



BÜKKSZENTKERESZT, Hungary



Bükkszentkereszt is situated in the Bükk Mountains and the Northern Hungary region has the lowest net average income in Hungary (~3750 €/capita). The heating season is longer (from early September until late May). The commune is surrounded by forests of the Bükk National Park. Due to its peripheral location, natural gas was not introduced in the municipality. Most of the 450 households and public buildings are heated with firewood, whose price has been skyrocketing. The energy efficiency of the buildings is low (58% of the dwellings built before 1979).

An extensive energy (poverty) mapping, conducted by the ELTE University and Environmental Planning & Education Network (EPEN) in 2021, showed that the heating equipment was outdated, and the energy consciousness of the inhabitants was low. Energy poverty was tangible even before the energy crisis since more than 1/4 of the families spent more than 10% of their income on energy bills, and there were at least 50 households that even spent more than 20-30%. Based on the local air quality monitoring equipment, the PM10 emission exceeds the WHO threshold on ~180 days per year.

Energy poverty and the resulting air pollution are big challenges. And the municipality wants to move forward and make a real difference in alleviating energy poverty. The aim is to have a **detailed development concept of the Local Energy Courtyard (LEC) associated with tailor-made public awareness-raising activities**. The concept of the LEC can be easily replicable in other regions across Europe.

