



# EnergyMeasures

Tailored measures supporting energy vulnerable households

ISSUE 1 DECEMBER 2021

## Newsletter

### Project background

Between 50 and 125 million people are at risk of energy poverty in the EU. Efforts to address this issue require a suite of measures informed by participatory and inclusive approaches.

**EnergyMeasures** is a project funded by the European Commission to help households improve energy consumption through behavior change. The project is implemented in eight European countries (BE, BG, IE, MK, NL, PL, UK, AT) and 12 partner organisations are dedicated to tackling energy poverty through direct household involvement, complemented and informed by innovative policy and practical measures.



8

European Countries



12

Project Partners



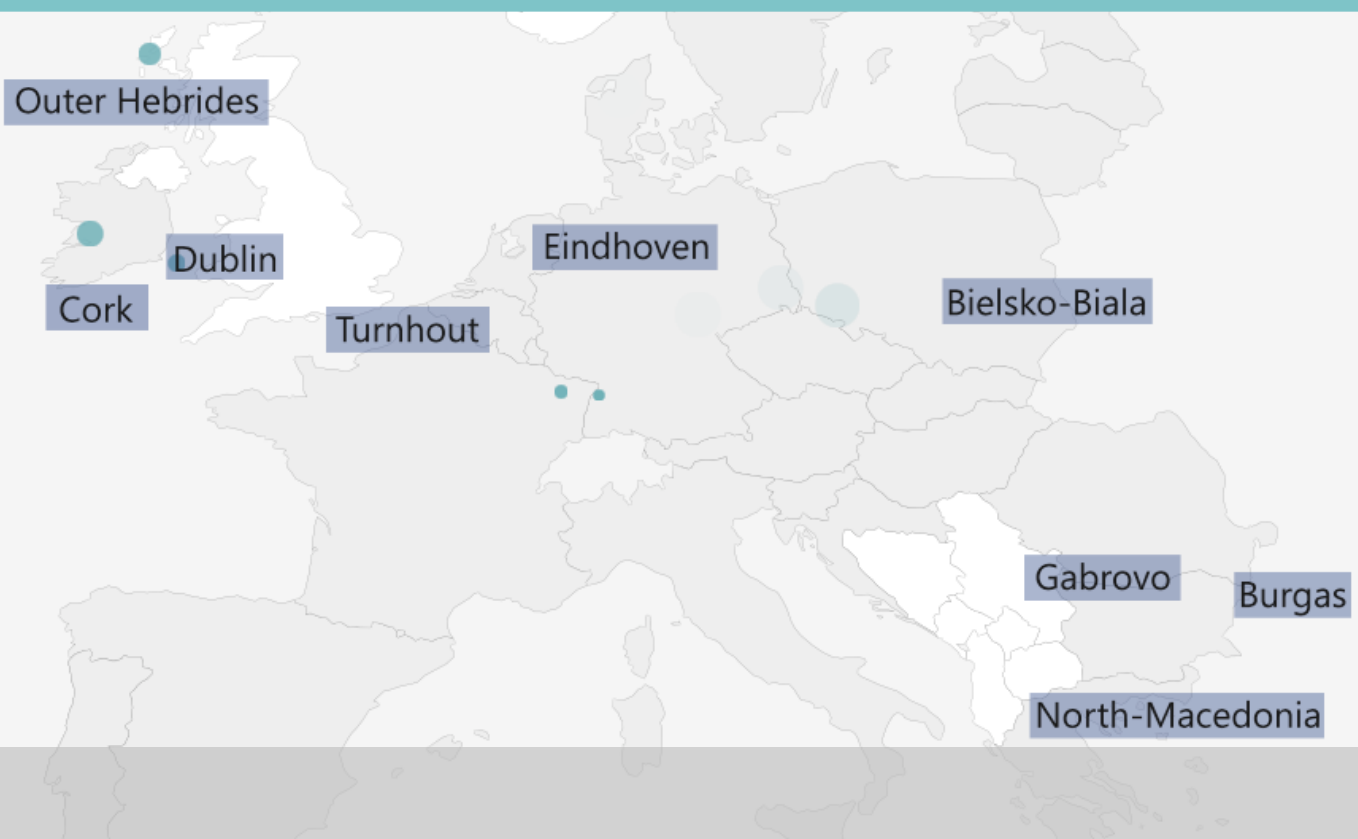
36

Projects Months



1

Major Problem To Tackle





# COUNTRY PROFILES

## THE STATE OF ENERGY POVERTY

### Facts and figures on energy poverty in North Macedonia

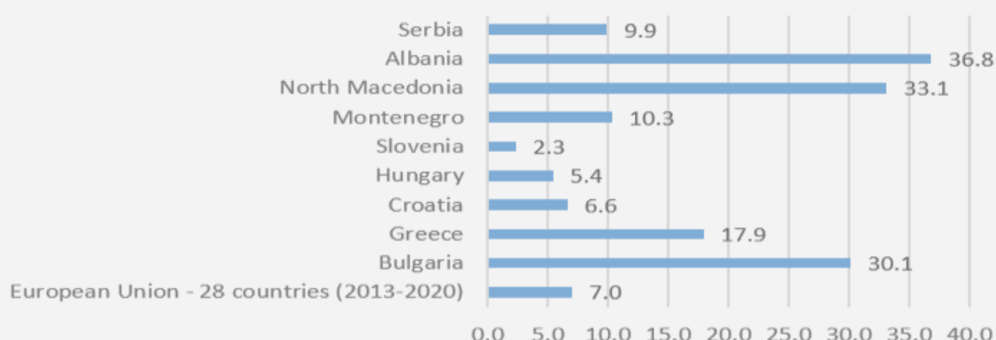
According to the State Statistical Office (2019), 21.6% of the population in North Macedonia live in poverty. According to the World Bank (2020), approximately **4.4% of the population live under the international poverty line (USD 1.90)**.

Figures from Eurostat (2019) show that energy poverty in North Macedonia is one of the highest in the region and far beyond the EU average: **33.1% of the population are unable to keep the home adequately warm** (compared to 7.3% of EU). Neither energy poverty, nor an appropriate vulnerable group of consumers is defined by the authorities. National policies to mitigate energy poverty in North Macedonia so far consist of direct subsidies of energy consumption ignoring the root causes of energy poverty.

