



# Energy poverty and gender

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# What is energy poverty?

On the EU level there is no accepted definition yet. In most of the EU countries (including Slovenia), there is no accepted definition yet.

Definition used in the past in the UK: Energy poverty occurs when a household spends more than 10% of its income on basic energy needs.

Description used by Statistical Office of RS: Energy poverty is a situation when a household is not able to provide a suitable warm apartment (and other energy services) at an acceptable price.

Simplified definition: An energy poor household can hardly afford, or cannot afford basic energy needs (electricity, heating).



# Energy poverty key figures in Europe



**57**  
million

**people** cannot keep their homes warm during winter



**104**  
million

**people** cannot keep their homes comfortable during summer



**52**  
million

**people** face delays in paying their energy bills

Source: EU Energy poverty observatory: [energypoverty.eu](https://energypoverty.eu)

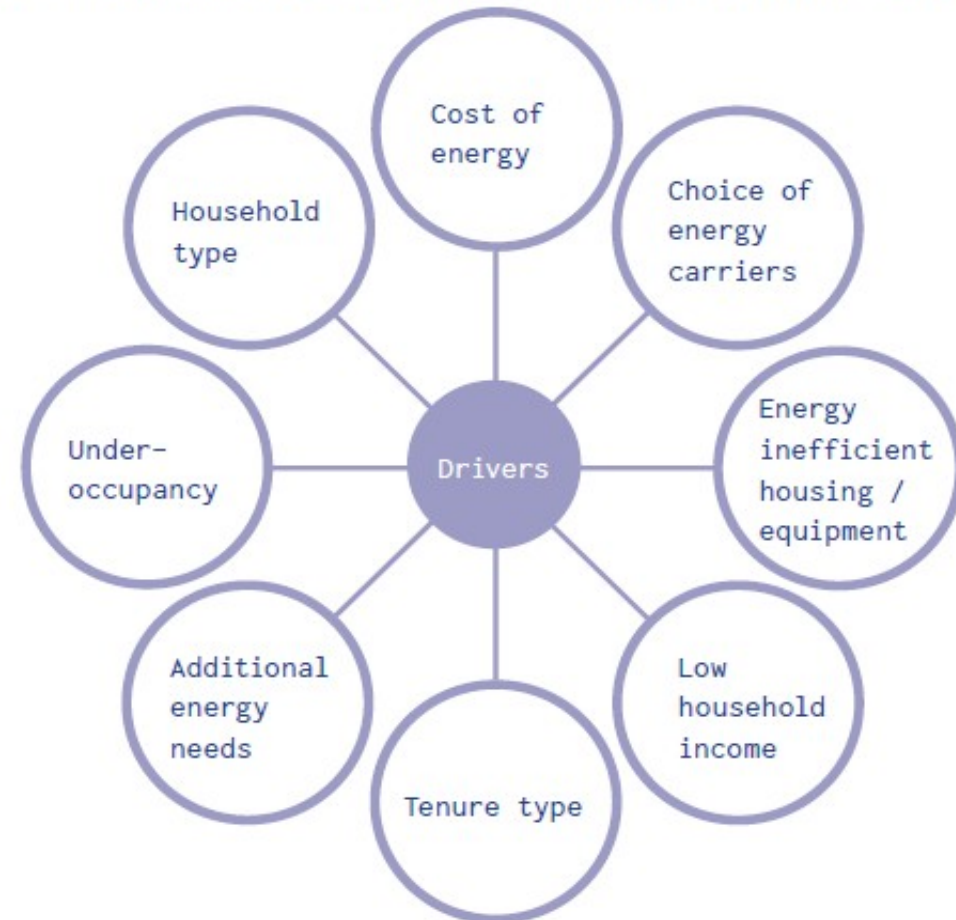


# Causes of energy poverty

Key factors, which are often closely related with each other:

- Low income, which is often linked to general poverty
- High energy prices, including the use of relatively expensive fuel sources (depending on the country energy structure it can be electricity domestic fuel...)
- Poor energy efficiency of a home, e.g. through low levels of insulation and old or inefficient heating systems or appliances

