Position paper

It's one of the most alarming phenomena of our times, affecting around 11% of Europeans. Despite being considered the most developed part of the world, the European Union is struggling to tackle energy poverty. Although there is no single indicator for energy poverty in the EU, available figures illustrate the increase of energy costs and growing inability for low income households to cope with them.

The situation on the ground

- 54 million people cannot keep their home adequately warm
- 161 million face disproportionate housing expenditure
- 87 million live in poor quality dwellings and
- 42 million face arrears on their utility bills

At the same time, the number of people with complex housing needs in Europe is increasing, especially in those countries hit most by the financial crisis. In Greece, for instance, according to the latest European Parliament survey, 36% of households suffer from energy poverty, while tens of thousands of them have no access to power and/or heating.

A complex, multifaceted challenge

The scale of the problem is due to

1. rising energy prices
2. low income
3. poor energy efficient homes

These three core reasons outline also the areas where actions are needed. The consequences are dire. Energy poverty is directly linked with health problems and increasing death rates, while at the same time contributes to air pollution, since many people end up using inappropriate means to heat themselves, such as bad quality wood and other materials in their fireplaces.



Additionally, it is rather evident that energy poverty levels are higher in countries with a weaker social housing sector. **Eurofound has reported that inadequate homes put an extra burden of 170 billion Euros annually to the state budget of the 28 EU Member States.**

Public, cooperative and social housing providers stand firmly on the other side of the road, investing more and more to a fair, green energy transition.

It is estimated that **over the last 5 years Housing Europe members** have refurbished more than 1,8 million dwellings, investing around 33 billion Euros and saving on average 724 Euros per year from their tenants' energy bills.

Through a wide range of activities, from renovations to even supporting the establishment of non-for-profit energy provision services that save tenants a significant amount on their household utility bills, **public, cooperative and social housing providers tackle all three root causes of energy poverty.**

Showing the way out of the deadlock

What is already working

In Italy

LEMON, led by two social housing associations, members of Housing Europe Italian member, Federcasa- ACER Reggio Emilia and ACER Parma- in the Emilia Romagna Region launched over 15 million € of energy investments in 622 private and public social housing dwellings to achieve 40% energy savings guaranteed by ESCOs. The envisaged financing structure involves a combination of national and ERDF funds.

 www.housingeurope.eu/resource-577/the-sweet-taste-of-a-lemon

In the Netherlands & in the UK

Energiesprong has made Net Zero Energy Refurbishments a market reality that is financed of the energy cost savings, since a house does not consume more energy than it produces (E=0); plus, it only takes 10 days for thermal comfort to increase and comes with a 30-year energy performance warranty from the builder, while energy bills for the residents stay the same.

 www.housingeurope.eu/resource-424/energiesprong-a-solution-to-eradicate-uk-fuel-poverty

In Nantes, France

194 dwellings were refurbished by LogiOuest, a member of Housing Europe French member, USH. With overall annual energy savings of 59.000 Euros and an upgrade to energy class B, a block of social

[The European Federation of Public Cooperative and Social Housing](#)

18, Square de Meeûs, B1050, Brussels - Tel: +32 2 541 0561 - Fax: +32 2 541 0561

info@housingeurope.eu - www.housingeurope.eu



apartments that host more than 700 tenants were turned into warmer and more affordable homes within less than 3 years. The project was carried out within the framework of the PowerHouse Nearly Zero Energy Challenge.

 bit.ly/1TlwhNr

In Malaga, Spain

The retrofitting of the complex “Los Limoneros”, focused on the improvement of the energy efficiency and comfort levels for the residents. Currently, the energy consumption is very low leading to a cut in energy consumption of 40%, a decrease in energy expenditure of 20% at an investment for energy retrofitting of less than 30.000 Euro per dwelling. The project was co-financed by the 75% from ERDF and 25% from the Malaga City Council.

 bit.ly/1XiKSvC

In Scotland

A new energy supply company has been launched which aims to cut millions of pounds from bills in some of Scotland's most disadvantaged communities. “Our Power Energy” is the first in the UK to operate on a non-profit distribution basis. It has been founded by 35 organisations including some of Scotland's largest housing associations. It plans to be selling heat and power to tenants in 200,000 homes across Scotland by 2020. The consortium expects to save its members up to 10% on their household utility bills, compared with standard commercial tariffs.

 bbc.in/1iLcatT

On the policy table

How to be more efficient?

Affordable energy to All

- Role of **local partnerships** with energy companies, construction sector, housing providers, tenants proposing adequate strategies
- **Training** is also needed for housing staff and residents in the field of energy. There is unlocked potential in the energy management of most homes.

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- Empowering and involving **citizen-consumers** and communities will be key to unlocking the full potential of every green energy transition strategy.

Need for dedicated housing policies

- A **supply of adequate and affordable housing** through a **variety of tenures** and well integrated within the local community is needed to increase the **social mix** in local communities.
- Urgent improvement of the building renovation supply chain and promotion of **business models** which are effective and affordable.

Smart financing

- Adequate **finance** for energy efficiency: strengthen conventional and alternative ways to provide long-term low-cost capital financing for the renovation of social housing
- **Welfare policies** ensuring that low-income groups are not unduly burdened by climate change costs.

Better regulation

- Improved implementation and stabilisation of the current **legislative framework**, in particular the NZEB roadmaps of the EPBD and the renovation roadmaps of the EED.

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