



Energy poverty and social-green innovation

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What is about

A common and clear definition is not yet in place at European level, but it is a phenomenon with multifactorial nature and has a result to no adequate access to energy or energy services for a high proportion of households. Energy poverty is connected to the household income, but also to many other factors, like energy prices, the energy efficiency of the building, social cohesion policies etc.

According to a study conducted by the Buildings Performance Institute Europe, the estimated number of energy-poor citizens in Europe is between 50 and 125 million people.

There is no specific EU policy with regard to combating energy poverty, even though several, direct or indirect, references have been made since 2009 on EU legal documents and policy papers.

But the last 2 years there is an increasing interest in promoting policies at the European level for combating energy poverty.

Interesting initiatives are taken by the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee. A tool for common approaches is the European Energy Poverty Observatory

- ✓ We support a coordinated at the European level policy and financial tools for combating the energy poverty
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We need cooperation at the European level

- ✓ **- A clear and common definition of energy poverty taking into account the multifactorial nature of the phenomenon and Monitoring indicators of the problem as a first step for**
 - Monitoring and Reporting National and European Energy Poverty Observatory, Specification of the appropriate measurement, integrating quantitative and qualitative criteria.
 - Exchange of relevant European experiences, views, expertise and good practices
 - Modern approaches on the subject, shift from “subsidies” to social-green investments
 - Preparation of a National Road-maps to eliminate energy poverty through the gradual transition from a social policy based on substitutes to an innovative green-social policy based on investments and energy efficiency measures, under a medium and long term perspective
 - specific policies, action plans, financial tools and measures on three areas identified significant for addressing the phenomenon (a) public awareness and mobilization (b) education, training and empowerment (c) improvement of energy efficiency of the households, support to energy communities and social housing models at the level of the neighborhood
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A need for change

Households suffering from energy poverty receive subsidies for their energy consumption. The result is postponement of necessary changes, waste of funds, lack of new job opportunities and failure in reaching targets on energy transition. Therefore, there is a need for new policies to tackle energy poverty and to create new sustainable job opportunities combining social policy with energy and climate policies.

The current National Policy

Most national social policies, which are indirectly related to addressing energy poverty, are in the form of subsidies:

- the «social electricity tariff» of the Public Power Corporation.
 - the provision of free electricity (up to 300 kWh for 2015) for households struggling to pay their energy bills,
 - the “rent subsidy”
 - the heating oil allowance (epidoma thermansis)
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Main problems of existed policies

- they do not target the causes of the problem**
- they waste the limited financial resources**
- they are not successful in eliminating the problem**
- they tackle the households as actors without role**

The most important policy for tackling energy poverty was the energy efficiency scheme for residential buildings called «Energy Efficiency at House-hold Buildings» Program, which, however, proved to be inefficient, due to its bureaucratic nature, its limited budget and other technical and procedural obstacles.

New social green policy for combating energy poverty

- **Integrated policies: Combining social policy with employment and climate policy. Results and performance oriented policies**
- **Shift from relief policies to active policies with the participation of citizens (RES, energy efficiency, community energy, REScoops)**
- **Through knowledge platforms creating synergies**
- **Transfer of expertise not only between member states and universities but also to local communities, NGOs, social enterprises and household**