

Getting to grips with energy poverty

*From EU to Cities to Home* – EAPN & CECODHAS

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Energy Poverty  
from the point of view of  
People experiencing poverty

Jeanine Vandecruys  
Working Group « Energy and Poverty »

EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

RESEAU EUROPEEN DES ASSOCIATIONS

DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PAUVRETE

ET L'EXCLUSION SOCIALE

[www.eapn.org](http://www.eapn.org)



# Working Group “Energy and Poverty” ?

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- An initiative of the NGO  
Institute for Community Development  
of the Province of Antwerp / Belgium  
+ Associations of people experiencing poverty
- Started in 1998
- No cut off during winter
- Minimum energy delivery in Belgium
- Follow up of energy policy and practice

# Method of the Working Group

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- Sharing experiences of people experiencing poverty
- Inviting other stakeholders
- Recommendations for energy policy
  - Ministers
  - Public bodies
  - Suppliers

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# Recommendations at European level

# 1. Energy... a fundamental right

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- Energy: condition for participation in society
- Cut off = social exclusion

## 2. Guaranteed Minimum Delivery

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- Rising prices of basic material +
- Certain political decisions at national and European level
  - pressure on budgets of low income families
  - higher risk of (energy) poverty
- Guaranteed minimum delivery is crucial !
- No cuts off because of poverty !

### 3. Public Service Obligations

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- Public Service Obligations = necessary correction for “competition” and “free market policy”
- European Charter for the protection of energy consumers:
  - recognise also other sources than electricity and gas (ex.: fuel oil).

## 4. Member States monitoring social aspects of energy policy

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Apply social measures automatically

= the only way to reach the most vulnerable consumers



## 5. Sustainable solutions

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Improve housing quality !

- High energy bills because of low housing quality (no insulation, damp, windows & doors)
- Financial help for low income owners

## 6. Evaluation & Sanctions

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- Sanctions by member states:  
for non application of
  - guaranteed minimum delivery
  - social maximum prices
  
- Evaluation of measures leading to limited supply :  
→ with involvement of people experiencing poverty

## 7. Invoices

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- Clear and easy to read invoices
  - About the functioning of energy market
  - About rights of energy consumers
  - Easy accessible and with personal contact  
(not only by telephone or internet !)
    - By companies
    - By authorities

## 8. Information

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- Clear and easy to read information
  - About the functioning of energy market
  - About rights of energy consumers
  - Easy accessible and with personal contact  
(not only by telephone or internet !)
    - By companies
    - By authorities

## 9. Ombudsman

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An independent ombudsman for energy in every Member State:

- Mediation in conflicts between customer and provider
- Free from charge
- Fast procedures
- Companies have to pay their own mistakes
- Monitoring the functioning of companies v-à-v customers
- Inventory of complaints
  - recommendations to policy authorities

## 10. Representation of consumers



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Representation of people experiencing poverty in energy dialogue

- Financial and administrative barriers for membership of consumer organisations
- Experience of specific problems of people experiencing poverty (budget meters, social max prices, cutt of)
- Looking for adapted ways of representation of people experiencing poverty



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Thank you for listening

[www.energieenarmoede.net](http://www.energieenarmoede.net)

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