Source: Thomson and Snell, 2016



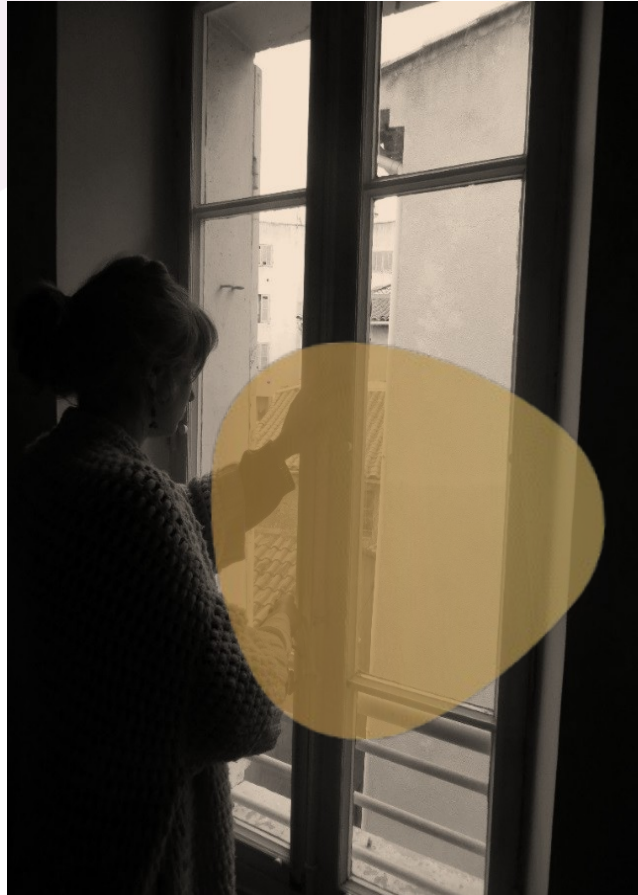
# Consequences of energy poverty

Energy poverty leads to thermal discomfort and affects **health and wellbeing**:

- **Deterioration of the housing conditions**: cold, damp, moisture...;
- **Economic difficulties**: unaffordable bills and debts, choices between food and warmth and the associated stress;
- **Social difficulties**: social isolation, degraded self-esteem...;
- **Health problems**: respiratory and circulatory diseases and conditions such as flu, cold, arthritis and rheumatism, but also mental health problems.



# People affected by energy poverty



People who are most affected by energy poverty are:

- Elderly
- Single parent families
- Unemployed
- Students
- Poor workers
- Women

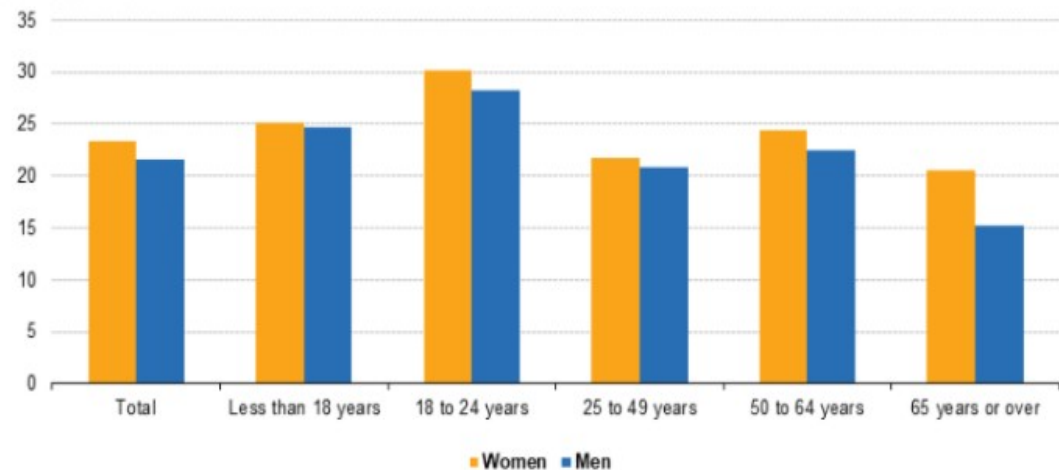
Woman affected by energy poverty - Marseille -  
Photo credit : GERES



# Energy poverty and gender issues (I)

- Women and women-led households are disproportionately affected by energy poverty
- Due to labour division, women tend to spend more time working at home and thus are more exposed to energy poverty and its consequences
- A higher share of women who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion than men

People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by sex and age group, EU-28, 2017  
(% of population)



# Energy poverty and gender issues (II)

- Age: higher share of women among elderly due to longer life expectancy (2015; 83.3 years for women and 77.9 years for men); elderly women more likely to be poor than men if living alone (23% women, 17% man)
- Women are more heat and cold sensitive than men due to physiology (chronic temperature-related discomfort, heat and associated diseases)
- Gender pay gap: difference in earnings between men and women (in 2017, men were paid on average 16% more than women)
- Gender pension gap: elderly women get lower pensions than men; in 2018, their pension was on average 30% lower than that of men

