

 **EURO CITIES** Social Affairs Forum digital edition

Five virtual workshops will run in parallel breakout sessions. The topics of the workshops were selected to reflect the pressing social challenges in our cities and to feed into the current policy debates at EU level. Participants need to choose the workshop they wish to attend as part of the event registration.

Workshop 1: Decent working conditions for digital platforms workers, Monday, 9 Nov, 14.40 – 16.00 [connect here](#)

Background

Digital platform work is paid work that is intermediated or facilitated by an online platform and carried out on-location or digitally (e.g. Uber, HelloFresh, Amazon, etc.). Platform work has been on the rise in Europe as part of the global trend of digitalisation of the world of work. Especially in cities and metropolitan areas where the service economy is the major employment sector, platform work is strongly represented. The main challenge lies in the unclear employment status of platform workers, aggravating the risk for undeclared work. Many studies have been conducted in recent years by ILO, Eurofound and the European Commission showing that platform workers are at higher risk than average workers to face poor working conditions and limited access to social protection (both in terms of formal and effective coverage) because they usually are not structurally informed or consulted, not represented, and not covered by collective agreements. The COVID-19 crisis shed a light on the key role of platform workers in our society as they provide delivery services (e.g. food and courier) but also highlighted their precarious conditions and the risks they face to their health and labour protection.

Policy context

Platform work is high on the public and policy agenda in the EU. In 2016, the Commission [Communication on a European agenda on collaborative platform](#) underlined that platform work blurs the boundaries between consumers and providers and between employees and the self-employed, challenging regulatory frameworks. In 2017, the European Parliament called for action in its resolutions on the European Pillar of Social Rights and on [online platforms and the digital single market](#). Recent EU policy initiatives, such as the [Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions](#) apply to some platform workers and increase transparency. In November 2019, the Council adopted the [Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed](#), including reference to platform workers. On 10 March 2020, the European Commission published a [Communication on A New Industrial Strategy for Europe](#). This strategy mentions that new forms of work must come with modern and improved forms of protections, including for those working on online platforms. Therefore, the European Commission made the commitment to publish an Initiative on improving the working conditions for platform workers.

The European Commission announced in its [work programme for 2021](#) that it will present a legislative initiative to improve the working conditions of people working in the platform economy. The expected focus is to ensure transparent, dignified, fair and predictable working conditions and adequate social protection for platform workers.

Objectives

With this workshop, we want to bring together policy-makers and practitioners from cities across Europe to:

- discuss the situation and working conditions of digital platform workers
- identify how cities can ensure decent working conditions for digital platform workers either through regulations, policy and projects
- exchange on the role cities can play to improve working conditions of digital platform workers
- discuss policy recommendation to feed into EU policy debate on this topic

Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples from their cities. Workshops will start with a brief introduction to the topic followed by short presentations of two good practices from cities. Participants will then exchange know-how based on the guiding questions. The key messages from each workshop will be shared with all SAF members as well as the EU institutional stakeholders to feed into the current EU policy debates.

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| 14.40 – 14.45 | Short introduction to the workshop by Silvia Ganzerla , Policy Director, Eurocities |
| 14.45 – 15.00 | Learn from Berlin: Alexander Fischer , State Secretary for Labour and Social Services, sharing Berlin's experience in the field of platform economy and the outcomes of the European conference on platform work in September |
| 15.00 – 15.15 | Learn from Bologna: Marco Lombardo , Deputy Mayor, sharing Bologna's 'Charter of fundamental rights for digital platform workers in the urban context' |
| 15.15 – 15.45 | Workshop discussion guided by the questions for reflection |
| 15.45 – 15.55 | EU policy updates by Nikolay Stoyanov , from the Employment Strategy Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission |
| 15.55 – 16.00 | Wrap up of key messages from the workshop |

Questions for discussion in workshop 1

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions:

- What is the role of your city with regards to ensuring decent working conditions for digital platform workers?
- What examples of policies, projects or practices do you have in your city relating to improving the working conditions for digital platform workers?
- What should the EU and member states do to ensure decent working conditions for digital platform workers?

