



EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK



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Dear Mrs Van Brempt,

EPSU, the European Federation of Public Service Unions and EAPN, the European Antipoverty Network, have worked on many occasions to bring the issue of energy poverty and its impact on low-income households to the attention of the European Commission, Member States and the European Parliament. The European Parliament and including yourself have played a key role in putting the issue on the European agenda. We kindly ask you to do so again with regard to the European Commission's so-called **Energy roadmap 2050**. This roadmap gives an overview of the challenges, if we are to make the transition to a more sustainable energy system (and as seen by the Commission). One of the points the Communication highlights is the issue of energy poverty and impact of increasing electricity prices for low-income households. The Communication says

In the section on public acceptance in paragraph 3.4

*"This task will increase in importance with the energy transformation being shaped in reality. A well functioning internal market and energy efficiency measures are particularly important to consumers. Vulnerable consumers are best protected from energy poverty through a full implementation by Member States of the existing EU energy legislation and use of innovative energy efficiency solutions. **As energy poverty is one of the sources of poverty in Europe, the social aspects of energy pricing should be reflected in the energy policy of Member States**"*

And from the conclusions The way forward:

6. Energy prices need to better reflect costs, notably of the new investments needed throughout the energy system. The earlier prices reflect costs, the easier the transformation will be in the long run. *Special attention should be paid for the most vulnerable groups, for which coping with the energy system transformation will be challenging. Specific measures should be defined at national and local levels to avoid energy poverty*

The Commission proposals are not very specific and this despite the fact that energy poverty is potentially a growing problem. In the UK the number of households suffering from energy poverty has increased for example. In 2000, the UK government passed the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act, followed by the UK Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2001.^[1] At that time, about 1.6million households were estimated to suffer

^[1] <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/31/contents>

from fuel poverty. This placed legal obligations on the government to take all vulnerable households (the vast majority of fuel poor households, out of fuel poverty by 2010 and take all consumers out of this category by 2016. Far from achieving this, the number of fuel poor households in the UK had risen to more than 5 million with a forecast the number could reach about 8.5 million by 2016 – about a third of households (Steve Thomas, University of Greenwich, forthcoming 2012) EAPN has drawn attention to the issue in its Report on the 2012 NRPs : <http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2012-eapn-nrp-report-en.pdf>. **An EU Worth Defending – Beyond Austerity to Social Investment and Inclusive Growth – EAPN analysis of the 2012 National Reform Programmes (NRPs) and National Social Reports (NSRs)**, July 2012,:

According to EAPN' assessment, "*Whilst some Member States are taking actions, the lack of a coherent integrated strategy, that tackles adequate income, prices and energy efficiency, undermines effectiveness (p.31)*. Therefore, it is all the more urgent that the European Commission ensures a due monitoring of the implementation of the third energy package requiring Member States to set up national energy action plans containing measures for combating energy poverty and links it to the NRP, NSR process.

We are therefore suggesting to propose an Amendment for the position of the European Parliament on this particular issue.

The European Parliament

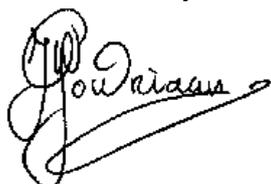
- Agrees with the European Commission that energy poverty is a problem in the European Union; notes therefore with concern that electricity and other energy prices will increase, having a negative impact on low-income households; demands the European Commission to give an overview of the measures taken in Member States to address energy poverty in the context of the transition and the energy roadmap 2050 by end 2013; and instructs the Commission to ask Member States to integrate this in the overall approaches to address poverty in the EU.

Justification

- The Commission rightly draws attention to the problem of energy poverty in the EU. This was also addressed by the European Economic and Social Committee in its Opinion TEN/459 Involving civil society in a European Energy Community, 18 January 2012

We would be pleased if you can support this amendment which is in line with previous positions of the Parliament and other approaches such as of the EESC. If you have questions or suggestions to make it stronger and more effective, please do not hesitate.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU Deputy General Secretary



Finton Farrell
Director EAPN