

Green and social solutions to the energy crisis

1 Russia's ~~illegal invasion of~~~~unjustified war against~~ Ukraine has led to dramatic consequences,
2 firstly for the people of Ukraine and for the entire world. Within ~~EU Member~~
3 ~~States~~Europe, we have witnessed a rise of social inequality, energy poverty, and
4 inflation, leading to significant impacts, e.g. on employment and food prices and quality of living.
5 In addition, climate change is exacerbating this situation and aggravating
6 inequalities by ~~hitting~~~~impacting~~ the poorest the hardest.

7 Almost one in four Europeans are already at risk of poverty and social exclusion.
8 ~~S~~piralling energy prices and climate change will only make things worse. The most vulnerable are
9 paying the highest price in this crisis. For example, women ~~Women~~ are
10 disproportionately affected by energy poverty and mobility poverty, in
11 particular single mothers, who represent 85% of single parent families with
12 dependent children.

13 Energy prices for European households notably electricity prices have increased
14 by up to 167% for people in some European countries with bills predicted to
15 surge by €2 trillion at their peak, early 2024. Already many households are
16 unable to make ends meet: this winter, many more will have to choose between
17 eating and heating.

18 This also affects society at large as services like hospitals, universities or
19 schools are impacted by the rise in energy prices. This energy inflation also puts at risk the viability of
20 many European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that play a significant role in their local
21 communities. Rising costs of operations may unfortunately force them into bankruptcy and therefore
22 threatens working people who are worried for their jobs and wages. Small companies, are not able
23 ~~to pass on their rising energy costs to their customers, risking bankruptcy.~~
24 Local authorities in charge of the front-line services rendered to European
25 citizens will have difficulties finding the money, leading to disruption in
26 public services.

27 Countries in Europe have different capacities to equitably manage prices and
28 demand or provide the essential support to those who need it. Financial
29 solidarity within the EU and between the EU and its neighbours is therefore
30 essential.

31 The total effect on the poor is now extra hard, with the increasing inflation, because inflation works as a
32 regressive income tax. Since inflation is regressive. Unavoidable expenditures such as
33 rent/mortgages,
34 food, energy, water, clothing, health and transport constitute a much larger
35 part of the budget particularly of low-income households, compared to wealthier households.
36 We need to focus first and foremost on the lowest incomes or households ~~income~~ ~~so~~ at risk of a
37 significant drop in income. We should also extend support to SMEs (Small and medium enterprises),

38 upon which
39 many livelihoods depend.

40 Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine shows the need to eliminate our dependence on
41 fossil energy imports and fossil fuels in general, in particular from
42 authoritarian regimes. like Azerbaijan, currently aggressing Armenia. The EU's short-term strategy of
43 focusing on diversifying the EU's oil and gas imports favors new, misguided investments in third countries.
44 To meet our 2030 and 2050 climate and energy targets, the EU must end its dependence on fossil fuels and
45 send clear investment signals for renewable energy. At the same time, however, the human rights situation in
46 fossil fuel exporting countries must be addressed. The short-term EU strategy needs to focus on
47 diversifying EU
48 oil and gas imports, without regard for the Human Rights situation in fossil
49 fuel exporting countries only feeds our addiction to fossil fuels and create new
50 dependency on third countries, contrary to our climate and energy objectives for
51 2030 and 2050.

52 The UN Sustainable Development Goal 7 aims to ensure access to affordable,
53 reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. To do that, we need to reduce
54 our energy consumption to a fair and sustainable level, ensure energy
55 efficiency, boost renewable energies sources and better-improve the sharing of the energy to
56 keep prices
57 at an acceptable level. Renewable energies production is the are the most cost-effective energy
58 sources and key to an environmentally sustainable system within the planetary
59 boundaries. The International Energy Agency and IPCC have both warned that new
60 fossil fuel infrastructures are incompatible with international climate goals.
61 In order to become climate neutral by 2050, the EU should phase out fossil fuels
62 in the energy system by 2035 at the latest already.

63 The EU is currently revising key Green Deal energy proposals. "Green Deal" energy but more needs to
64 be done
65 to achieve climate neutrality before 2050.

