



Press Release

For immediate release

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Title: Time to put rural energy poverty on the map: alleviating rural vulnerability of energy poor households through replicable and scalable renovation roadmaps

There were about [35 million EU citizens](#) (around 8% of the EU population) unable to keep their homes adequately warm in 2020. With the consequential rise in energy prices and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many more EU citizens have likely been impacted since. The European Commission is committed to tackle energy poverty and protect vulnerable consumers through its policies ([Clean Energy for all Europeans Package](#), [National Energy Climate Plans](#), [Fit for 55 package](#)) and initiatives such as the [Energy Poverty Advisory Hub \(EPAH\)](#). RENOVERTY, a LIFE funded project, will follow in those footsteps by fostering energy efficiency building upgrades in energy poor households in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) / South-eastern Europe (SEE) and Southern European countries (SE).

It is noted that rural residents are at higher risk of facing poverty and social exclusion and that less renovation and just transition initiatives take place in rural areas¹. Indeed, rural residents face multiple challenges when it comes to energy poverty, from the lack of access to adequate technical and social infrastructures, to socio-economic inequalities with high rates of income poverty and the need for more public participation and representation to become effectively and democratically involved in low-carbon transition processes.

To support vulnerable consumers in an effective way, the EU has put the spotlight on renovation through the [Renovation Wave](#) which aims to focus on improving the renovation rate of buildings to allow households to reduce their final energy consumption and enhance their quality of life. RENOVERTY will build on the Renovation Wave and tackle these gaps by facilitating energy renovations in the worst-performing buildings in rural areas through the development and replication of renovation roadmaps. Renovations will be done by delivering tools and resources to support local actors in building and implementing financially viable roadmaps.

"Energy poverty and vulnerability have been at the forefront of Member States' and the Commission's concerns since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the energy price hikes of the last year. Despite the increased attention to and need for reducing this phenomenon, little research has been carried out regarding the presence or degree of energy poverty among rural and peri-urban households within the EU." Says Mara Oprea, Energy and Climate Expert at IEECP and Coordinator of the RENOVERTY Project. "As such, RENOVERTY seeks to put rural energy poverty on the map by identifying key indicators to characterise the most at-risk populations, thereby enabling their targeted support, while alleviating rural vulnerability by fostering energy efficiency building upgrades in energy poor households through replicable and scalable renovation roadmaps. By being the first EU-funded project to dedicate our efforts solely to rural and peri-urban energy poverty, the results of the next three years will set the tone for the progress made in relation to these groups, which is a responsibility we do not take lightly."

¹ European Parliament (2017)



In the next three years, the project will impact 7 pilot countries: Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia (CEE, SEE region), Italy, Portugal, and Spain (SE region), while ensuring the replicability of the model in these regions and scaling it up to the EU level.

To have a long-lasting effect, RENOVERTY will ensure the replicability of the model to guide other public actors to renovate rural vulnerable districts. