



## European leaders: end energy poverty now!

Dear European leaders,

Europe today is facing a twin challenge: rising inequality and a dangerously warming world. Linked to both, energy poverty – due to low incomes, high energy prices and low-quality housing stock – is on the rise.

**Energy poverty affects up to one in four people in Europe<sup>1</sup>.** With rising prices, arrears in utility bills have tripled across the continent since the 2008 financial crisis<sup>2</sup>. 80 million Europeans<sup>3</sup> are living in inadequate, unhealthy homes, impossible to keep warm or cool, exposing households to extreme weather and causing an estimated 100,000 deaths<sup>4</sup> every year, as well as contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and worsened mental health.

Energy poverty and inadequate housing harm in winter as well as summer. During the winter, 50 million<sup>5</sup> people cannot keep their homes warm. In summer, the problem of sweltering homes is set to amplify with climate change. Fifteen years ago, 2003's deadly heat wave killed 70,000 people, and deaths due to more intense heat-waves could increase 50-fold by the end of the century (Forzieri, 2017). Southern European countries are on the frontline, with an increasing number of households reporting they cannot afford to comfortably keep cool in summer.

Access to energy is a basic human right and should be protected as such. European legislation has required EU Member States to act on energy poverty since 2009; a decade later, less than a third of governments have even officially recognised the problem.

**It's time to combat energy poverty, inadequate homes, and climate change together.** We, a European coalition of trade unions, anti-poverty organisations, health organisations, family associations, community energy projects, social housing providers, and environmental NGOs, call upon governments to ensure the right to energy for all in the 2030 EU energy package.

A first step is to recognise and define energy poverty in the Governance Regulation of the Energy Union. Governments must also take concrete action. To make homes part of the solution, they must initiate massive renovation programmes across the continent with an ambitious Energy Efficiency Directive. In the Renewable Energy Directive, they must support local community energy projects that reduce energy poverty on the ground. Finally, to protect Europeans unable to pay their bills and ensure access to energy, Member States should ban disconnections for low-income and vulnerable households and ensure a minimum quantity of energy to all Europeans in the Electricity Market Directive.

The clock is ticking, and the window of opportunity is closing. What will your legacy be?  
End energy poverty now!

---

<sup>1</sup> Tackling Fuel Poverty in Europe, EPEE Consortium - IEE Study, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Eurostat

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat

<sup>4</sup> Braubach M. et al (2011), Environmental burden of disease associated with inadequate housing, WHO

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat

## Signatures

- 350.org
- Action for Breast Cancer Foundation (Malta)
- Alianza contra la pobreza energética (Spain)
- Amigos de la Tierra (Spain)
- Anti Poverty Forum Malta (Malta)
- Asociación de Ciencias Ambientales (Spain)
- Attac (France)
- CILAP EAPN Italia
- Climáximo (Portugal)
- CLER (France)
- COFACE (Europe)
- Coopérnico (Portugal)
- Corporate Europe Observatory (Europe)
- Deutsche Umwelthilfe (Germany)
- Društvo za oblikovanje održivog razvoja (DOOR) (Croatia)
- EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network) (Europe)
- EAPN Cyprus
- EAPN Portugal Portugal
- EAPN Romania
- Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)
- EnACT
- EnerGent (Belgium)
- Energy Action Scotland (UK)
- Energy Efficient Wekerle (Hungary)
- Energiaklub (Hungary)
- Énergie Solidaire (France)
- Energy Cities (Europe)
- European Federation of Public Service Unions – EPSU (Europe)
- European Trade Union Confederation – ETUC (Europe)
- FEANTSA (Europe)
- Focus Association for Sustainable Development (Slovenia)
- FoE-CEPA (Slovakia)
- Fondation Abbé Pierre (France)
- Fondation pour la Nature et l’Homme (France)
- Friends of the Earth England Wales and Northern Ireland (UK)
- Friends of the Earth Europe
- Friends of the Earth Ireland
- Friends of the Earth Malta
- Friends of the Earth Scotland
- Fuel Poverty Action (UK)
- Fuel Poverty Working Group of the Connecta Energia social innovation Network (Spain)
- Fundación de Familias Monoparentales Isadora Duncan (Spain)
- Greenpeace EU (Europe)
- Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)
- Housing Europe (Europe)
- Initiative Rénovons ! (France)
- Inter-Environnement Wallonie (Belgium)
- ISDE (International Society of Doctors for Environment) Italy
- ISDE (International Society of Doctors for Environment) EU
- IFSW Europe (Europe)
- Just a Change (Portugal)
- Legambiente (Italy)
- Maan ystävät ry (Friends of the Earth Finland)
- Medact (UK)
- Milieudefensie (The Netherlands)
- Municipal Services Project (International)
- Novapolis Association (Romania)
- Plataforma por un nuevo modelo energético (Spain)
- Réseau Environnement Santé (France)
- REScoop.eu (Europe)
- Réseau Wallon Pour L'Accès Durable À L'Énergie – RWADE (Belgium)

- SOS-Energies Futures (France)
- TERRA Mileniul III Foundation (Romania)
- Transition Wekerle (Hungary)
- Transnational Institute – TNI (The Netherlands)
- The Salvation Army EU (Europe)
- WECF International
- Za Zemiata (Bulgaria)