Useful resources:

- European Parliament (2020). 'Briefing on Platform economy and precarious work: Mitigating risks': [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652721/IPOL_BRI\(2020\)652721_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652721/IPOL_BRI(2020)652721_EN.pdf)
- European Commission (2020). 'Study to gather evidence on the working conditions of platform workers': <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en &pubId=8280>
- Eurofound (2019), 'Platform work: Maximising the potential while safeguarding standards?', www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef19045en.pdf

Workshop 2: Upskilling, reskilling and skills matching at local level, Monday, 9 Nov, 14.40 – 16.00 [connect here](#)

Background

Addressing the massive impact of COVID-19 on employment, especially on the low-skilled, youth and people with migrant background, while moving forward towards energy transition requires an unprecedented investment in skills. This energy transition will require structural changes, since the coal sector alone employs over 238,000 people across the EU. Moving to a green economy opens up new opportunities to create new businesses in new sectors (e.g. renewable energy, clean technologies) and generate new, greener jobs. However, some businesses will close, some jobs will disappear and some skills will become obsolete. It is estimated that 160,000 jobs will disappear within the EU over the next 10 years, perhaps even more in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.

A just transition means a pathway for every person in vulnerable sectors to a good new job, the chance to requalify and develop new skills to remain active in the labour market and benefit from the green and digital transitions. To this end, it is key that employment services work together with social services to support people who are at risk of losing their jobs due to obsolete skills. Investing in people and their skills is fundamental to ensuring just transitions through up-skilling and re-skilling policies. In a nutshell, to ensure just transitions, we need to support skills transitions now.

Cities play a key role in assessing and promoting new opportunities for local economy, supporting job creation, investing in skills training and directing the unemployed to the sectors looking for new skills. Good practices from cities show the added value of Local Pacts for Skills that can generate hundreds of quality jobs after skills training of long-term unemployed people. Cities act as catalysts by coordinating efforts of employers, education and training organisations at local level to set up new skills training programmes to match the demand for new skills. Cities work hard to provide online skills training and make access available to everyone. Many cities are investing in innovative local approaches to re-think how to match the offer and demand for new skills.

The current situation has shown the importance of investing in skills and in people's ability to navigate through professional transitions. We now have the opportunity to re-think how to better equip people with new, highly demanded skills to be resilient in a complex and constantly changing labour market. This implies tailored measures for up-skilling, re-skilling and skills matching of the demand and offer of skills, new programmes for education and training for all ages, development of new career paths and roles, as well as enforcing measures for development of competencies for those that are further from the labour markets.

The paradigm-shift in up-skilling and re-skilling needs to be built around resilience of workers, matching the offer and demand for new skills (green, digital, circular) in emerging sectors while ensuring equal access to skills development and a COVID-19 recovery that leaves no one behind.

Policy context

Skills development is at the core of the twin - green and digital – transitions, as well as social-economic recovery in EU. In November 2017, the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) was adopted. In December 2019, the Commission presented the [European Green New Deal](#), one of the main ambitions of EU which dedicates a specific section to education and training of people. It calls for activating schools, training institutions and universities to promote knowledge, skills and attitudes on climate change and sustainable development. In March 2020, the Commission has launched the new [EU Industrial Strategy](#)

focusing on globally competitive, green and digital Europe. One of the main focuses is on the skilling and reskilling of the workers to support the transition to a green economy. Part of the EU skills policy framework, in summer 2020, the Commission has published the new [European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#). Through its 12 actions, it sets ambitious objectives for upskilling and reskilling of people, as well as the life-long learning programmes to support the skills development. As part of the Skills Agenda, the Commission has also proposed a [Pact for Skills](#) as a new engagement and approach to skills. It is designed to address COVID-19 challenges and help deliver the recovery from the crisis, the [EU Industrial Strategy objectives](#) and the green and digital transition. Under the Pact, the industry, public and private employers, social partners, education and training providers and employment agencies will be called to work together on shared vision and actions for the upskilling and reskilling of people. The main guiding principles for the pact are connected to promoting lifelong learning, building strong partnerships, monitoring skills and work against discrimination while ensuring gender equality and equal opportunities.

Objectives

With this workshop, we want to bring together policymakers and practitioners from cities to:

- discuss the upskilling and reskilling programmes in cities and how the coronavirus crisis has impacted the skills demand and offer on the local labour markets
- identify good practices in how cities work on skills development and skills mismatch at local level
- exchange on the role cities can play to ensure the transition to emerging sectors while developing new skills (including green, circular and life skills)
- discuss policy recommendation to feed into EU policy debate on this topic

Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples from their cities. Workshops will start with a brief introduction to the topic followed by short presentations of two good practices from cities. Participants will then exchange know-how based on the guiding questions. The key messages from each workshop will be shared with all SAF members as well as the EU institutional stakeholders to feed into the current EU policy debates.

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| 14.40 – 14.45 | Short introduction to the workshop by Patricia Couti , Policy Advisor, Eurocities |
| 14.45 – 15.00 | Learn from Munich : Munich Employment and Qualification Program, Magdalena Ziolek-Skrzypczak |
| 15.00 – 15.15 | Learn from Vantaa : Urban Growth – Growth and Social investment Pacts for Local Companies (GSIP Vantaa), <i>Kati Myren</i> |
| 15.15 – 15.30 | EU policy update by <i>Julie Fonda</i> , Deputy Head of Unit, Skills and Qualification, DG EMPL, European Commission |
| 15.30 – 15.50 | Workshop discussion guided by the questions for reflection |
| 15.50 – 16.00 | Wrap up of key messages from the workshop |

Questions for discussion

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions that will guide our discussions in the workshop:

- What is the role of your city in matching the skills demand and offer on the local labour market?
- What examples of policies, projects or practices do you have in your city on upskilling, reskilling and skills matching at local level?

- What should the EU and member states do to better equip people with the skills needed to be resilient on changing labour markets?

Useful resources:

- European Commission (2020). 'Communication - European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience': <https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=22832&langId=en>
- European Parliament (2020). 'Draft resolution on the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience': https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/EMPL/RE/2020/10-28/1213281EN.pdf
- European Commission (2020). 'Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027: Resetting education and training for the digital age': <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0624&from=EN>
- European Parliament (2020). 'Draft resolution on shaping digital education policy in EU': https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CULT-PR-658874_EN.pdf
- European Parliament (2020). 'Briefing on Skills and jobs for future labour markets': [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/642385/IPOL_BRI\(2020\)642385_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/642385/IPOL_BRI(2020)642385_EN.pdf)

Workshop 3: Addressing the digital divide

Monday, 9 Nov, 14.40 – 16.00 [connect here](#)

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the trend of digitalisation in European cities. To minimise the virus spread, many cities moved online many public (social) services such as healthcare, employment services and social assistance. While this has contributed to innovative local government solutions in the response to the crisis, it has also created new challenges and widened the digital divide. It has accelerated existing inequalities between those that have access to modern information and communications technology and those that do not, especially affecting children in poverty, families in precarious conditions and the elderly. The digital divide impacts many aspects of daily life during the pandemic, among them home-schooling, teleworking, online access to social services, or telecare and telemedicine. In many cities, households in deprived urban areas are less or not able to make use of digital services to that end, often due to weak, absent, or unaffordable internet connectivity, lack of devices or lower digital literacy and digital skills. Inequalities in acquiring digital skills have become more pronounced and are affecting many already vulnerable groups in our society in different ways.

Moreover, only certain professions can be done remotely. These frequently are in sectors where office-based work is the norm, and that offer better working conditions and pay or greater job security. Where manual labour is required, teleworking is near impossible and has increased precarious and sometimes unsafe working conditions, especially in professions that rely on close human contact (care work, hospitality, construction, food delivery etc.). The digital divide therefore relates to both digital and analogue inequalities.

Cities can play a key role in tackling the digital divide and by making digital skills attainable for all people. One example of this is the EUDIGIT project which explores how cities can become actively involved in reducing the digital divide via policies and an evolution of public services tailored 'with and

for all citizens¹, alongside an improved pattern of communication with them.¹ The project is coordinated by Marseille and counts Rotterdam, Genoa, Varna, Hamburg, and Cluj-Napoca among its partners. The city of Nantes also has a programme for free training vouchers for citizens with which the city aims to reduce local inequalities.² With the vouchers, citizens can learn new digital skills or pay for computer lessons or other technological education.

Policy context

The [digital divide is a topic of concern for EU policy makers](#) and is reflected in a cross-cutting way in various policy initiatives. In the new EU budget, the Commission proposes comprehensive support for building up digital skills as well as support reskilling and upskilling in Europe. This is reflected across several EU funds, among other in the new [Digital Europe Programme](#), which aims to provide specialised training courses and job placements on digital technologies. The [European Social Fund +](#) is another financial instrument which aims to improve the quality, effectiveness and labour market relevance of national education and training systems to support the acquisition of key competences, including digital skills. It will also promote upskilling and reskilling opportunities, placing a particular emphasis on digital skills.

The new [Digital Education Action Plan](#) (2021-2027) has two long-term [strategic priorities](#): fostering a high-performing digital education ecosystem; and enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital age.

The current [Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition](#) contributes to the objectives of both the EU Skills Agenda and the Digital Education Action Plan in bringing together various stakeholders (member states, companies, social partners, non-profit organisations and education providers) to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe. The forthcoming Digital Skills and Jobs Platform will be a one-stop-shop for digital skills trainings and resources in Europe. Presently, information on digital skills intelligence, funding and training opportunities, best practices and certification is fragmented. The Digital Skills and Jobs Platform will display the work of these different actors in a user-friendly manner to facilitate the access and the dissemination of digital skills opportunities.

At the end of September, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution calling for concrete measures to close the digital education gap in Europe](#). The members of Parliament (MEPs) deplored the “severe discrepancies” in learning across the EU during the lockdown, amounting to 32% of pupils in some countries without any access to education for several months. In the [resolution](#), MEPs call for a European Education Area and a Digital Education Action Plan with concrete measures and funding. They also underline the need for a multi-stakeholder and co-creation approach to education policy with local authorities included in both design and delivery.

Objectives

With this workshop, we want to bring together policy-makers and practitioners from cities across Europe to:

¹ European Digital Citizens (EUDIGIT) project : <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/efc-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/7305c272-5eb7-497d-a485-00ac0b27d800>

² The Mayor (2020), “Nantes fights the digital divide with free learning vouchers”: <https://www.themayor.eu/en/nantes-fights-the-digital-divide-with-free-learning-vouchers>

- discuss how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the digital divide in employment, education and access to social services
- identify good practices in how cities are working to tackle the digital divide either through regulation, policy or projects
- exchange on the role cities can play to tackle the digital divide
- discuss policy recommendation to feed into EU policy debate on this topic

Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples from their cities. Workshops will start with a brief introduction to the topic followed by short presentations of two good practices from cities. Participants will then exchange know-how based on the guiding questions. The key messages from each workshop will be shared with all SAF members as well as the EU institutional stakeholders to feed into the current EU policy debates.

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| 14.40 – 14.45 | Short introduction to the workshop by Katharina Bamberg , Policy Advisor, Eurocities |
| 14.45 – 15.05 | Learn the key findings from the survey on digitalising social services, by Julia Robeer , International office and European affairs, Amsterdam |
| 15.05 – 15.50 | Workshop discussion guided by the questions for reflection |
| 15.50 – 16.00 | Wrap up of key messages from the workshop |

Questions for discussion in workshop 3

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions that will guide our discussions in the workshop:

- Which groups of citizens are particularly affected by the digital divide in your city?
- What measures, policies, or projects, is your city putting in place to tackle the digital divide?
- What should the EU and member states do to address the digital divide?

