



**European Committee
of the Regions**

ENVE-VI/038

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WORKING DOCUMENT

Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy

**Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy
poverty**

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This document will be discussed at the meeting of the **Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy** to be held on **Monday 28 January from 11 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.**

Reference documents

Own-initiative opinion

**Working document of the Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy –
Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy poverty.**

I. General comments and analysis

1. The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy defines energy poverty as "a situation where a household or an individual is unable to afford basic energy services (heating, cooling, lighting, mobility and power) to guarantee a decent standard of living due to a combination of low income, high energy expenditure and low energy efficiency of their homes". Energy poverty, as defined above, affects one in ten European citizens in some form. More specifically:
 - 57 million people do not have adequate heating for the winter;
 - 104 million people are not able to cool their homes properly in summer;
 - 52 million people face delays in paying their energy bills;
 - 10 million people have to walk for over 30 minutes to reach the nearest public transport stop¹.According to other sources, more than 80 million Europeans are living in damp housing which contains traces of mould. This is also linked to the difficulties they experience heating and cooling their homes properly.
2. Energy poverty is a complex problem which can only be resolved by taking a joint and coordinated approach to social, technical and economic aspects. In order to take stock of energy poverty and work towards solutions, a wide range of information must be collected and a detailed analysis carried out. Tackling energy poverty requires the use of various public policy instruments which take into account both energy efficiency and social protection issues.
3. In its previous opinions, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) has already highlighted the need to consider energy poverty when drafting opinions. In the Committee's view, one of the most important political developments in recent years is the explicit recognition by the various EU institutions of the need to consider the social consequences when shaping climate and energy policy, now and in the future.
4. With regard to these social consequences, one of the main problems is energy poverty, which is closely linked to both the Committee of the Region's priorities for the current term of office, and to those of the ENVE commission for 2018. Taking into account both the general EU view and local and regional specificities when managing the fight against energy poverty can help, first and foremost, to boost citizens' trust in the EU and to bring Europe closer to its citizens, but can also contribute to implementing the Paris Agreement and the Energy Union.
5. The European Commission legislative framework "Clean Energy for All Europeans" acknowledged the importance of eradicating energy poverty and refers to it explicitly many times. During the negotiations on this package, social consequences were given increasing attention and the wide variety of problems linked to energy poverty across various policy areas

¹ <https://www.eumayors.eu/support/energy-poverty.html>.

were recognised. Following the establishment of an EU framework, the next challenge is to adapt the general provisions of the clean energy package to the needs of different regions. This will involve both maintaining compliance with the general EU framework and setting out the necessary frameworks and measures based on knowledge and recognition of the various aspects of energy poverty.

6. Given that energy poverty is an extremely complex problem, it is not possible to apply the same solutions to the different regions of the EU. Appropriate solutions must therefore be found at local and regional level, placing local and regional authorities at the forefront of the fight against energy poverty. At the same time, policies to manage energy poverty may bring other benefits for these local authorities, for example, by boosting the success of other policy objectives and supporting policies such as those aimed at energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and social protection. Moreover, tackling energy poverty effectively could help local and regional authorities to further extend the social base for climate change action by involving social groups that have thus far been less active and have received less attention.
7. The CoR opinion should refer to the fact that the European Pillar of Social Rights, launched in November 2017, also puts special emphasis on the question of social protection. Energy poverty is a typical case where action is required at EU level.
8. The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy pays particular attention to energy poverty; it plays a leading role in keeping this problem on the agenda and in seeking solutions. In this area too, the CoR must support the Covenant of Mayors, making the most of the benefits deriving from it, its active involvement and its deep social roots, and use the tools that it provides to encourage local and regional authorities and their leaders to join.
9. The EU Energy Poverty Observatory set up by the European Commission is working to draw up a general overview of issues linked to energy poverty. It was established for a period of 40 months and more than half of this time has already elapsed. The results so far fully meet the objectives behind its creation. It has brought to light and made available an enormous amount of information, which is essential to the development of policies linked to energy poverty. The results achieved to date by the Observatory show that the problem is clearly more widespread than expected in Europe and that it is reaching staggering levels. The CoR should recognise how useful the Observatory is and utilise its results.
10. At this point, we already know perfectly well that energy poverty is a real problem which must be addressed. In the future, nobody will be able to claim that they were unaware of the problem: policies and specific measures are needed. Work is now starting in this area at European level and we can contribute the pioneering experience already gained at local and regional level. The new Regulation on Governance of the Energy Union provides the framework for local and regional authorities to have their voices heard and to prioritise dealing with energy poverty. The CoR should make sure that national governments comply with their obligations in both areas. Despite these efforts, much remains to be done. European legislation could be much more ambitious and national governments need to cooperate openly and actively with local and regional authorities to ensure effective multi-level governance.

II. Questions

1. How can we ensure a fair and equitable division of green transition costs, including possible increases in energy expenditure, and what role could local and regional authorities play in this context?
2. Did you know that the EU Energy Poverty Observatory has been operational since the beginning of 2018 and have you ever used the information it provides?
3. What kind of information do you expect from the EU Energy Poverty Observatory? In your opinion, how could the local and regional authorities in your region or country be better involved in the Observatory's work? How can we ensure that the Observatory's conclusions are publicised more effectively?
4. Is getting involved in the Observatory's work something that might interest you personally or the local or regional authority that you represent?
5. In your view, could the CoR play a role within this body and if so, what would the CoR's involvement look like?
6. How can the CoR encourage local authorities and their leaders to join the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy? What role can the Covenant Ambassadors play in this regard?
7. Based on your experience, to what extent is the support offered by the EU in the area of energy poverty transparent and available to local and regional authorities?
8. What measures should be taken at European level to significantly increase the average annual renovation rate of European housing stock – which is particularly low at present (around 1 %) – , which is essential if we are to reduce and modernise household energy consumption?
9. Do you agree that the EU, by linking up with the particularly ambitious goals it has set itself as part of its climate and energy policy, should set equally ambitious targets to reduce energy poverty by 2030 and 2050?

Brussels, ...

III. PROCEDURE

Title	Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy poverty
Reference(s)	Own-initiative opinion
Legal basis	Article 307(4) of the Decree
Procedural basis	Rule 41(b)(ii)
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	–
Date of Bureau/President's decision	
Commission responsible	Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE)
Rapporteur	Kata Tüttö (HU/PES) Representative of Local Government of District 12 of Budapest
Analysis	
Discussion in commission	Planned for 28 January 2019
Date adopted by commission	Scheduled for 4 April 2019
Result of the commission vote (majority, unanimity)	
Date adopted in plenary	Scheduled for 26/27 June 2019
Previous Committee opinions	
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	–