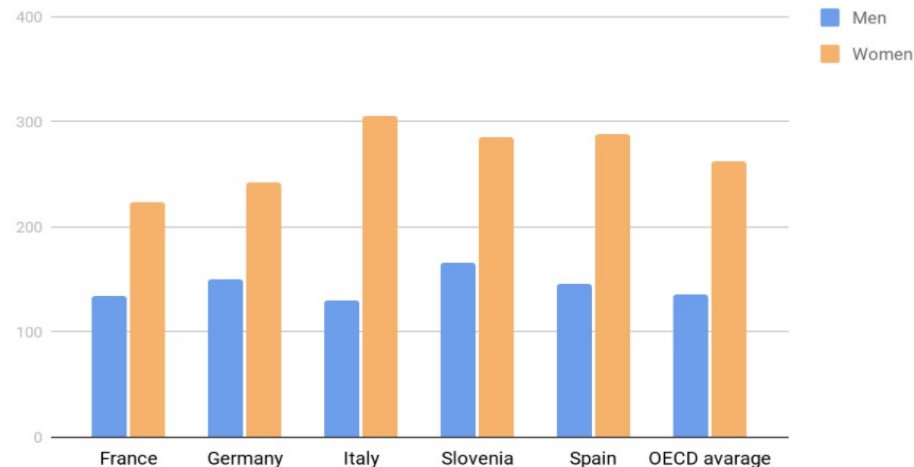




# Energy poverty and gender issues (III)

- Single-parent households: 48 % of lone mothers and 32 % of lone fathers are at risk of poverty or social exclusion; women make up almost 85 % of all one-parent families in the EU; employment rate is 78 % for lone fathers and 69% for lone mothers
- Less time for paid work: Compared to men, women are less likely to work full-time, more likely to be employed in lower-paid occupations, and less likely to progress in their careers

Time spent in unpaid work, by sex in minutes (stats.oecd.org)



# Energy poverty and gender

Women and women-led households are disproportionately affected by energy poverty. This is due to at least 4 different dimensions:

- Physiological dimension: women are more heat and cold sensitive than men
- Economic dimension: gender pay gap, gender pension gap, less career advancement opportunities
- Health dimension: women are more vulnerable to winter mortality and mental stress
- Social/cultural dimension: disproportionate share of care work, for which women spend more time at home; often responsible for household energy consumption, but do not have an equal voice in decisions about energy

<https://www.empowermed.eu/resource/energy-poverty-and-gender-facts-and-arguments/>



# Women are strong actors



- ‘Gender myths’ portray women in energy poverty as vulnerable, helpless or oppressed; yet they are strong autonomous agents of their lives and of change, especially in acting against energy poverty
- Raising awareness that women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty; at least: collection of sex-disaggregated data for EP, engendering EP indicators and EP definition with gender/intersectional aspects
- Give priority to women, affected by energy poverty, in accessing EU’s climate and energy measures, as well as include women in governance of just transitions
- Women’s engagement in EmpowerMed: gender-just communication, respecting women’s schedules, gender-disaggregated data, respecting gender equality principles when providing policy advice





# EmpowerMed

*Empowering women to take action against energy poverty in the Mediterranean*





# EmpowerMed objectives



Door

Overall objective of **EmpowerMed** is to contribute to **energy poverty alleviation and health improvement** of people affected by energy poverty in Mediterranean countries, with a particular focus on women, through:

- implementing practical solutions to empower over **10,000** people affected by energy poverty in the Mediterranean
- assessing the impacts of those measures to formulate local, national and EU policy recommendations
- promoting policy solutions for tackling energy poverty at local, national and EU level among **220** decision-makers, **560** social actors, **100** utilities, **180** health experts and **100** energy poverty experts.



# Activities

**Mobilisation  
of key local  
actors**

**Capacity  
building of  
key actors  
and  
partners**

**Household  
energy  
visits**

**Collective  
assemblies**

**Analysis and  
design of  
recommendations  
for tackling energy  
poverty**

**Advocacy of  
gender-just  
energy  
poverty policy  
solutions**

**«Do It  
Yourself»  
workshops**

**Health  
workshops**



THANK YOU!



EmpowerMed

[www.empowermed.eu](http://www.empowermed.eu)



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