Useful resources:

- European Commission (2020), “Teleworkability and the COVID-19 crisis: a new digital divide?”: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/efc-project-details-page/?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/7305c272-5eb7-497d-a485-00ac0b27d800>
- European Commission (2020), “Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027)”: https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/deap-communication-sept2020_en.pdf
- European Parliament (2020), “European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2020 on the future of European education in the context of COVID-19”: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0282_EN.html
- Santo Milasi, Martina Bisello, John Hurley, Matteo Sostero, Enrique Fernandez-Macias (2020), “The potential for teleworking in Europe and the risk of a new digital divide”: <https://voxeu.org/article/potential-teleworking-europe-and-risk-new-digital-divide>

Workshop 4: Guaranteed minimum income

Monday, 9 November 2020, 14.40 – 16.00 [link to connect here](#)

Background

Guaranteed minimum income is defined as a plan set up by a government to provide every person the guarantee of an income of a certain level, ideally above the poverty threshold. Most EU member states have in place minimum income schemes to provide the most vulnerable people with financial support to guarantee their minimum standard of living, as a basic social safety net. Minimum income schemes are targeted towards people who are unable to work or access a decent job, people not gaining enough from employment and people no longer entitled to or excluded from other types of social benefits (such as unemployment benefits and pensions for example). The key issue is that in most EU countries (except Ireland and the Netherlands) the minimum income support is not adequate as it does not make for a living above the national poverty threshold. There are also issues related to access, coverage and take-up rates that prevent national schemes from achieving their objective to reduce poverty.

In recent years, the concept of guaranteed minimum income has been piloted around the world. Finland carried out a national basic income experiment³ in 2017-2019 with interesting results showing just small effects on employment, but strong positive effects on mental health and well-being due to the perceived economic security. Barcelona has carried out its own pilot project B-MINCOME⁴ in 2017-2020 supported with EU funding from the Urban Innovative Action initiative. Glasgow together with three other local authorities have conducted a [feasibility study](#) about piloting universal basic income (UBI) in Scotland and found many arguments in favour of UBI model but difficult to implement given the multi-level governance structure in the UK and the final decision with the UK government.

The socio-economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, when many people lost their jobs and income, has raised attention to minimum income policies as a tool to fight poverty and social exclusion. Some countries are now revising their minimum income schemes to ensure they meet people's basic needs. Such is the case of Spain that [approved in late May 2020](#) the measure to help 2.3 million people with minimum income between €461 to €1,015 depending on the composition of each household. The Spanish government estimates that the minimum income will cost €3bn per year. At EU level, there is growing support for an EU Framework Directive on Minimum Income as a key tool to decrease poverty.

Policy context

In its [2017 resolution on minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty](#), the European Parliament called on member states to introduce adequate minimum income schemes to support households with inadequate income and enable them to have a decent standard of living.

The [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) was endorsed in late 2017 and introduced a dedicated principle 14 on minimum income stating: "Everyone lacking sufficient resources has the right to adequate minimum income benefits ensuring a life in dignity at all stages of life, and effective access to enabling

³ The Finnish government allocated €20 million to conduct the experiment. 2,000 unemployed people aged 25-58 received a monthly payment of €560, unconditionally and without means testing. Participants were randomly selected nationwide, and findings were compared to the data of a control group made up of 173,000 individuals.

⁴ B-MINCOME is combining guaranteed minimum income and active social policies in deprived urban areas <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/barcelona>

goods and services. For those who can work, minimum income benefits should be combined with incentives to (re)integrate into the labour market”.

