

Affordable and clean heating for all?

Winter workshop and debate on an inclusive heat transition

6th of December

9.00 – 16.00

Maison de La Poste, Room Maritime (Tour and Taxi)

Rue Picard 5/7, 1000 Bruxelles



Photo credit: Bence Járdány

Background

Heating represents nearly two-thirds of households' energy consumption in the EU, while 75 percent of European buildings are inefficient. An important share of European households relies on **solid fuel heating** such as coal and biomass. Solid fuel heating is **predominant among the lowest-income groups** in many EU member states. Coal heating is to be phased out to reach decarbonization targets. **Biomass** is on the one hand a major contributor to renewable energy use statistics, it is however, simultaneously a major source of indoor and **outdoor air pollution** when burnt in homes. Firewood or coal heating is often a **labour-intensive, time-consuming, and polluting form of heating**. Solid fuel heating can be overrepresented in the **worst-performing buildings and associated with the use of obsolete and inefficient boilers and iron stoves**. The current energy crisis has seen the overall demand for biomass increase exponentially as higher-income groups seek cheaper or sustainable energy sources. Consequently, firewood prices have skyrocketed in some countries, making heating even less affordable for many of the poorest households, who have no other heating options but to burn wood logs or coal in their stove or boilers.

Transition to **decarbonized and clean heating systems and the reduction of energy needs of buildings** are key policy measures of the green transition. They provide a historic opportunity to **lift households out of energy poverty** and provide affordable and clean energy. At the same time, the renovation of the unfit housing stock and the switch to clean heating sources represent a key social challenge in terms of funding, engagement, and technology and guarantees are necessary **not to leave anyone behind**. **2023 was a significant year for the transition** as multiple **EU legislative files** have been accepted or updated or are on their way to being updated. Directives on energy efficiency, energy performance of buildings, renewable energies, and emission trading, together with the social climate funds are all directives that can directly or indirectly impact the lives of solid fuel users.

Objectives

This event aims to explore **the opportunities and challenges of solid fuel users living in the worst-performing stock** in light of the policy developments in 2023 in the form of a high-level panel discussion. Three cases of selected vulnerable communities relying on solid fuels will be presented at the event and **clean heat transition trajectories will also be developed for them by social, technical, policy, and financial experts in the format of a workshop**.

Participants

The event will bring together EU policymakers, relevant EU stakeholders (financial experts, green and social NGOs, the heating industry), and practitioners working with solid fuel user households.

Agenda

09.00 – 09.30 – Presentation of 3 case studies on communities relying on solid fuels by practitioners working on the field.

09.30-11.00 **Heat transition trajectories for the cases**, session 1, in three round tables

- **Technical aspects and engagement**, based on the outline of Heating and cooling plans required by the EED Article 25 with a focus on:

- heating and cooling appliances and systems in local building stocks [and potential technical alternatives]
- potential for increasing energy efficiency [of heating]
- applying the energy efficiency first principle
- needs of local communities
- involvement of stakeholders [especially target families]

11.00-11.30 Break

11.30-13.00 **Heat transition trajectories for the cases** session 2, in three round tables

- **Policy and finance**, based on the outline of Heating and cooling plans required by the EED Article 25, with a focus on:

- [Policy measures and changes necessary to reach the transition]
- How to finance the implementation of policies and measures
- Identify financial mechanisms allowing consumers to shift to renewable heating and cooling

13.00 -14.00 Lunch

14.00 -14.30 Presenting the **transition pathways**.

14:30- 16.00 Panel discussion: **Opportunities and challenges of Green Deal legislative files for solid fuel users - to provide affordable and clean heating for all in upcoming winters.**

Confirmed speakers:

- Bogdan Atanasiu, Senior Policy Officer on Energy Efficiency in Buildings at DG Energy, European Commission
- Cristina Pricop, Policy Manager at European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
- Giorgos Koukoufikis, Project Leader at Just & Empowering Transitions, EC Joint Research Center
- Loar Halleröd, Policy and Project Officer, Energy Cities
- Milena Damianova, Policy Coordinator - Social Climate Fund, DG Climate Action, and EC

Moderator: Ruth Owen, deputy director, FEANTSA