

### Opening and Welcome

- **Marina Varvesi**, ASSIST Project coordinator
- **Vincent Berrutto**, Head of Unit, EASME - H2020 Energy Unit

### Challenges to tackle energy poverty: views from EU projects

*Moderator: **Stefan Bouzarovski**, EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV)*

- **Silvia Vivarelli**, Unit B1 H2020 Energy, Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)
- **Marina Varvesi**, ASSIST coordinator
- European projects on Energy Poverty
  - **Cezara Popovici**, STEP coordinator, Horizon 2020 project
  - **Daan Creupelandt**, REScoop coordinator.
- **Clotilde Clark-Foulquier**, Project coordinator, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)
- **Discussion with the audience**

## ABOUT SESSION II

In the last years energy poverty has gained always more importance and priority on the political agenda. This result is also due to the numerous initiatives implemented at European level to tackle energy poverty.

The aim of the second webinar was to present the insights from some of these European initiatives with the coordinators. To share methodologies and results on what has been achieved and what will be achieved in the next years.

European projects represent also an opportunity to test and set the basis for future long-standing initiatives which have proved to be successful. The final aim of the webinar is therefore to illustrate to European actors possible solutions which may be taken up to tackle energy poverty.

## SESSION II

The second session of the ASSIST final conference welcomed five European energy-related initiatives and organisations to share their views about the challenges to tackle energy poverty. The session was moderated by Stefan Bouzarovski, chairman of the European Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV), and was attended by more than 120 policy makers and actors on energy poverty and energy vulnerability across Europe.

**Vincent Berrutto (Head of Unit - EASME)**, welcomed panelists and participants to the webinar. In his speech he introduced the energy efficiency projects under the Horizon 2020 programme of the European Commission and the new funding opportunities under the LIFE programme. As 8% of the

## SESSION II

households in Europe are at risk of not being able to heat their homes, projects that promote and facilitate the implementation of energy-efficiency measures are very relevant. Vincent Berutto explained that “the programmes do not only support research and innovation projects but also, so-called CSA or concerted actions, that focus on the replication of best practices from one country to another and are 100% funded”. Projects and initiatives that are relevant for tackling energy poverty can have different scopes, as illustrated by the presentations of the panelists. For example, ASSIST and STEP focus on the promotion and implementation of advice on low-cost energy saving measures while REScoop focuses on the network of renewable energy cooperatives on the supply side. In concluding his speech Vincent Berutto stressed the relevance of supporting projects that target vulnerable consumers as energy poverty is a very important issue.

**Silvia Vivarelli (EASME)** gave an overview of EU funded projects that contribute to the alleviation of energy poverty and promoted future funding opportunities within the last call of the Horizon 2020 programme (EC-2: Mitigating household energy poverty). The majority of the past and ongoing projects contribute to the alleviation of energy poverty by providing advice on low-cost energy efficiency measures to low income households, such as SMART UP, SAVES2 and ASSIST within the H2020-programme and REACH and FIESTA within the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme. However, the projects that were presented also illustrated that support can be granted to projects that tackle energy poverty from a different perspective and focus on, for example, innovative financial models for energy refurbishment of social housing buildings (e.g. EnerShift), quantification of multiple impacts of energy efficiency, in particular on public health (e.g. COMBI), empowering women to take action against energy poverty (e.g. EmpowerMed), supporting Obligated Parties under article 7 of the EED to adopt schemes to alleviate energy poverty (e.g. SocialWatt), making high impact/ high cost energy efficiency improvement accessible to energy poor communities (e.g. ComAct) and developing support programmes for the participation of energy poor citizens in joint initiatives (e.g. POWERPOOR).

**Marina Varvesi (AISFOR)** presented the ASSIST project as an example of a Concerted Support Action for engaging private consumers towards sustainable, and reduced consumption of energy, funded under the Horizon 2020 programme. Twelve partners from 6 countries were involved in the project and one European Association. The ASSIST project started in 2017, before the European Energy Poverty Observatory was launched, and will end in June. ASSIST started from a holistic and integrated approach. Within the context of the ASSIST project Home Energy Advisers (HEAs) were trained as empowered operators on all aspects of energy poverty. In addition, the national network of HEAs offered a platform for HEAs from different sectors and contexts to share information and experiences. Marina Varvesi gave an overview of the activities that were carried out in the context of the ASSIST project and concluded her presentation with the main project result: “We trained more than 500 HEAs as empowered operators on all energy poverty related issues. We established a national or regional HEA network in each of the partner countries. We assisted more than 5,200 vulnerable consumers through providing customized energy advice.”

**Cezara Popovici (BEUC)** presented the STEP project which is also an example of a Concerted Support Action, funded under the Horizon 2020 programme, that aims to tackle energy poverty through low-cost measures and behaviour change. The project started in June 2019 and will end in November 2021. STEP involves 9 partners and engages with frontline workers. Frontline workers are indispensable in defining effective solutions to tackle energy poverty as they are close to the vulnerable consumers and understand their needs. Cezara Popovici explained that the project aims to raise awareness about energy poverty at the national level by offering online training to consumers and frontline organizations, by following up the access to grants and the effective implementation of energy efficiency measures, by defining policy recommendations and by establishing networks of referral organizations.

**Daan Creupelandt (REScoop)**, presented the European network of renewable energy cooperatives that was founded in 2013. Initially started as a European project, REScoop currently counts 1,500 energy cooperatives operating across Europe, representing 1 million EU citizens (potentially 264 million EU citizens by 2050). The main objective of REScoop is to ensure that the voices of citizens and cooperatives are heard in energy policy debates. The network also fosters international collaboration between citizen-led energy cooperatives and supports the implementation of innovative business models. Daan Creupelandt explained the concept of an energy cooperative as lots of misinterpretations exist about the technical concept, legal form, scope and financing. Daan Creupelandt recognized that participation in an energy cooperative is often limited to those people that have the money to buy a share. He presented the example of the city of Eeklo (Belgium) to illustrate that new business models can facilitate the participation of vulnerable consumers in renewable energy cooperatives.

**Clotilde Clark-Foulquier (FEANTSA)** presented the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless and shared her view on how to address social issues and climate change, and how the Green Deal must be fair for all, especially the most vulnerable in society. She referred to the report “What are the foundations for a green and social pact for Europe?” to illustrate that a myriad of national instruments already exist to support people in energy poverty and their effectiveness is determined by a broader inclusion strategy. She emphasized that “the big challenge of these instruments is their accessibility and adequacy”. Clotilde Clark-Foulquier stated that “energy efficiency renovation in buildings can offer synergies between energy poverty alleviation and climate change mitigation, but at the same time, it can give rise to some key risks, such as lock-in effect, rebound effect, cold homes (no return on investment but only increase in comfort)”. The presentation was concluded with some key recommendations on how the Green Deal can be social, e.g. by ensuring a regulatory framework to curtail soaring property prices and prevent an increase of rent levels after renovation works or by establishing simple and accessible financial support schemes for energy poor people.