

POWERING CITIZENS

Empowering energy citizenship among energy-poor people through joint actions

POLICY MEMO

CURRENT SITUATION

- Energy poverty remains a persistent challenge across Europe and the Western Balkans
- Many households cannot afford adequate heating and cooling, affecting well-being
- Existing policy frameworks face implementation gaps and limited effectiveness
- Support measures are often fragmented, underfunded, and poorly targeted
- Structural barriers, including outdated buildings and limited investments, worsen the issue
- A clear gap persists between policy commitments and real-life outcomes



GERMANY

- No official definition or integrated monitoring framework for energy poverty
- Structural issues in buildings (heating dependence, efficiency gaps)
- Limited long-term targeted support mechanisms

ITALY

- Strong framework but targets not fully achieved
- Monitoring advanced but not fully multidimensional
- Renovation schemes benefit higher-income groups
- Financial support (social bonuses) insufficient vs rising costs

GREECE

- Energy poverty addressed indirectly, no fully integrated strategy
- Monitoring tools not well linked to policy (NECP)
- Old and inefficient housing stock
- Financial support insufficient and not well targeted

NETHERLANDS

- No binding energy poverty targets in policy
- Monitoring exists but lacks clear benchmarks
- Split incentive problem (landlords vs tenants)
- Complex access to financial support; reliance on short-term measures

ALBANIA

- No clear definition of energy poverty and weak policy framework
- Limited and short-term financial support (no structural funding)
- Weak institutional capacity and coordination

KOSOVO

- No legal definition of energy poverty and incomplete NECP
- Lack of data systems and targeting mechanisms
- Financial support focused on consumption, not efficiency
- Limited administrative capacity

INSIGHTS FROM ENERGY CAFÉS



ENERGY COSTS & COPING

Households struggle with rising bills and reduce essential energy use

Expand targeted financial relief and social protection



HOUSING & EFFICIENCY

Poor housing conditions drive high energy consumption

Scale up renovation and efficiency programs



INCOME & VULNERABILITY

Vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected

Strengthen income support and targeted protection measures



ACCESS TO SUPPORT

Complex procedures exclude vulnerable groups from benefits

Simplify application processes and eligibility criteria



INFORMATION & AWARENESS

Many households lack knowledge of support schemes

Improve outreach, advisory services, and local support



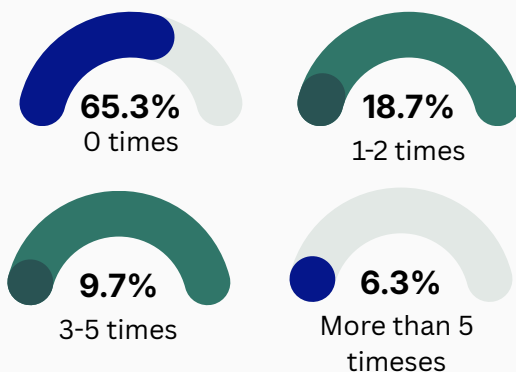
BEHAVIOR & COPING STRATEGIES

Households reduce essential energy use to manage costs

Design policies that reduce the need for harmful coping strategies

ENERGY POVERTY SURVEY IN PARTNER COUNTRIES: KEY INDICATORS AND INSIGHTS

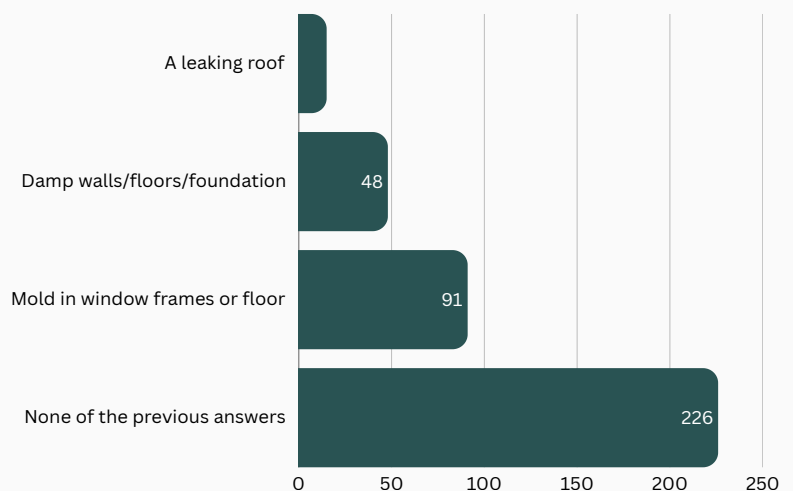
Arrears on utility bills



Over the past five years, have you experienced any delays in paying your energy bills?