On 9 October 2020, the Council adopted [conclusions on strengthening minimum income protection to combat poverty and social exclusion in the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond](#), in which it underlines that minimum income schemes contribute to the social protection of the most disadvantaged. The Council invites Member States and the European Commission to work together in order to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular its principle 14. The Commission is requested to initiate an update of the EU framework to effectively support and complement the policies of member states on national minimum income protection. The Council conclusions also invite the member states and the Commission, in accordance with their competences and national labour markets models, to address the gaps in minimum income protection and to use in the best possible way support from EU funds, such as the European Social Fund Plus and the Next Generation EU recovery instrument.

Objectives

With this workshop, we want to bring together policy-makers and practitioners from cities across Europe to:

- discuss the role of minimum income policies as a tool to reduce poverty and social exclusion
- share lessons learned from recent pilot projects in cities related to the implementation of universal basic income or guaranteed minimum income
- exchange on the role cities can play to improve minimum income policies as well as access and coverage to reach out to the people in need

Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples from their cities. Workshops will start with a brief introduction to the topic followed by short presentations of two good practices from cities. Participants will then exchange know-how based on the guiding questions. The key messages from each workshop will be shared with all SAF members as well as the EU institutional stakeholders to feed into the current EU policy debates.

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| 14.40 – 14.45 | Short introduction to the workshop by Bianca Faragau , Eurocities |
| 14.45 – 15.05 | Learn from Barcelona: Lluís Torrens , Director of social services shares the findings and lessons learned from B-MINCOME project |
| 15.05 – 15.20 | Learn from Glasgow: Ricky Bell , City Treasurer, shares lessons learned from Glasgow’s work on universal basic income and living wages |
| 15.20 – 15.50 | Workshop discussion guided by the questions for reflection |
| 15.50 – 16.00 | Wrap up of key messages from the workshop |

Questions for discussion in workshop 4

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions that will guide our discussions in the workshop:

- What is the role of your city with regards to minimum income or income support for people in need (e.g. people who are living at risk of poverty)?
- What examples of policies, projects or practices do you have in your city to ensure some safety net for people living at risk of poverty?

- What should the EU and member states do to improve minimum income policies as a tool for fighting poverty and social exclusion?

Useful resources:

- Council [conclusions on strengthening minimum income protection to combat poverty and social exclusion in the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond](#), 9 October 2020
- [Results of Finland's basic income experiment](#), May 2020
- Barcelona 'B-MINCOME project', [A successful journey towards participative and community-oriented social welfare system](#), March 2020
- Glasgow et al., [Assessing the Feasibility of Citizens' Basic Income Pilots in Scotland: Final Report](#), June 2020
- EuObserver, [Spain takes 'giant step' on guaranteed minimum income](#), May 2020.
- Social Platform, [Policy statement for an EU Framework Directive on adequate minimum income](#), September 2020

Workshop 5: Tackling energy poverty

Monday, 9 November 2020, 14.40 – 16.00 [link](#) to connect

Background

European households continue to spend an increasing share of income on energy, leading to higher rates of energy poverty and negatively affecting living conditions and health. Recent estimates suggest that more than 50 million Europeans are affected by energy poverty.⁵ The main causes of energy poverty are poor energy efficiency standards, high energy prices, low incomes and how energy is used in the home. Whilst energy poverty is partially driven by low household incomes, and many low income households are energy poor, energy poverty does not fully overlap with income poverty, and is a distinct issue on its own right that should be addressed through both energy policy and social policy.

The consequences of energy poverty include poor housing conditions, poor physical and mental health, debts, difficulties affording other essential services and goods, social isolation and low educational attainment. The multi-dimensional nature of energy poverty therefore requires action across a wide range of policy areas and multi-agency approaches.