66 This is why we with special emphasis of the demands made previously in the resolution on energy poverty
67 adopted at the 34th EGP Council are calling on: the European Commission and Member States to:

68 The European Commission and National Government to recognize the right for all citizens to have
69 access to safe and sustainable energy. Recognize the right to energy, understood as the
70 universal affordable
71 access for citizens to safe and sustainable

72 EU institutions to adopt a harmonised definition of energy poverty in order to improve actions to
73 fight it

74 **Ensure immediate action to address the impact of high energy prices**

75 Member States National Governments should focus support on those hardest hit by current
76 prices,
77 notably households in or at risk of energy poverty, particularly those in public and social
78 housing and SMEs as well as

- 79 public services, ~~such as social housing~~, education establishments ~~or and~~
80 hospitals which are at risk of decreasing availability for all in need;
- 81 ~~□ We support the EU Commission's proposal for a joint purchasing platform to pool Europe's~~
82 ~~purchasing power vis-à-vis gas-exporting countries weather by pipelines or on the global spot~~
83 ~~markets for liquefied natural gas with a view to and significantly reduce prices in the wholesale~~
84 ~~sector. The European Union should adopt a temporary dynamic price cap on EU gas imports to lower~~
85 ~~the price of imports and immediately reduce energy prices, while ensuring security of supply and~~
86 ~~solidarity among Member States. The European Union should do it utmost to stop imports of~~
87 ~~Russian gas and to prevent speculation on energy prices. The European Union should adopt a~~
88 ~~temporary dynamic price cap on EU gas~~
89 ~~imports to lower the price of imports and upgrade the EU energy platform~~
90 ~~to a joint procurement of energy sources in order to strengthen the EU~~
91 ~~bargaining power;~~
- 92 □ ~~Member States~~National Governments should immediately ~~provide~~ensure households with
93 a basic amount of
94 energy at an affordable price. National Governments should also ensure adequate
95 redistribution mechanisms for vulnerable households and provide temporary direct income
96 support to the users of sustainable transport modes,
97 ~~to vulnerable households and transport users~~, as a transitional measure,
98 to absorb the increase in prices for the most vulnerable;
- 99 □ ~~They~~National Governments ~~ought should~~ to ban disconnections from energy supply and
100 stop evictions
101 from homes, suspend rent indexation schemes and ensure access to
102 alternative payment plans for bills, consumer advice and mediation
103 services; Energy companies should not charge interest on energy for low and medium income
104 households and SME's on debt incurred during energy crisis;
- 105 □ The European institutions should implement a socially fair EU wide energy
106 savings scheme asking the biggest contribution from high-income energy-intensive household
107 and large energy-intensive companies, ask most from energy intensive users, in order to
108 ~~prioritise~~ensure
109 supply to households especially low and medium income ones, as well as public and private
110 providers of essential
111 goods and services ~~is prioritised~~;
- 112 □ ~~Member States~~National Governments should limit, and prohibit where appropriate, the use
113 of
114 high energy consumption non-essentials such as private jets, short haul
115 flights where a train journey alternative exists, heated outside terrasses, big private yachts or
116 heated private
117 swimming pools, ect;
- 118 □ ~~Member States~~National Governments should tax excess profits of multinational companies
119 that
120 have profited from the consequences of the war and market speculation and

121 ensure that the collected revenues are distributed to the most vulnerable
122 households, especially those in or near energy or mobility poverty; The
123 European Commission should propose a permanent mechanism enabling, in a
124 crisis, the orderly collection and redistribution of taxes on windfall
125 profit tax on large companies across all sectors;

126 ~~□ EU institutions should adopt a harmonised definition of energy poverty in~~
127 ~~order to improve actions to fight it;~~

128 ~~□ National Governments shall review their tax legislation to **stop** tax benefits for investments that are~~
129 ~~unsustainable, e.g. by keeping up the consumption of fossil energy. Tax legislation in member states may~~
130 ~~introduce tax benefits for companies and individuals to **accelerate the energy transition, for example**~~
131 ~~by supporting public transportation for business purposes;~~

132 **Guarantee the necessary investments in energy savings and renewable energies**

