



Review of policies to tackle energy poverty in 10 EU countries

Insights from the [ONPE Brochure](#) ‘Context and schemes to tackle energy poverty in Europe’

Outline

Introducing the study

Context and governance

Statistics and indicators

National policies

Good practices

Conclusions

The study

Compiling

Up-to-date data on:

- Context & Governance
- Statistics & indicators
- Policies & measures

**Knowledge on policies
& measures to tackle
energy poverty**

Disseminating

Communication brochure

- Concise format
- Bilingual FR and EN
- Documentation (sources)

Fostering experience sharing

Products now publicly available at: <https://onpe.org/ailleurs/europe/fiches-pays>

- Brochure including 10 country factsheets
+ 1 Europe factsheet
- Synthesis in a presentation mode (+ [paper](#))
- Annexes (explanatory note + documentation)



Example (overview of a 4-page factsheet)



Context and schemes to tackle energy poverty in Europe

FRANCE

BACKGROUND AND GOVERNANCE

BACKGROUND

The policies on the right to energy were initially focused on dealing with bill arrears, in line with policies on the right to housing and the right to equal exclusion. The issue of energy poverty emerged along the 2000s with the increase in energy and housing prices and the liberalisation of the energy markets.

Following NGOs' lobbying the "Solidarité 2^e loi" introduced an official definition in 2010:

"In energy poverty [...] a person who has particular difficulties in getting the energy supply necessary to ensure his/her needs in his/her dwelling because of inadequate conditions of revenues or housing."

NATIONAL OBSERVATORY ON ENERGY POVERTY (ONPE)

Created in March 2011 following the "Solidarité 2^e Loi".

Objective: to have a reliable and shared knowledge on energy poverty in France with the tasks of (1) pooling, processing and producing data, (2) facilitating public debate and (3) disseminating information on the subject.

Operation:

- Chartered and led by ADEME (French agency for ecological transition)
- Means: between 200 and 300,000 euros/year (multiannual budget), and a dedicated team (equivalent to about 2 full-time positions).
- 28 partners including a strategic committee with 10 funding members (State (2 national), ADEME, ANAH, EDF, ENEDIS, ENGIE, GROF, TOTAL and Le Monde), the national Energy Ombudsmen, federations, NGOs and other stakeholders
- 5 Working Groups:
 - Household-level sociological studies
 - Data (dashboards)
 - Territorial diagnosis (SCDDP tool - Geolocating and diagnosing energy poverty)
 - Litigates
 - Communication

From 2010, the State has emphasised measures on energy renovation (e.g. Living Better - "Habiter Mieux" programme) as a means of tackling energy poverty.

The **TECV Law** of 2015 set a target of reducing energy poverty by 15% by 2020, and renovating the homes of at least 200,000 low-income households per year, as well as generalising the energy voucher in 2018. The **Energy Access Law** of 2019 set the objective of inducing a maximum level of energy consumption per m² in the criteria for decent housing from 2023, and to renovate all the most energy efficient dwellings by 2028.

STAKEHOLDERS AND SCHEMES

The State sets the objectives, the regulatory framework and defines the policies (including the energy voucher), with the technical support and expertise of ADEME (Agency for ecological transition).

ANAH (National housing agency) implements two key programmes for energy renovation: **Living Better Security** ("Habiter Mieux Sérénité") and **MaRénovationCuisine** ("MaPrimeRénov").

Energy suppliers must guarantee access to energy and facilitate energy savings in the framework of the **Energy Savings Certificates**, either directly through partnerships or contracts with delegated parties or other service providers.

The national **Energy Ombudsman** provides neutral information to consumers and mediation in case of complaints or disputes with energy suppliers.

Local authorities, energy distributors, social housing bodies, social services and associations are key actors on the ground to identify and support households in difficult situations.

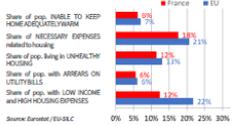


FRANCE

STATISTICS

- Population: 67 millions (2019)
- National median equivalised income: €22,600/year (in current prices, 2019)
- Number of people living below the poverty line: 9.1 million (2018)
- Climate: 3 major zones (oceanic, continental, and Mediterranean)
- Average annual expenses for electricity, gas and other fuels + per inhabitant (related to the dwelling): €800/year (in current prices, 2018)

COMPARISON WITH THE EUROPEAN AVERAGE IN 2019



In 2019, the indicators related to energy poverty are better in France than the EU average. The share of population with low income and high housing expenses is almost half as high in France (12%) as in the EU average (22%). However, the proportion of French households experiencing arrears of utility bills is almost at the EU average.

