EPAH #3 PRACTITONER EVENT

EQUITY AND VULNERABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ENERGY POVERTY

21st EPAH Lunch Talk – Dec. 3, 2025

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Vulnerability and Equity in the Context of Energy Poverty in Central and Northern Europe

KLIMA BÜNDNIS ÖSTERREICH

#3 EPAH Practitioners' Event

📅 Date: 26th November 2025
🕐 Time: 10:00 – 12:00 CET
💻 Format: Online

✍️ 158 registrations
🙋 73 participants from 23 EU countries

Keynote

🗨️ **Jenny von Platten (SE)**
Stockholm Environment Institute
Energy poverty beyond bills: Vulnerability and Equity

Roundtable

🗨️ **Xander van Tilburg (NL)**
TNO Applied Scientific Research
Local energy poverty policies in the Netherlands: biannual monitor of municipal design and implementation

🗨️ **Irene Milewski (AT)**
Climate Alliance Tyrol
DoppelPuls: Energy and climate coaching for households

🗨️ **Audrey Dobbins (DE)**
Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI
Improving the energy welfare of households

Energy poverty beyond bills: Vulnerability and Equity

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Jenny von Platten (SE)

Sweden: heating is included in the rent

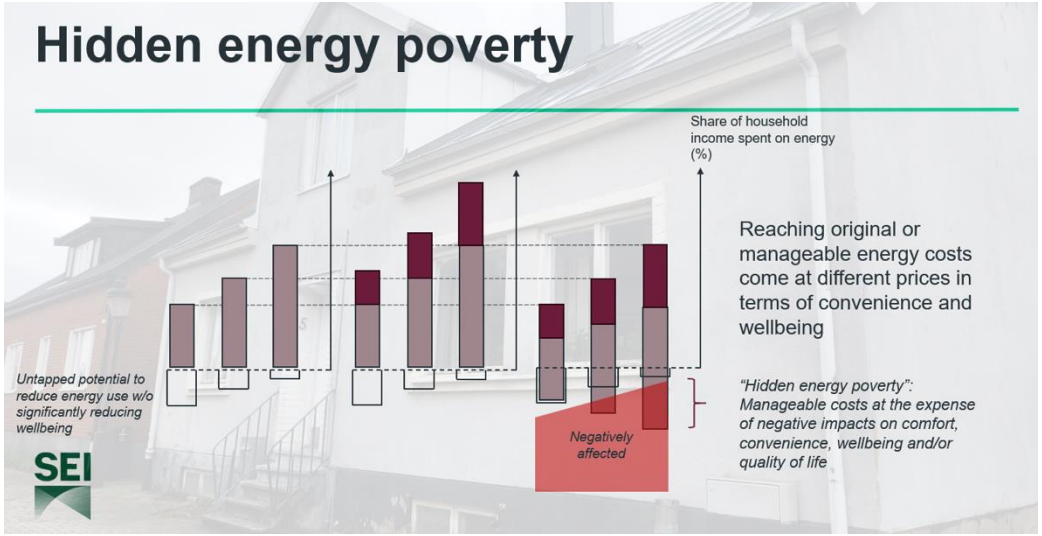
🥶 Tenants experience cold not because of direct monetary costs, but due to

- Fear
- Lack of energy literacy
- Power relations

PLUS: increasing **vulnerability** drastically **reduces** households' **ability to cope** with price peaks without sacrificing their quality of life and well-being.

🎯 **Solutions**:

- support to improve efficiency
- reduce income inequalities
- transformative transition that addresses deep social roots



Participatory breakout sessions / discussion

1. **Social dimension and identification.**
   energy poverty: deeply tied to social factors: stigma, isolation, invisibility of those affected.
   🔍 identification difficult (all contexts)
2. **Cost models and service integration.**
   💶 further socialise energy expenses beyond warm-rent (political feasibility?)
   🛠️ better integrate financial tools with social and advisory services
   📍local communities: crucial mediators
3. **Practical barriers and housing challenges.**
   e.g. language, understanding of energy use / billing, lack of affordable housing with adequate thermal performance;
   🏠 motivating landlords to renovate; tax incentives; minimum energy-class requirements
4. **Equity, governance, and funding.**
   💶 insufficient funding schemes,
   👀low governmental awareness,
   💾 importance of improving data

Local energy poverty policies in the Netherlands: biannual monitor of municipal design and implementation

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Xander van Tilburg (NL)

🔍 energy poverty monitoring at the municipal level -- focusing on the interface between national and local policies

2022 energy crisis: Dutch government funds to municipalities to address energy poverty

biannual surveys; 350 municipalities, gathering quantitative and qualitative data,

😖 open-text responses: highly valued for capturing participants' frustration

Findings:

- Despite good cooperation with housing associations, identifying the target group proved difficult.
- Municipalities appreciated the flexibility but found initiatives too temporal for long-term impact. (concerns about continuity due to potential austerity measures)
- Value of energy coaches and their role in the transition are to be stressed.

DoppelPlus:
Energy and climate coaching for households

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Irene Milewski (AT)

DoppelPlus = **local support service** for vulnerable groups focusing on energy and climate training provided by volunteer climate coaches

- aimed at both owners and tenants
- reduces the “shame barrier”
- emphasizes affordable behaviour changes and minor investments: energy efficiency, heating, mold prevention, utility bill explanations

💡**free starter pack** to reduce energy costs, e.g. LED lights, fridge thermometers

💡 **workshops in social institutions** to reach target groups.

💡 Since 2017: 1,200 consultations; estimated annual savings per household: € 200 and 650 kg of CO2

Improving the energy welfare of households

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Audrey Dobbins (DE)

technical approach: identifying the impacts of policies on households, focusing on improving energy well-being by reducing consumption and carbon emissions

Tool for Germany:

1. characterizing household profiles based on variables like income and location,
2. modelling these profiles to optimise long-term energy investments, and
3. comparing the impacts of different policies.

Findings:

Consumption subsidies

- maintained fossil fuel use.

Investment subsidies

- promoted renewable energy use,
- reduced fossil fuel dependence,
- significantly reduced suppressed demand to below 1 million people in the long term

Conclusion:

Targeting policies support both energy poverty alleviation and meeting energy transition goals.

Main points raised during keynote, breakout room discussions, roundtable presentations

Energy poverty remains **hard to identify** due to stigma, social isolation, invisibility of vulnerable households.

A **shortage of affordable, thermally adequate housing** continues to worsen the problem.

Current **funding programmes are insufficient** to meet the actual scale of need.

Persistent practical barriers include language challenges, limited understanding of energy use and bills, and complex heating systems.

National and institutional perspectives vary, influencing how energy poverty is tackled.

Improved data collection is essential to reach households that do not seek help due to shame or mistrust.

Thank you from EPAH antenna Klimabündnis Österreich – Climate Alliance Austria

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EPAH antenna

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