European fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency

EPEE project

www.fuel-poverty.org
Project summary

EPEE project aims to improve energy efficiency of buildings for low-income people who often live in uncomfortable dwellings and cannot improve them.

EPEE project aims to facilitate the application of the European directive on the energy performance of buildings by focusing on low-income people.

The study is led in France (coordinator), Belgium, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

Expected results

- Comparison of the situation in the different Partners’ Country
- Evaluation of best practices
- Identification of new mechanisms
- Implementation of experimentation
Background

Fuel poverty describes the situation of people who are not able to warm their house properly.

Why the situation is more or more important: Causes and consequences of fuel poverty

- Main causes are
  - Bad quality of buildings
  - Energy prices’ increase

What are the consequences

- Main consequences are on:
  - Health (physical and psychological)
  - Quality of buildings stock
  - over-indebtedness
  - Climate Change
Objectives and main steps

Objectives

• Identify and characterise fuel poverty situation in the partners’ Country
• Identify the main actors (National and local) involved in fuel poverty,
• Analyse the existing practices to tackle fuel poverty
• Define new mechanisms to reduce fuel poverty
• Implement a experimentation in each partner’s country

Main steps

• January 2008: characterisation of the fuel poverty in the different Country
• November 2008: diffusion of a guideline
• Spring 2009: diffusion of national guide for local actors
• Summer 2009: results of the experimentations
Expected results

- Diagnosis of causes and consequences of fuel poverty
- Evaluation of fuel poverty in partners’ Country
- Existing mechanisms to tackle Fuel Poverty
- Actors involved in Fuel Poverty
- Analyse of best practices
- Elaboration of new mechanisms
- Publication of an European recommendations guide
- Publication of national guides for local actors
- Implementation of local pilot actions programmes
First outcomes: A shared report

Necessity to act to reduce fuel poverty
- Nearby 1 in 7 households at risk of poverty

Similar causes
- Too heavy loads
- Poor Housing
- Increase of energy prices

Same consequences
- On health
  - Physics
  - Psychological
- On the buildings stock
- On the debt
- On Climate Change
But various situations (1/3)

More or less accurate definitions
- UK: “Normal” Energy expenses > 10% of revenues
- France: Identification of unpaid energy bills

Different poverty thresholds
- From 7200 to 8900 € / year / person
- 60% of median income
Various situations (2/3)

Thermal different regulations

- Dates of implementation
  - From 1973-74 in Italy, France and United Kingdom
  - 1980 for Spain
  - In 1999 for the Brussels region

- In terms of requirements

Proportion of buildings built before the thermal regulation

More than 60% of the dwellings built after thermal regulation

Diagram showing the proportion of buildings built before the thermal regulation in different regions: Spain, France, Flanders, Brussels, Walloon, Italy, United Kingdom, with Belgium highlighted.
Energy prices

- Everywhere on the rise, from 2005 to 2007
  - Gas price increased on average by 18%
  - Electricity price by 14%
- But
  - With variations in the order of over 30% coverage

Status for opening energy markets a wide range
General situation in 5 countries: Belgium, France, Italy

Belgium:
- a considerable degree of social support and consumer protection but a lack of the political awareness needed to develop an effective response

France: (2 and 5 M of households)
- a good and coherent infrastructure to tackle different manifestations of fuel poverty but policy is not well coordinated

Italy:
- The profile of fuel poverty is increasing as an issue of social concern.
General situation in 5 countries: Spain, UK

Spain:
- Fuel poverty is not recognised at any significant level. No real remedial infrastructure because there is no perception of fuel poverty as a compelling social problem.

United Kingdom: 4.5 M fuel-poor households, (around 17%)
- A greatest experience and understanding of fuel poverty issues
- An objective measure of what constitutes fuel poverty
- The problem is accurately quantified
Form emergency to prevention
Some best practices (1/2)

Energy costs
- Social tariffs
- FSE - unpaid energy bill in France
- Premium for the tank in France or Winter Fuel Payment in Great Britain
- Prepaid meters in Great Britain

Improvement of housing
- Programs for rehabilitation of private dwellings (ANAH)
- Social funds to help Energy efficiency works (FSATME) in France
- Auto-assisted rehabilitation in France
- Warm Front, Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC), Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT), Decent Homes Standard in Great Britain
From emergency to prevention
Best practices (2/2)

Increase of Revenue

- Accompanying household to collect aid

Training

- Social workers and professionals and artisans
What will be done now?

Epee project will:

• Publish a European recommendation guide for policy makers
• Publish a practical guide to help local authorities to launch project to tackle fuel poverty
• Test some new mechanisms in the framework of national experimentations
What could be done at the European level? (1/4)

To have a common definition

- A consistent minimum definition at EU level would guarantee an effect on national Fuel Poverty programs across all Member States
  
 『 Fuel poverty as a household’s difficulty, sometimes even inability; to adequately heat its dwelling, at a fair price 』

- To reach a common position on what constitutes ‘vulnerability’

- Even if each member state can refine the common definition according to own context
What could be done at the European level? (2/4)

To have a legislative framework

- To use existing EU legal documents as a good starting point
- And to go further with by completing existing regulation
  - To involve Fuel Poverty policies in the future new Directive concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity
  - To impose higher standards for social housing in Directive on energy performance of Buildings
  - To extend regulation to all existing buildings and not only those that are subject to major renovation
    - etc
- To propose new regulations
  - Related to fuel poverty and health
  - Energy consumers’ charter
  - Reporting on how member states fulfil their obligations energy consumers
    - Ofgem already reports on progress in meeting its social and environmental duties
What could be done at the European level? (3/4)

- To have a consistent diagnosis
  - To analyse in detail the current fuel poverty situation

- To improve quality of European data by including new variables

- To create a Working group on fuel poverty data
  - To report on National and European data, energy tariffs and social impact of energy supply, based on
    - On a common set on indicators through the different European Countries

Effective fuel poverty programmes require reliable information on the scale and distribution of fuel poverty
What could be done at the European level? (4/4)

To create a fuel poverty Special Interest Group

- To gather all stakeholders from different sectors
  - Consumer protection
  - Energy,
  - Health,
  - Housing,
  - Others

- To share a common reference resource such as a European Fuel poverty watch

- To guarantee the co-ordination between countries, making sure that the regulations are being applied
Publication of 5 guides dedicated to local actors
Experimentation of local action plans

Presently, the experimentation of local actions plan (WP6) is implemented in the different Countries, the territories have been chosen:

- Belgium: Courcelles and Mons two cities of the Wallony
- France: a district of Paris named Flandres
- Italy: South part of the province of Bergamo (Lombardy Region)
- Spain: Ciutat Meridiana near Barcelona
- UK: Calderdale (West Yorkshire)

For all these territories, the needs have been analysed and the definition and the implementation of activities programmes are on process.
Partners & Contact

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- ECOSERVEIS (Barcelona)

United Kingdom
- NEA (National Energy Action)