For the same purchasing power and despite lower electricity prices, energy expenditure related to the dwelling is higher in France than the European average (Eurostat 2021). This is linked to the slightly higher price of gas and district heating in France than the European average and a housing stock with a lower energy performance, more energy intensive per m² than the European average (GDSE42).

TRENDS FRANCE OVER 2010-2019



Overall, most of the indicators related to energy poverty remain stable.

Over 2010-2019, differences between income levels are noticeable in the evolution of the share of the population for which housing expenses represents more than 40% of total income: upward trend for low-income households vs. improvement or stabilisation for wealthy households. In 2019, the deterioration of this indicator for the poorest is particularly important and offsets past improvements.

Expenditure on housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels has increased (+20% in 2019 and 2020), due to the strong rise in energy prices (+3% per year over 2010-2019) and electricity, +2.8% per year for gas, ENERDATA.

This offsets the decrease in unit energy consumption of dwellings over this period (-1.1% per year, GDSE42).

NATIONAL DATA (ONPE INDICATORS)

Share of households in energy poverty according to the indicator of...	2006	2013
• EER - Energy Effort Rate	8.4%	10.4%
• LINC - Low Income, High Cost	10.2%	10.4%
• COLD - Perception of cold	5.3%	6.0%

ONPE monitors indicators based on data from the National housing survey (ENL, done every 4 to 5 years by INSEE (National institute of statistics and economic studies) with large samples (27,000 households in 2013). The trend between two ENLs can be estimated annually by modelling (EER, 30 indicator) and from the annual survey of the **energy barometer**, done by the national energy ombudsman among 2,000 households for COLD and deprivation).

14% of French people surveyed in the 2020 energy barometer said they had suffered from the cold for at least 24 hours in 2020. 11.9% of households, i.e. 3.5 million households, were in energy poverty in France (metropolitan) in 2019, according to the EER-30 modelled indicator (see [ONPE 2020 Dashboard - 2nd semester](#)).

NATIONAL POLICIES

• POLICIES FOR ENERGY ACCESS, BUILDING RENOVATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

SCHEME	TARGET (RESULTS)	Other information
Energy voucher (2018): annual aid to the payment of energy bills up to 200 euros on average.	Households under income criteria. Sent to 5.5 million eligible households in 150 (19% of households); €812 million.	Can be used for energy bills or invoices of energy renovation.
Solidarity Housing Fund (2005-): aid to the payment of energy bills upon approval of household's application.	19% of households under income criteria set by each Department. 2018 data: 98,289 applications; 75,926 beneficiaries; €23.5 million.	Managed by the Departmental Council.
Objective to maintain the private gas and electricity supply (1990-)	Households eligible to the energy voucher or beneficiary of the Solidarity Housing Fund. More than 671,000 interventions in 2015.	Written trace (a possibility of mediation).
Living Better Security (2010-): grants for renovation aiming at energy savings of more than 35%.	Households under income criteria, private landlords, condominiums: 68,367 dwellings renovated in 2020; €597 million.	Managed by ANAH (National housing agency).
MyRenovationBonus (2020-): grants with the possibility of advance payment.	All households eligible. Grant rate depending on income level and action type. 141,143 low-income households in 2020; €370 million.	Managed by ANAH.
Energy Savings Certificates (CEE, "energy power") (2016- on-going): aids per action type with minimum performance criteria (per action type).	Energy savings target dedicated to low-income households, with a bonus for very low-income households; 708 TWh came between January 2018 and December 2020.	Obligation of the energy suppliers.

Energy renovation is also promoted through other incentives (e.g., reduced VAT 5.5% rate). Social housing bodies are eligible to dedicated schemes (e.g., eco-Social Housing Loans). Numerous local authorities implement complementary incentives or schemes (e.g., Social Aid Fund for energy renovation in some Departments).

• COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES

TYPE OF INITIATIVE	EXAMPLE(S)
Schemes to identify and help energy poor households	Often run by local authorities or associations: e.g., accompanying programmes in the CEE scheme like SUMME or Loco-NEO .
Initiatives targeting the most vulnerable households	Often run by NGOs (e.g., Soifs Plus (Fondation Abbé Pierre)).
Schemes for accompanied De-Homeless rehabilitation	Often run by NGOs (e.g., Soifs Plus (Fondation Abbé Pierre)).
Aids for renovation works related to social schemes or tackling substantial housing	e.g., loan for housing improvements, pension fund's aids for renovation works (see ONPE factbooks).
Research works (sociology, economics, etc.)	e.g., studies done or gathered by ONPE and the GDSE42 network.

ZOOM ON



The law requires energy suppliers (obligated parties) to achieve energy savings for end-users, with a specific target ("energy poverty" CEE) to be reached at low-income households, since 2018. Until the end of 2021, actions carried out with very low-income households can also receive a CEE bonus (€1). From 2022 onwards, the "energy poverty" obligation will be targeted at very low-income households only (and the bonus will be removed).

Obligated parties can carry out their own programmes, co-organise Living Better Security, finance support programmes by third parties (NGOs, local authorities, etc.) or buy CEE on the dedicated market. Eligible actors (NGOs, social housing bodies, local authorities) can also get and use CEE.

70% TWh sums of "energy poverty" CEE were issued over 2018-2020. The average price of the "energy poverty" CEE in 2020 was about 8 euros/euro kWh of energy.

GOOD PRACTICES

<p>SUMME - Local Intervention Service for Energy Management. Identifying + accompanying (since 2013)</p> <p>Led by the NGO ALICE co-funded through the CEE scheme, with SUMME (Fondation Abbé Pierre) as a partner with local authorities.</p> <p>Objective: Scale up the actions tackling energy poverty, with one-stop shops per area to continue reporting on energy poverty situations and organise the situations of vulnerable households.</p> <p>Approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying: detection chain for households in situation or at risk of energy poverty; 2. Assessing: home visit + small energy saving equipment; 3. Advising: support for households to find sustainable solutions (e.g., setting up project and application for renovation aids). <p>Results: 42 local authorities / SUMME scheme in place and +15,000 households supported in 2020 (58,500 in total since 2013).</p> <p>See also the evaluation report 2021</p>	<p>Boite à l'énergie ("Boîte d'Accueil") - Renovation aids for households in situation of exclusion (since 2012)</p> <p>Co-funded by the Abbe Pierre Foundation and led through the CEE scheme.</p> <p>Objective: Offer efficient housing to households in situation of exclusion, who cannot access conventional rental accommodation.</p> <p>Approach: Aid up to 10% of the investment cost for the renovation of dwellings units for housing (35% of the renovated dwellings had a 0 to E energy class before works).</p> <p>Operations carried out by approved associations or social housing bodies in partnership with local authorities.</p> <p>Results: 550 dwellings renovated per year (more than 5,000 dwellings since 2012), aid of €6,900 per average 64 million euros in total over 2013-2020.</p> <p>Average energy consumption reduced from 387 to 128 kWh/m² per year (yearly 18% reduction on average). (See also the sociological study, done in 2020)</p>
<p>Mediation energy (since 2014)</p> <p>Objective: Help households in energy poverty in the private rented sector and convincing landlords to carry out works.</p> <p>Approach: Households identified through other schemes (CAES, SUMME, etc.) are supported by an energy mediator (Ea association), with a socio-technical diagnostic visit (in situ actions) and socio-technical mediation with the landlord to negotiate and support the decision and implementation with landlords, resulting in 63 renovation projects.</p> <p>Results: 200 households helped in 2016-2017, with 122 mediations with landlords.</p> <p>See also the video done by ONPE about the scheme)</p>	<p>REPARM - Multi-footed network of support for De-Homeless rehabilitation (since 2015/2016)</p> <p>Led by the Bâtisseurs Compagnons and Repaïss</p> <p>Objective: Develop accompanied De-Homeless (DH) rehabilitation at national and local level, to make energy renovation works affordable.</p> <p>Approach: Inventory of operators, organisation of meetings and experience sharing, definition of models, pooling of resources, support for the development of activities.</p> <p>Results: 900 rehabilitated operators, 140 bodies members of the network, 7 Regions, 2,300 dwellings renovated in 2018 by the Builders' Compagnons. (See the example of implementation in Droptown)</p>
<p>Winnow platforms - "sustainable mobility for all"</p> <p>Programme led by the Winnow association co-funded by the European Social Fund and through CEE scheme.</p> <p>Objective: Enable persons in professional insertion to get an access to sustainable mobility.</p> <p>Approach: Partnerships with local authorities and other actors to develop local platforms offering tailored support by a Mobility Advisor.</p> <p>Approach: "Mobility Test" questionnaire;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need assessment and identification of suitable solutions; 2. Setting up an individualised Mobility Pathway. <p>Results: 30 platforms in 10 Regions, 14,380 persons supported in 2019, target 30,000 persons over 2019-2020.</p> <p>(See also the video on Winnow platform)</p>	<p>Action "When housing makes you sick" (Gronovo)</p> <p>Support provided on housing & health (2015-2019)</p> <p>Action carried out by the Regional Eco-Energy Centre of Aquitaine (CECA) in partnership with the Council on Health and Indoor Environment (COHIE) of the French Ministry of the Ecological and Solidarity Transition, the Abbe Pierre Foundation CARAT (Regional and Vocational Health), the Regional Health Agency and the Regional Delegation for Environmental Planning and Housing (DRSAU/Nouvelle-Aquitaine).</p> <p>Objective: Protect the health of people suffering from energy poverty-related illnesses by improving the housing quality.</p> <p>Approach: Support on health and building aspects with site visits for households identified by CMEI, recommendations, help with financial set up and renovation projects, and follow-up one year after to assess changes in quality of life and health.</p> <p>Results: 6 persons supported over 2015-2019 (83 dwellings). Reduction of health impact of housing after the works confirmed by an evaluation.</p>