133 ~~□ National Governments Member States~~ must invest in energy savings, efficiency and
134 renewables as
135 first choice solutions to fight high energy prices and dependencies, as
136 renewable energy generation facilities have extremely low operating costs;
137 Investment in long-lasting measures should be at least comparable in
138 volume to the short-term relief and must be coordinated in order to
139 effectively lift people out of energy and mobility poverty;

140 ~~□ National Governments Member States~~ should mobilise additional investments
141 ~~corresponding to at~~
142 ~~least 1% of their GDP per year~~ into energy savings, notably also in the
143 renovation of poorly insulated homes and renewable energy to the benefit
144 of vulnerable households;

145 ~~□ National Governments Member States~~ have a duty to ensure that those who can contribute
146 more to
147 national solidarity pay their fair share of taxes; In addition, ~~Member~~
148 ~~States they~~ should ensure that any support measures and investments they make
149 respect the principle of 'do no significant harm'. ~~We support the creation in European law of a~~
150 ~~'leave no one behind' principle and that should~~ safeguard social and
151 labour rights; They should therefore reject investments in ~~and subsidies for~~ additional gas
152 and oil infrastructure, ~~within and outside Europe~~, which are not in line with EU climate
153 targets and
154 would create lock in to fossil fuel and dependency; European institutions
155 should agree on binding national energy efficiency targets and a higher
156 binding EU target of at least 20% by 2030; Similarly, they should support
157 a higher binding EU renewable energy target of at least 56 % by 2030; ~~and 100% electricity~~
158 ~~production by 2035;~~

159 ~~□ National Governments Member States~~ should adopt ambitious and mandatory gas and
160 electricity
161 demand reduction targets; and end schemes to install fossil fuel boilers

162 in buildings, redirecting such financing instead to support the most
163 vulnerable households in [retrofitting and](#) switching to renewables; In addition, they should
164 put in place binding measures to replace by 2025 the 64% of gas used in
165 the industrial sector that is easily replaceable by mature renewable
166 technologies;

167 [National Governments Member States](#) should proactively provide effective information and
168 logistical and financial support [by 2023](#) to ensure the creation of at least one
169 renewable energy community per municipality by [2023](#) so that citizens, [especially those most](#)
170 [vulnerable](#), can
171 produce, consume, store and resell their own renewable energy as
172 individuals or communities;

173 [The European Union should adopt a collective strategy for the development of storage systems for](#)
174 [renewable energy to ensure grid flexibility. We need additional investments in research, development](#)
175 [and innovation towards more sustainable, recyclable and safe storage systems developed in the EU.](#)

176 Where relevant, [National Governments Member States](#) should phase out nuclear power
177 either by the
178 dates announced or once nuclear plants have reached a lifetime of 40
179 years, in order to limit the security and safety threats related to ageing
180 nuclear plants;

181 [The European Union and National Governments should further reduce their reliance on materials,](#)
182 [technologies and components from authoritarian regimes and rather trade with partners sharing our](#)
183 [democratic values. The upcoming adoption of the European Critical Raw Materials Act should](#)
184 [pursue this objective. In addition, the European Union and national governments should invest and](#)
185 [stimulate European research and development, support producing renewable energy technologies](#)
186 [and components in Europe, as well as recycling/reusing capacities in the European Union in order to](#)
187 [ultimately reach independency.](#)

188 [The European Central Bank should stop indirectly subsidising](#)
189 [environmentally and financially destabilising](#) all fossil fuel related
190 investments and instead use its highly influential asset purchase programs
191 to encourage banks to favour investment in renewables and energy and
192 resource efficiency;

193 [We call on the European Commission to immediately present a coordinated exit plan from the Energy](#)
194 [Charter Treaty for the EU and its Member States, to end the anachronistic protection of investments in](#)
195 [fossil fuels.](#)

196 ***Guarantee citizens are at the heart of the energy transition and of a social***
197 ***Europe***

198 The European Commission should put EU citizens at the centre of any future
199 reform of EU energy market design; Such reform should promote a resource
200 and cost efficient and socially just ecological transition towards a
201 highly energy efficient and fully renewable based economy by 2040 at the
202 latest; The European Commission should design a future EU energy market
203 reform that is based on the principles of solidarity, cohesion, equity and