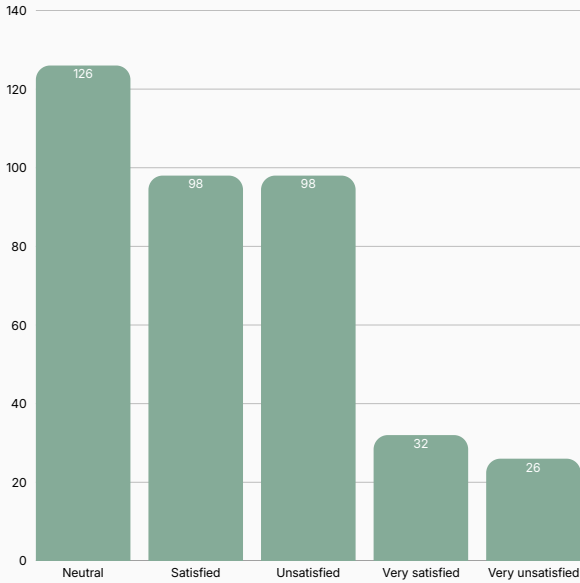
Housing conditions

Problems with your dwelling/accommodation

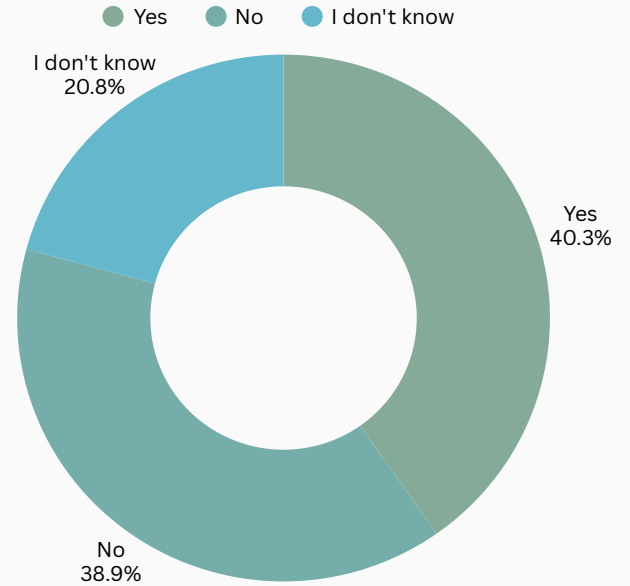


Energy efficiency

How do you evaluate the energy efficiency of your building?

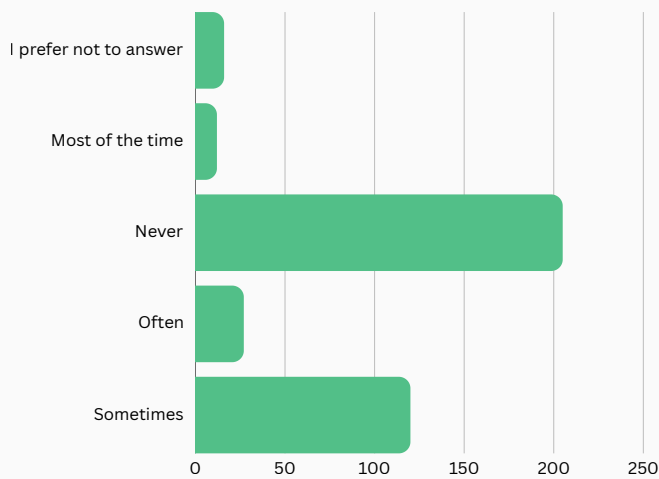


Does your house have thermal insulation?

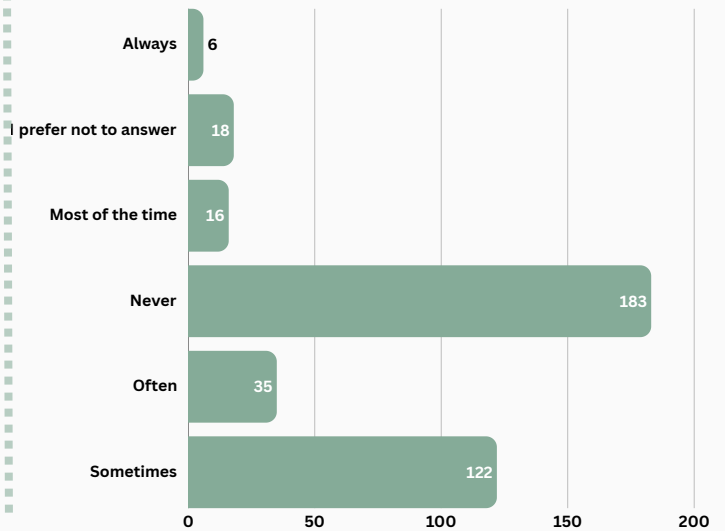


Impact of energy costs on household well-being

Have you struggled to cover essential expenses in the past 5 years?



Have you skipped activities due to energy costs?

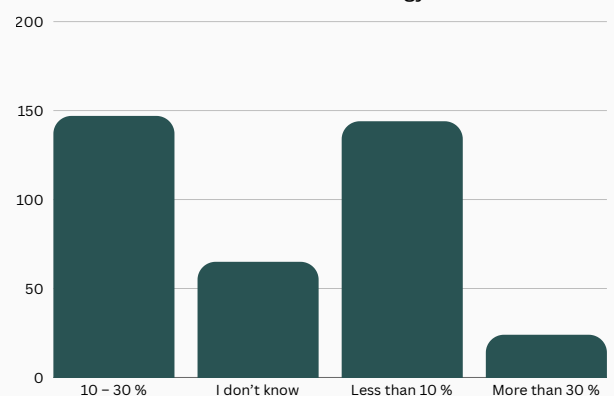


Impact of energy

Family Incomes



Portion of the family's income needed to cover energy bills



RECOMMENDATIONS

01. Strengthen policy frameworks by setting clear NECP targets, improving monitoring, and defining measurable indicators, prioritized in Albania and Kosovo, with further refinement in Greece, Germany, and the Netherlands.

02. Improve monitoring by creating integrated data platforms and Energy Poverty Observatories, adopting multidimensional indicators across all countries, with Albania and Kosovo building dedicated hubs based on international practice.

03. Prioritize inclusive renovation programs for vulnerable households, addressing barriers like the landlord-tenant split despite existing strategies.

04. Strengthen financial support by shifting from short-term subsidies to long-term, targeted investments in energy efficiency and clean energy, especially in Albania and Kosovo.

05. Increase awareness through targeted campaigns and local partnerships to inform vulnerable groups about energy poverty, support schemes, and energy-saving practices