

The Renovation Wave must deliver on its commitment to tackle energy poverty

Brussel, 22 November 2021

Dear Commissioner Simson,

As environmental NGOs, trade unions, social justice groups and civil society actors, we urge you to deliver on the European Commission's commitment to alleviate energy poverty and provide deep renovations to over 35 million households as outlined in [the Renovation Wave strategy](#) last year.

As you are aware [over 50 million Europeans currently live in energy poverty](#), having to choose between heating their homes and having food on the table. This number is set to skyrocket in light of the current gas crisis this winter. [Europe's inefficient and unhealthy housing stock](#) is a significant root cause of energy poverty and our overconsumption of energy. With damp, mouldy housing contributing to a catastrophic public health burden of [over €194 billion](#) and linked to [over 100,000 premature deaths per year](#). This is a tragedy which we have a responsibility to remedy. With the EU Green Deal, we now have the opportunity to provide the necessary regulation, funding and technical assistance **to deliver deep renovation programmes prioritising energy poor households across Europe.**

The upcoming revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) is pivotal to reach this goal. If designed well, it has the potential to boost renovations in the residential sector, improve the living conditions for millions of Europeans as well as meeting climate targets and creating local, good quality jobs. **However, this is not a given.** The EPBD has been reluctant to step into people's homes in the past, and yet, this is exactly where the European Green Deal can demonstrate the most tangible benefits to people's everyday lives. This is an opportunity that cannot be missed for social acceptability of the Green Deal, and to deliver on the promise it will leave no one behind.

Energy efficiency is now identified as [the most effective solution](#) to tackle energy poverty as well as to reduce carbon emissions. [A new study](#) by Cambridge Econometrics shows a reduction in household energy bills by over €400 per year after a deep renovation. Considering the average energy bill of the EU27 was €1,500 in 2019, this represents a reduction of 25% on average. In addition, to tackle the climate crisis and achieve the Renovation Wave's objective of [deep renovating 35 million homes](#), this would reduce heating demand by 60% by 2030, meaning a reduction in household gas consumption equivalent to [25 of the world's largest LNG gas carriers](#) each year.

This would also reap huge economic benefits. A [Eurofound](#) study claims if all necessary renovations were achieved in the residential sector at once, the cost to EU economies would be repaid [within 18 months](#) by projected savings in lower public health burden and social outcomes. In other words, for every €3 invested, €2 would be paid back in one year. Furthermore, increasing energy efficiency by 40% could lead to annual savings of 88bn euros in 2030, according to [an in-house European Parliament study](#).

The 'win-win-win' benefits of delivering deep renovations in the residential sector cannot be underestimated for the climate, social equality or our economy. However, this requires ambitious legislation to ensure that those who need renovations the most feel the rewards of the Renovation Wave.

As a diverse range of stakeholders from 45 civil society organisations, we have come together to call on the Commission to deliver a robust EPBD which takes active steps to tackle energy poverty, to provide safe housing for millions and deliver on climate ambition to stay below 1.5°C.

We must ensure that worst performing buildings and energy poor households are prioritised, hence we call on you to **introduce mandatory Minimum Energy Performance Standards across the residential sector with strong social safeguards**. Attached, we have prepared a [briefing](#) with 7 recommendations on how to deliver mandatory MEPS sustainably to cut carbon emissions, alleviate energy poverty and provide a greener, more socially fair Europe.

We strongly urge the Commission to:

1. Tackle unsafe and inefficient housing as a priority in the EPBD
2. Introduce mandatory Minimum Energy Performance Standards across the residential sector with strong social safeguards. Member States must be required to implement and monitor the impact at national level
3. Ensure the allocation of substantial EU funds for renovations, prioritising low-income households, those facing energy poverty and those living in unfit housing.
4. Provide technical assistance to Member States to develop and design effective low-income renovation programmes
5. Support the establishment of one-stop-shops, which streamline assistance for both renovations and renewable installations; with specific schemes for low income & vulnerable households
6. Outline stronger protections for tenants to ensure housing affordability and overcome landlord-tenant split-incentive
7. Ensure an ambitious deep renovation standard to support low-income households in the transition to Zero Energy Buildings

In light of the 'winter of disconnections' that energy poor households will face, it would be a tragedy for the Renovation Wave, which offered a beacon of hope to millions of Europeans in unhealthy and dangerous buildings, to fall short. We hope you deliver on this commitment in the weeks to come and we remain at your disposal to provide suggestions on how to do so.

We would also like to remind you that the fight against energy poverty starts by ensuring decent wages & conditions for workers so that they can afford their basic energy needs. Unfortunately, jobs in the construction sector are too often characterized by low wages, zero-hour contracts, informal work and poor working conditions. In parallel to the EPBD revision, the Commission should take measures to ensure that new jobs created by the renovation wave will be [quality jobs](#) with decent living conditions to reduce inequalities.

These recommendations come from allies and coalition members of the [Right to Energy coalition](#). This group unites environmental NGOs, trade unions, anti-poverty groups, social housing providers, health organisations and energy cooperatives across Europe to tackle energy poverty. We work together to provide the most socially and environmentally resilient solutions in the EU Green Deal



Signed by 45 civil society organisations across Europe

Right to Energy Coalition members	Allies and partners
Friends of the Earth Europe European Anti Poverty Network Greenpeace European Trade Union Confederation Housing Europe Energy Cities European Climate Foundation European Public Service Union COFACE Families Europe REScoop EU ECODES Ecoserveis FEANTSA Droit a l'energie Habitat for Humanity Bulgaria Enginyeria Sense Fronteres Fuel Poverty Action CanalEnergia European Federation of Building and Woodworkers Geres RES Foundation RWADE Aliança contra la Pobresa Energètica	European Environmental Bureau EEB E3G Climate Alliance Jacques Delors Institute Global 2000 Transnational Institute FOCUS Friends of the Earth Slovenia Amigos de la tierra Women Engage for a Common Future Friends of the Earth Ireland CCOO Workers Commission Spain Deutsche Umwelthilfe DOOR Siltnamis Abbe Pierre Foundation Canarias Archipelago Sostenible Observatorio Ciudad Renovons Fundación Renovables Fundación de Isadora Duncan ABD Fundacion Asociación de Ciencias Ambientales Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas - Eduardo Torroja Institute of Construction Science



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