

# Arrears on utility bills

## Definition

The “arrears on utility bills” indicator represents the share of (sub-) population with arrears on utility bills, based on the question «In the last twelve months, has the household been in arrears, i.e., has been unable to pay on time due to financial difficulties for utility bills (heating, electricity, gas, water, etc.) for the main dwelling?».

## Examples

An elderly person only turns on the oil heater at night and only in one room while sitting near it.

A person with a disability that requires the maintenance of a temperature range throughout the day and the use of medical devices that need to be turned on 24 hours.

With the soaring energy prices and cold weather in a given month, the bill was higher than expected, and the household does not have enough money to cover it.

## Limits

The indicator is able to capture an important sign of energy poverty: the inability to pay for bills. Even if it is an easily comparable indicator between member states, it contains **limits**:

It does not separate energy bills from other basic needs

It does not provide information on cases of under consumption/energy self restriction.

Social tariffs, bill support, personal loans are not considered and can lead to misinterpretation

The dichotomous results do not capture a range of possible experiences and other fuels use such as biomass.

## Numbers

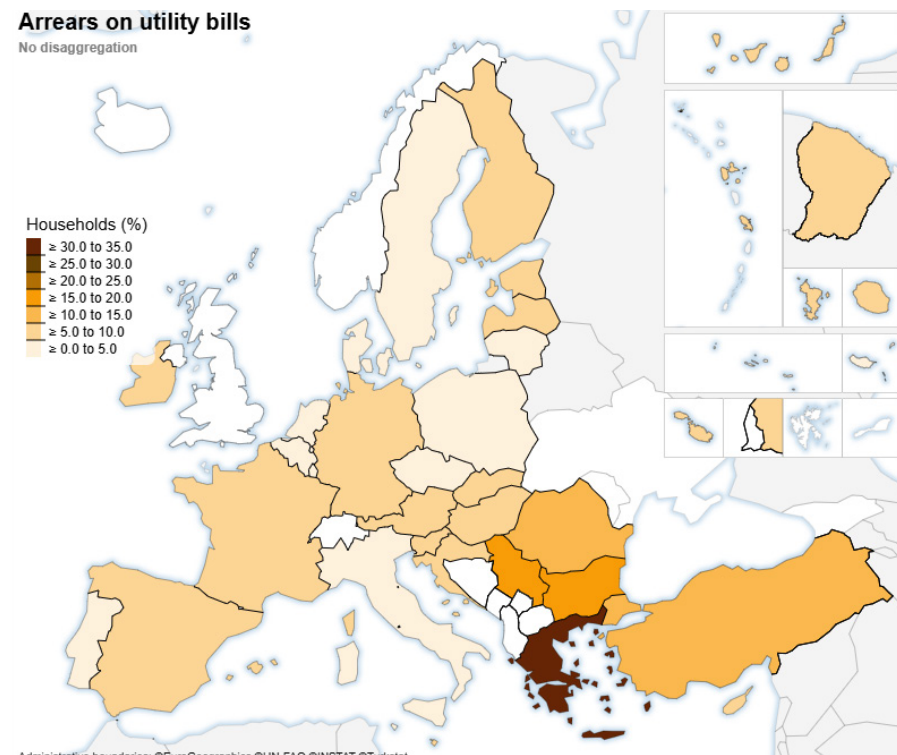
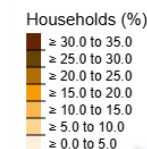
In 2024, 6.9% of the European Union population presented arrears on utility bills, corresponding to 31\* million Europeans.

*\*considering that the European Union population in 2024 was 449.3 million, according to [EUROSTAT \(2025\)](#).*

Additional insights in the EPAH report:  
**“Energy Poverty National Indicators:  
 Insights for a more effective measuring”**

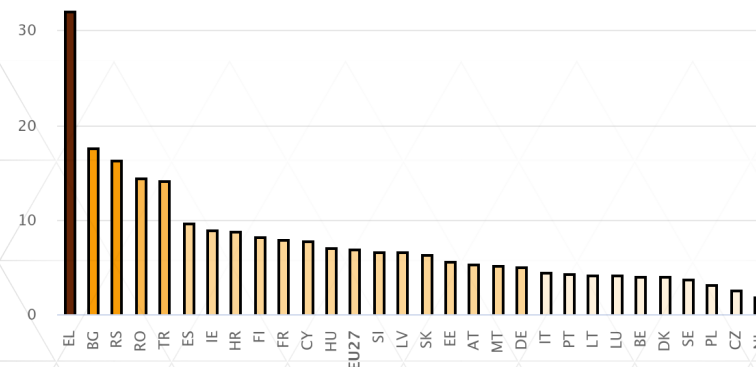
## Arrears on utility bills

No disaggregation



Administrative boundaries: ©EuroGeographics ©UN-FAO ©INSTAT ©Turkstat

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Unit: Households (%) | Source: [EU-SILC](#) and JRC | Last update: 2024

Administrative boundaries: ©EuroGeographics ©UN-FAO ©INSTAT ©Turkstat