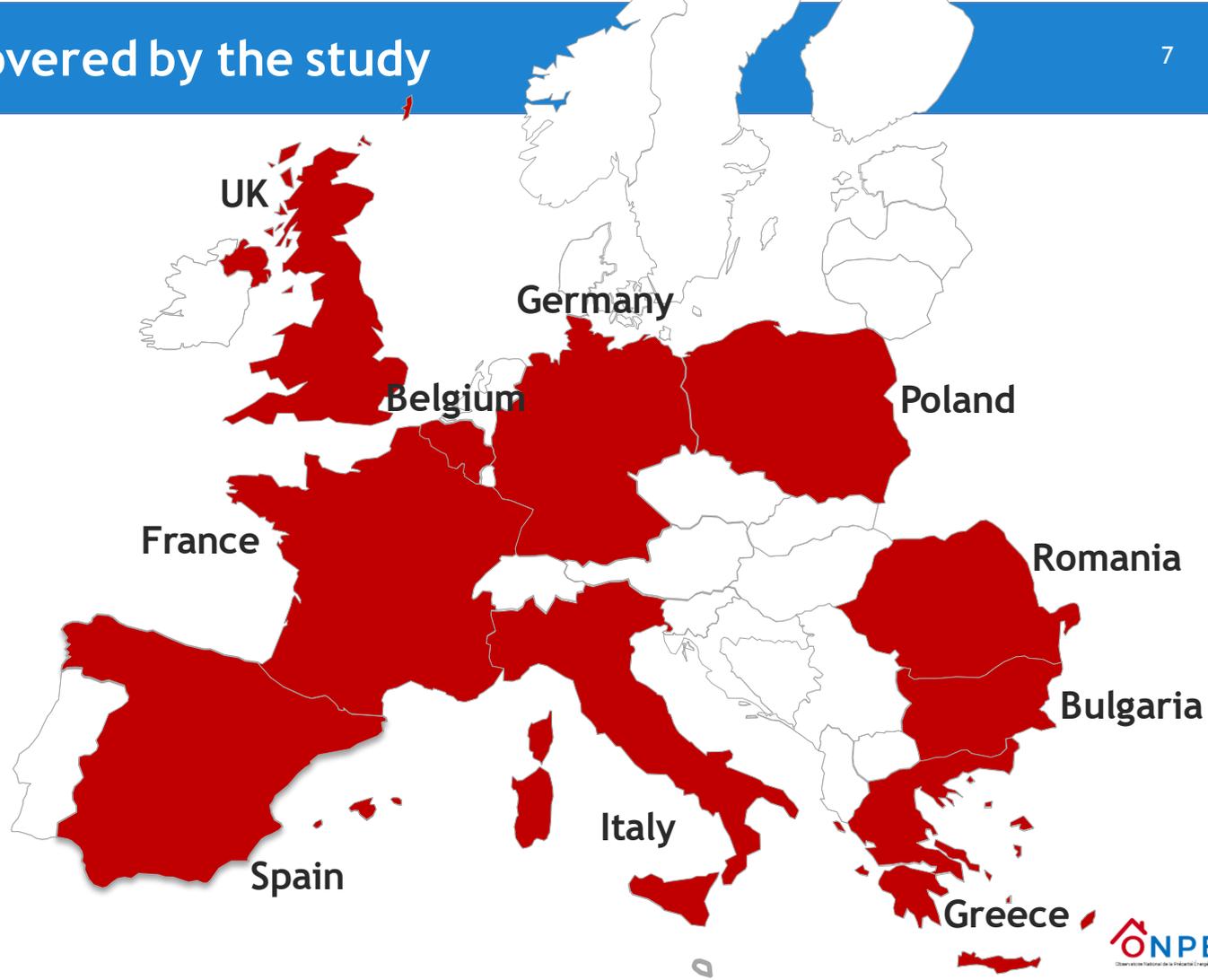
See also the [ONPE Action Factbooks](#), or the [annual update](#) of the RAPPEL network.