In North Macedonia residential electricity prices are well below the EU average level<sup>1</sup>. The **electricity prices were recently increased by 7.4%**, but it didn't have an impact on the overall price of electricity as the **tax rate on electricity was reduced from the 18% tariff to the 5% tariff**.

<sup>1</sup> C. Vasquez, R. Begolli, L. Van Gelder, and S. Shukla, "Western Balkans: Directions for the Energy Sector," pp. 1-57, 2018.

Population unable to keep home adequately warm by poverty status, 2019, % of population



North Macedonia has declared a "state of crisis" and authorised the authorities to intervene financially to help electricity suppliers buy power from abroad.

On November 9, 2021 the government of North Macedonia has declared a one-month energy-crises. The reason for this declaration lies with the reduced domestic production capacities and increased global (electricity) prices. Up to now restrictive measures have not been put in place.



# COUNTRY PROFILES

## THE STATE OF ENERGY POVERTY

### Energy poverty: the current situation in Austria

A new [study by Statistics Austria](#) (2021) on energy poverty provides insights into the current situation in Austria.

#### **2.4% of all households cannot afford to keep their homes warm**

About 94,000 households in Austria cannot afford to keep their home **adequately** warm. This is according to the study by Statistik Austria based on the 2019 survey on income and living conditions (EU-SILC). At the same time, in 2018

115,500 households with comparatively low incomes had to pay above-average energy costs.

#### **Smaller and less educated households are more likely unable to afford heating costs**

The study shows that energy poverty takes different forms, but tends to occur in the same population groups. For example, energy-poor households are more likely to be found in lower educational strata. In addition, one-person households, households in multi-apartment buildings, and households living in smaller and often rented flats in old buildings are more affected.

