



European Economic
and Social Committee

Recent
EESC achievements

Upholding the right to affordable energy for everyone



Energy poverty occurs when households cannot afford the energy necessary for their health, well-being and quality of life. Eurostat figures show that 10.6% of Europeans, or over 48 million people, could not keep their homes adequately warm in 2023. This is a sharp increase from the previous years when these figures stood at 9.3% and 6.9% in 2022 and 2021 respectively.

This series of fact sheets aims to show our impact on EU legislation, where we brought essential civil society issues to the EU or where we established ourselves as key players.

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The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) brings the voices of the energy-poor to the heart of the European Union and makes sure they are prioritised in the fight against energy poverty.

Through **opinions and conferences**, we put energy affordability high on the EU political agenda, building a strong network of stakeholders and partners from civil society, academia, EU institutions, Member States, and regional and local communities to drive change. Our efforts bring new ideas and concrete proposals that shape EU policies in this field.

The EESC's recommendation for a European Poverty Observatory led the European Commission to create the **Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH)**. This body brings together all stakeholders to define European energy poverty indicators. Since 2021, we have held **annual conferences** on energy affordability, partnering closely with the EPAH to ensure fair energy access. In **2022**, we focused on involving citizens in the green transition through the Social Climate Fund, and in **2023**, we gave energy-poor citizens themselves a platform, by working with the European Anti-Poverty Network and its 31 national networks.

Our efforts influenced the **European Commission's 2023 Recommendation on energy poverty**, which reflects many key EESC proposals on how to effectively implement anti-poverty measures. They include the need to adopt a holistic approach and to support

energy-poor households in their switch from fossil fuels to cheaper renewables.

The **political guidelines issued by Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen** at the beginning of her second term have also taken on board our call for a swift rollout of the Social Climate Fund, ensuring access to affordable, energy-efficient homes. Our **2024 conference on affordable energy** pushed for bold steps on the right to basic energy consumption, the power of energy communities, and driving both public and private investments in energy access.

Looking ahead

We continue to push Member States to act on our recommendations. These include the acknowledgement of the right to energy as a human and social right, the need to impose a ban on unilateral disconnection, the importance of a social and distributional impact assessment of the green transition, the need for more funds for building renovations and decentralised production of energy, the importance of transport poverty and the gender perspective.

Everyone deserves access to affordable energy, and we are committed to making sure that happens.



We are committed to developing a strategy for affordable, secure and sustainable energy that promotes energy communities and ensures fairness for the most vulnerable. Our aim is to achieve Europe's strategic autonomy and competitiveness, as well as a greener and more sustainable economy and society. This requires making an integrated EU energy market a reality and giving citizens, economic operators and consumers the chance to play a proactive role.

Baiba Miltoviča, president of the EESC's Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society