Policy context

Whilst a common EU-wide definition of energy poverty is not yet agreed, a widely accepted description of energy poverty is when 'individuals or households are not able to adequately heat, cool, or provide other required energy services in their homes at affordable cost'.⁶

⁵ EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, 2016

⁶ Thomson, H.; Bouzarovski, S. *Addressing Energy Poverty in the European Union: European State of Play and Action*; EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV): Brussels, Belgium, 2019; Available online: https://www.energypovetry.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/observatory-documents/19-06/paneureport2018_updated2019.pdf

Tackling energy poverty is key to achieving the broader objectives of the European Green Deal and to address interlinked economic, social and environmental sustainability challenges. Effective programmes, such as financing schemes for households to renovate their houses, can reduce energy bills and help the environment. Cities have a key role to play in tackling energy poverty and in enabling a just energy transition.

The EU has made energy poverty a policy priority in the [Clean energy for all Europeans](#) package, adopted in 2019. The package calls on member states to act appropriately to tackle energy poverty and to protect vulnerable energy customers. Member States will also be obliged to assess the number of households in energy poverty and must establish robust criteria to underpin the assessment. The Commission has further stepped up its ambition to tackle energy poverty and support EU countries in their efforts through the recently published [Recommendation on energy poverty](#), issued as part of the [renovation wave](#) package in October 2020. To further support member states in a just and fair energy transition, the [EU Energy Poverty observatory](#) was established to provide a user-friendly and open-access resource to promote public engagement, disseminate knowledge and support informed decision making at local, national and EU level.

Eurocities adopted a [policy paper](#) on EU's Renovation Wave Initiative – 'Delivered with cities and citizens' – the paper calls on the EU to use the Renovation Wave to address barriers to renovation for all types of buildings, including social housing, to fight energy poverty and support vulnerable groups, account for the gender dimension in energy poverty and to boost skills for creating quality jobs in the construction industry for the renovation sector.

Objectives

With this workshop, we want to bring together policy-makers and practitioners from cities across Europe to:

- Discuss the role of different support schemes for energy poor households
- Share lessons learned from recent initiatives in cities related to tackling energy poverty
- Exchange on participatory approaches and innovative governance models to promote a just energy transition
- Discuss policy recommendation to feed into EU policy debate on this topic

Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples from their cities. Workshops will start with a brief introduction to the topic followed by short presentations of two good practices from cities. Participants will then exchange know-how based on the guiding questions. The key messages from each workshop will be shared with all SAF members as well as the EU institutional stakeholders to feed into the current EU policy debates.

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| 14.40 – 14.45 | Short introduction to the workshop by Masha Smirnova , Eurocities |
| 14.45 – 15.05 | Focus on policy: Learn from Antwerp, Tom Meews , Deputy Mayor, sharing Antwerp's integrated approach |
| 15.05 – 15.20 | Focus on project: Learn from Zagreb, Slavica Robić , Executive Director of the Society for Sustainable Development Design (DOOR), sharing lessons from the ESF project 'FAIR (FER) Solutions for Better Community' |
| 15.20 – 15.50 | Workshop discussion guided by the questions for reflection |
| 15.50 – 16.00 | Wrap up of key messages from the workshop |

Questions for discussion in workshop 5

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions that will guide our discussions in the workshop:

- How is energy poverty measured in your city and how does it complement national statistics?
- What examples of policies, projects and support schemes do you have in your city to fight energy poverty and to bring together climate and social cohesion goals?
- How does your city work to ensure that social concerns are key part of the energy transition?
- What should the EU and member states do to support cities to tackle energy poverty?

Useful resources:

- [Recommendation on energy poverty](#) C(2020) 960 final | [Annex](#) | [Staff working document](#)
- [Directive on common rules for the internal market for electricity](#) (EU) 2019/944
- EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV): [Towards an inclusive energy transition in the European Union: Confronting energy poverty amidst a global crisis](#) (2020)
- [EPOV Study: Energy poverty and vulnerable consumers in the energy sector across the EU](#) (2018)
- Dobbins, A., Fuso Nerini, F., Deane, P. *et al.* Strengthening the EU response to energy poverty. *Nat Energy* 4, 2–5 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-018-0316-8>



This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020).

For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>