#### **Exemption from green electricity costs helps energy-poor households**

Informing and raising awareness about energy saving is an important step in helping energy-poor households. Therefore, information about the possibility to be exempted from green electricity costs is crucial to fight energy poverty in Austria.



#### **Energy providers do not adhere to price guarantees**

According to reports by the Austrian Consumer Protection Association, rising prices on the energy market are causing suppliers to shorten the terms of contracts and force people out of existing ones. The argument: wholesale fuel prices do no longer correlate with consumer prices. This is causing problems for numerous households. ([Link](#))





# COUNTRY PROFILES

## THE STATE OF ENERGY POVERTY

### Fuel poverty in Scotland and the Island communities

In 2019 the Scottish Parliament passed the **Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) Act**, which sets statutory targets for reducing fuel poverty. The overarching target is that in the year 2040, no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty and in any case no more than 5% of households are fuel poor, no more than 1% are in extreme fuel poverty.

The **Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act 2019** sets equally ambitious targets to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045, with interim targets requiring a 75% reduction by 2030, and 90% by 2040. These two Acts now form the basis for action at a Scotland level on fuel poverty.

The new **Fuel Poverty Strategy**, laid before the Scottish Parliament in early November 2021 sets out the Scottish Government strategic direction to both reduce fuel poverty and emissions in collaboration, linked to the Heat and Buildings Strategy. Local delivery is seen as the mechanism to achieve tackling fuel poverty, but it remains to be seen the limits of funding this aspiration. There is only scant mention of behaviour change, that Scottish government fund through a national Home Energy Scotland (HES) advice service. Also, outreach capacity is minimal.

In the Outer Hebrides outreach services are delivered by **Tighean Innse Gall** (TIG). The need for such services was demonstrated in the production of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Nov. 2021) which relied upon the work of TIG to identify services, delivery and indeed the report itself.



#### Facts and figures about fuel poverty in Scotland and the Island communities:

In Scotland 24.6% of homes (Scottish House Condition Survey 2019) are in fuel poverty with 12.4% in extreme fuel poverty. In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, these numbers are significantly higher, with the Outer Hebrides suffering the highest levels of fuel poverty at 43% and extreme fuel poverty at 26%.

**TIGHEAN  
INNSE GALL**





# WORK PACKAGES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS

## WP 1: Planning and preparatory work

WP1 designates the planning and preparation work package for **EnergyMeasures** activities, led by **University College Cork**. This includes the successful completion of four key deliverables (D1.1, D1.2, D1.3, D1.4) that involve developing a deeper understanding of multistakeholder engagement in addition to assessing deliberating on the different institutional contexts in each of the partner countries, and strategies for household engagement of targeted segments of energy poor in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**D1.1** reviews current best practices, academic discourse, and new thinking to select the most appropriate methods to identify energy poor households for the planned engagements in the project's different locations.

**D1.2** provides an overview of energy-related behaviour concepts and theories, and analyses the methods used in similar initiatives to **EnergyMeasures** to propose an approach to integrate behavioural change methods with the deployment of low-cost energy measures.

**D1.3** collects diverse perspectives from citizens in local communities in the focal countries about their experiences when accessing institutional support to reduce energy vulnerability.

And finally, **D1.4** provides a review of relevant EU and national policies that affect energy vulnerability in the participating countries. These deliverables will be available on the project's website shortly.