- Information sources (see also the documentation area)
- **Ministry of Ecological Transition**
- **ONPE** - [By annual dashboard](#) and mapping tool [GEOD](#)
- **ADEME** pages on energy poverty in housing and mobility
- **RAPPEL network**



The 10 countries covered by the study

- ✓ 29 policy measures about energy access
- ✓ 26 policy measures about energy efficiency
- ✓ More than 70 good practices or other initiatives



General precaution:

- Data collection completed by the end of 2020

Precautions on statistics:

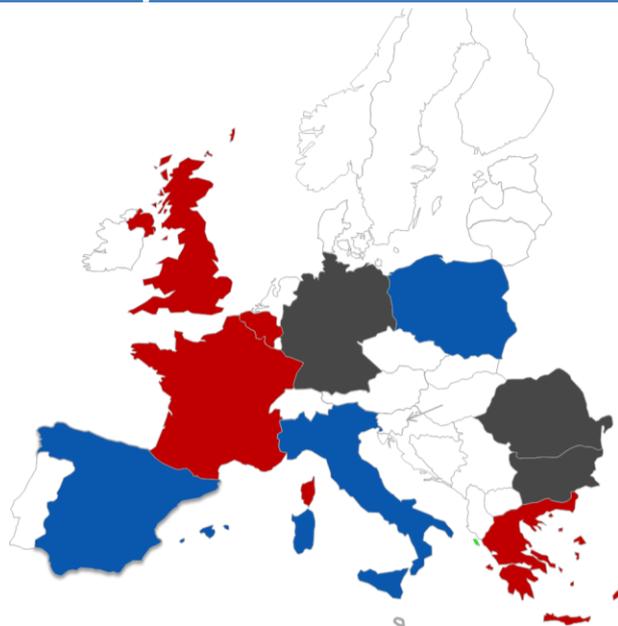
- Average values enable an overview, but hide the values' distribution and therefore the differences within each country
- Analysis focused on relative indicators (in %), the trends in absolute values (number of households) may differ
- Starting point for a benchmark, but need to cross indicators and other more specific data to understand better the causes of energy poverty
- Difficulty to relate the trends in the indicators to the policy measures in place

Precautions on policy measures:

- Non-exhaustive list: selection of main policy measures related to energy poverty (list checked with national experts)

Context and governance

National approaches

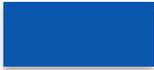


 Energy poverty addressed as **one of the aspects of tackling poverty** (in general)

Bulgaria

Germany

Romania

 **Intermediate approach**
(recognition of the issue, but no dedicated measure for EE)

Italy

Poland

Spain

 **Comprehensive approach**
(with dedicated measures for EE)

Belgium

France

Greece

UK

Measures about energy access in all countries

Few energy efficiency policy measures dedicated to tackling energy poverty



No definition

Belgium

Bulgaria

Germany



Definition under discussion / adoption

Greece

Poland



De facto definition (without legal status)

Italy

Romania



Official definition

France

Spain

UK

Definitions often related to the concept of “basic needs”,
with variations according to the countries

National policy measures

Overview of the main policy measures (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