- 204 justice between Member States, regions and generations; generations, where public or social
205 ownership of energy production and distribution plays a central role;
- 206 Member States National Governments should fully implement the 2018 Clean Energy
207 Package,
208 including the rights of renewable self-consumers and renewable energy
209 communities; They need, with technical assistance from the European
210 Commission, to empower municipalities to support the development of
211 renewable energy communities so that citizens can produce, consume, store
212 and resell their own renewable energy;
- 213 Member States National Governments should lift existing administrative barriers to further
214 accelerate the deployment of renewables with a swift permitting process,
215 while ensuring proper public participation and the respect of
216 environmental impact assessment procedures; The European Union should expand its
217 infrastructure projects and build towards an interconnected European electricity infrastructure and
218 network, including strengthening local energy production, with the aim of further improving storage
219 and transfer capacity and balancing renewable energy demand and supply across the EU and its
220 neighbours, in order to reduce costs and achieve further energy independence. Further sanctions should
221 be taken against Member States that are deliberately impeding the development of renewable energies.
222 In addition, the European
223 Union should complete its infrastructures for balancing renewable energy
224 demand and supply across the EU and its neighbours;
- 225 National Government shift to a more democratic control of their energy systems, through
226 decentralised and interconnected systems with fair, affordable and equal access to energy
227 guaranteed to all.
- 228 The European Union should adopt measures and means to strengthen social
229 welfare and social protection systems, including the continuation and
230 refinancing of SURE (Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an
231 Emergency) and the swift adoption of an ambitious the Social Climate Fund; It should
232 adopt an EU Directive for Adequate Minimum Income Schemes that ensures an
233 EU-wide minimum income level set at at least 60% of median income before
234 allowances for specific needs such as disability so that every citizen in
235 Europe can live a life in dignity; Member States should promptly implement
236 the recently adopted Directive on Minimum Wages as soon as possible, since
237 this will lead to a wage raise of 20 % for 25 million workers across the
238 EU;
- 239 Member States National Governments should ensure access to decent and affordable
240 housing for
241 all notably by promoting the construction and/or the provision of affordable new and deeply
242 renovated and retrofitted, highly
243 energy-efficient housing steck accessible to all, ,-a portion of which must be allocated to public or
244 social housing, and combatting the
245 financialisation of residential property, ,-prioritizing rental prices regulation and social housing as
246 essential tools for this purpose.- They need to deliver the

- 247 Renovation Wave target of doubling annual energy renovation rates in the
248 next 10 years with a particular focus on housing for the lowest income
249 groups as well as on the rental market;
- 250 □ The European Union should establish a new EU fund, complementary similar to the Recovery
251 and Resilience Fund (RRF) based on common EU borrowing redistributed as
252 grants and loans and able to meet a substantial part the additional costs
253 of accelerating the energy transition to 100% renewables and maximum
254 energy efficiency while ensuring the elimination of energy poverty;
- 255 □ EU institutions should reform the EU's complex and short-sighted economic
256 governance framework notably by promoting - rather than, as is the current
257 case, discouraging - investment in the energy and wider ecological
258 transition and the social infrastructure needed to ensure access for all
259 to the goods and services necessary for a decent quality of life; including by amortising in
260 the debt and deficit calculations green and social investments compliant with the Paris
261 Agreement's objectives;
- 262 □ Member States National Governments should provide increased transparency and
263 regulatory
264 oversight of market based and over-the-counter gas trading to reduce
265 market vulnerability, price speculation and spiralling bids; EU and
266 national competent authorities should investigate, report and address
267 possible cases of market abuse or market manipulation in commodity markets
268 in general and in the gas market in particular; The European Commission
269 should make the "just transition" an explicit and central policy
270 complement to the "Green deal" to ensure that socio-economic barriers to
271 the fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of the ecological
272 transition are identified and removed.
- 273 □ Given the current energy crisis, the European Union should assess the impact of a possible revision
274 on the price-setting mechanism on the energy markets, while paying attention to safeguarding the
275 competitiveness of renewable energies.
- 276 □ The European Central Bank should be given a dual mandate to focus on price stability as well as full
277 employment while respecting the EU commitment to achieve a climate-neutral economy. Rising interest
278 rates in the current context of a supply side shock, that harm economic recovery and particularly
279 vulnerable households and small companies, is not the answer to the crisis.