# WORK PACKAGES

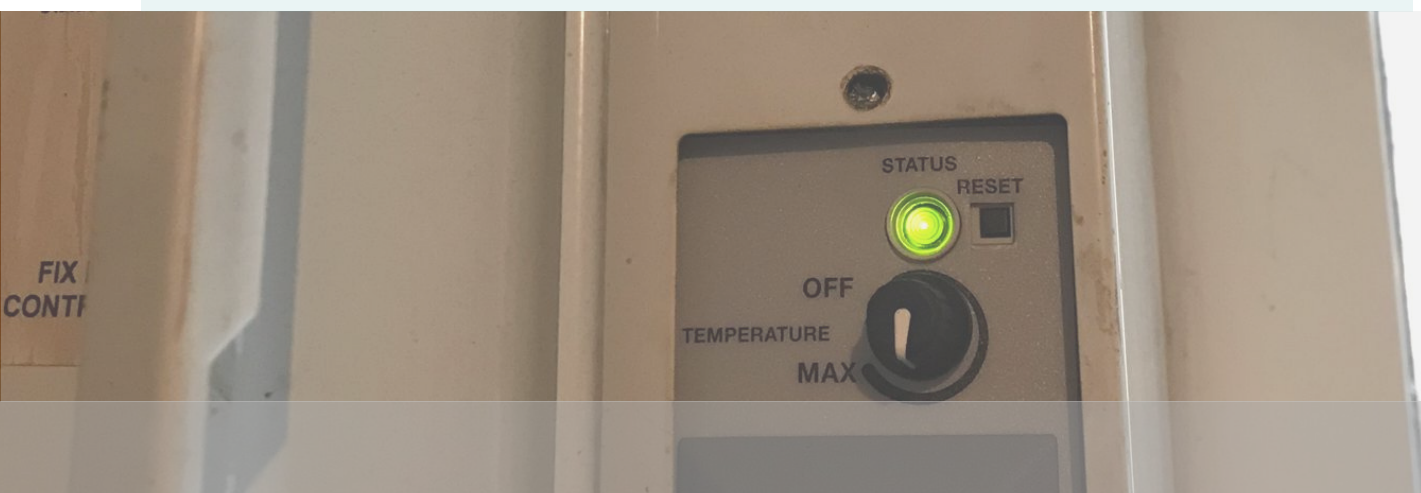
AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS

## WP 2: Household energy engagement programmes realisation

The efforts in WP2 aim to engage energy-vulnerable householders in the focal countries. Project partners work with households to learn about participants' relationship with energy to help to jointly **identify the necessary behaviour changes and low-cost measures that can help householders address their energy vulnerability** and live in a more comfortable space. These engagements not only consider the potential energy savings according to the dwelling physical attributes, but also **take into account the social dimension of the lived experience of energy**.

Leveraging from the outputs of WP1, each partner has developed a WP2 implementation plan to describe how energy-vulnerable households will be engaged within their individual, country-specific context. The plans include an overview of the target socio-demographic groups, the process in which these groups will be recruited, and the procedures to be adopted in the actual household visitations.

The household engagements were planned to start from March 2021. However, these plans were impacted by the Covid-19 related restrictions that remained in place for the first half of 2021. As a result, the WP was restructured, and engagements started earlier this fall along with the 'reopening' of society as the vaccination programme progressed and the pandemic threat lessened. So far, project partners have engaged nearly 250 households.





# WORK PACKAGES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS

## WP 3: Policy and Practice Innovation

Work package 3 of the **EnergyMeasures** project is about policy and practice innovation. It aims at innovation in several ways, yet with an overarching aim: (help) deliver effective energy poverty alleviation services which are also sustainable in the longer term. With the partners, work package leader DuneWorks will **identify innovative elements in the household engagements** (WP2 household energy engagement programmes realisation). But it will also **engage with external innovative initiatives and stakeholders, and hold workshops to co-develop propositions and business/organisational models.**

In a working session with all partners (Nov 16th), first ideas have been discussed regarding initiatives that are interesting to engage with. More working sessions will follow and for next physical project meeting a train-the-trainer workshop is planned, to support partners in conducting business modelling workshops in their respective countries. Next, DuneWorks will translate outcomes of all WPs into recommendations – an agenda for policy renewal, informed by citizens' and practitioners' views.

And as a special addition to WP3, University College Cork will set up its own (maintenance and technical) staff volunteer program to deliver energy poverty alleviation services in the community.







# WORK PACKAGES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

## WP 4: Impact quantification

Does the meter reading offer enough proof?