Type of “social dimension” » in the energy efficiency policy measures	Germany	Belgium*	Bulgaria	Spain	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Romania	UK*
Measures without social criteria but deemed affordable to all			1				2	1	1	2
Measures with social criteria	1	2		2	1	2		1		
Measures dedicated to tackle energy poverty	1	1			2	1		1		3

- *EE measures = responsibility of the Regions in Belgium and devolved Nations in UK, which may explain the larger number of measures in these countries.*

Example of measure with social criteria: grant rate depending on income level

Example of dedicated measure: eligibility criteria including income thresholds or eligibility to social benefits

- Few national measures on electrical appliances
- Schemes offering “low-cost” actions (e.g., LED, multi-socket with a switch, caulking doors and windows) rather in local initiatives (national measures focused on interventions with higher cost)
- Major issue of targeting in the recovery plans (cf. Just Transition)
Renovation works often out of reach for the most vulnerable households who need tailored support and aids

Belgium: complementary measures adapted to different profiles / income levels

- 1) Grant for major renovation works with very progressive rates (factor 1 to 6) + 0%-rate loan accessible to low-income households (social credit institutions), to cover the remaining cost
- 2) Grant of max. 1,365€ for low-income households for “intermediate” works
- 3) Scheme providing the most vulnerable households with tailored support

UK: Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), obligation of renovation works in the private-rented sector

Landlords owning dwellings in energy class F or G must do energy efficiency works of at least €4,100. From 2020, this applies even when the tenants stay in place.

Poland: Stop Smog programme

National call for projects for municipalities to implement local programmes 70% funded by the State and aimed at helping low-income households living in individual houses heated with coal, to replace the heating systems and insulate the house.

Good practices

Overview of the good practices (cf. page 4) or other initiatives (cf. page 3) included in the factsheets

Type of operation / main objective	Germany	Belgium	Bulgaria	Spain	France	Greece	Italy	Poland	Romania	UK
Aids for energy access	2					1	1			1
Identifying and providing support			1		3					
Advice	2	1	1+1	1						3
Renovation of dwellings		3		1	4		2	1	1	1
Replacing / improving heating systems			1			1				
Low-cost energy saving actions		1	2	1						
Replacing / improving electrical appliances		1								
Mobility					2					
RES						1	2	1		
Networks of actors		1	1	1	1				1	1
Research	1	1		1		2	1	1+1	2	1
Training	1	1		1			1			1

Figures in black and italic = local implementation of European projects

Conclusions

- **Eurostat data** = starting point to compare countries
But **detailed analyses are needed** to understand the differences (especially differences in trends)
- **Added value of national observatories** to centralise and disseminate information, and foster experience sharing
- More and more data and knowledge on energy poverty, but still a **lack of data about policy measures and their results**
- Only ONPE provides annual data on policy measures and their results
- Lack of data on policy results + energy poverty being multi-dimensional
= **very difficult to distinguish the impact of policies** in the trends in energy poverty indicators

- Most often the first measures taken to tackle energy poverty are about revenues or direct aids to help with energy expenses
- Challenge for energy efficiency measures to tackle energy poverty: **renovation works are often out of reach for vulnerable households**
 - Usefulness of dedicated schemes OR to uprate enough the financial incentives
- Implementing the “**Energy Efficiency First**” principle = considering **long-term** and **multiple benefits** (e.g., reducing vulnerability to increase in energy prices, reducing fossil fuel imports...)
- Energy poverty = complex issue → good practice = combining approaches or measures to provide a **comprehensive** support
- Identify the relevant elements for a strategy to tackle energy: **avoid blind spots**

- Targeting of incentives for energy efficiency less developed than targeting of aids for energy access
- Different targeting strategies according to the measures / objectives:
 - Tackle regressive effects (choice of a broad scope of “low” income) OR Focus on the most vulnerable (criteria more complex to set and use)
 - “Universal” measures with specific provisions (e.g., different grant rates) OR Dedicated measures (cf. eligibility criteria)
- Policy measures in frequent evolution, adapted according to the experience, policy priorities and changes in the context (→ factsheets = pictures at a given time)
- Very likely **adaptations/developments to come** to face the socio-economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Current priority at EU level set on renovation, but also increasing inequities



Brochure

Context and schemes to tackle energy poverty in Europe

<https://onpe.org/ailleurs/europe/fiches-pays>

10 country factsheet

Europe factsheet

Documentation annex

Explanatory note

Study done by IEECP and ENERDATA for ONPE and ADEME