The aim of Work Package 4 is to monitor and quantify the effects of the project. Given the multi-faceted nature of the energy poverty challenge and the objectives of the project, there are a number of different impacts to measure.

Quantitatively, we measure reduction of the energy consumption during the project to compare with an average consumption and see the effect of the applied energy measures.

We are now working with the partners to establish a uniform measurement structure, even though each partner has its own method of working; ranging from low budget energy monitoring, own CRM data system, online smart surveys to on-site meter reading.

Monitoring is not easy: data on the use of coal, wood and fuel oil is not readily available, the energy data from previous years is often blocked by the DSO and last but not least COVID-19 related restrictions are making home visits very challenging.

Qualitatively, we ask the residents whether they have been able to change their habits as a result of the tips and explanations we provide during the home visits. Reducing energy consumption must not come at the expense of comfort. During the home visits (during the span of one year) we are giving advice to households on issues such as: how to use the thermostat, how to ventilate, but also on which energy supplier to choose. Through a carefully designed interview structure, we engage in a conversation with the residents to determine together the potential areas they want to focus on, the potential effect of the proposed habit change and an evaluation on the likelihood in maintaining the chosen behaviour change measures.

Food for thought | We are measuring reduction in kWh, while at the same time energy prices are rising dramatically across Europe.



# WORK PACKAGES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

## WP 5: Synthesis and replication

The leader of WP5 is **EcoEnergy**, supported by University College Cork and all project partners, to ensure the sustainable continuation of the **EnergyMeasures** action and their replication in communities outside the project's direct scope of impact.

Even though the activities will officially start in August 2022, the key components of the work are already clear, including:

- **A deep dive into the social dimension:** intersections between energy use, socio-economic privilege and gender
- **Knowledge capture:** experience of both energy poor households, and the organisations that work to support them
- **Understanding the multi-level institutional context:** addressing EU, national, and local levels and focusing on the various policy domains relevant to energy poverty
- **Co-creating user-centred business models** focusing on the needs of the at-risk communities, governance arrangements, and policy initiatives
- **Replicating 'best practice' approaches** to engaging energy poor citizens on energy-related behavioural change

First insights from the field work, data collection and policy advocacy supported by the project are already being presented at key international events.





# WORK PACKAGES

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

## WP 6: Communication, dissemination and exploitation

The leader of the work package is **Oikoplus**. Since the project started in September 2020, Oikoplus KG has managed to achieve multiple results in terms of communication and dissemination elements.

Oikoplus is continuously working on the creation of presentation and promotional materials to be used by the consortium. These materials include:

- Roll-up banner template
- Flyers
- Presentation templates
- Canva graphics for social media use
- Clickable animated vector graphics
- Bi-annual newsletter
- Promotion video for household engagements
- National landing pages for all project countries

The creation of content for the blog and for social media represents an ongoing task. **Project-related content is regularly published via Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.**







# PARTNER PROFILE

WHO'S BEHIND ENERGY MEASURES?

## DuneWorks, Netherlands



Not too long ago, we saw huge ambitions to transform a vulnerable neighbourhood into the most sustainable neighbourhood getting stranded. Policy actors did not lack ambition, but what was missing was alignment with the residents and their needs. So, none of the zero-energy ambitions materialised – not even solar panels. Yet, instead something better happened. Based on action-research with residents, renovation propositions were developed that addressed residential needs; that offered choices; in an inclusive process; and with transparency about the sharing of costs and benefits.

**DuneWorks** (2010) translates between research and (policy) practice and the other way around, preferably in co-creative settings. Our area of work: sustainability transitions. We are six practice-oriented social scientists working from an environmental justice perspective (recognition of diversity; procedural and distributive justice; with attention to strengthening capabilities).

Energy poverty is increasing, energy transition policies run the risk of excluding those citizens that need support most. **EnergyMeasures** allows us to work with others to counter these trends.

Sylvia Breukers, DuneWorks





# FOR INFORMATION

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 894759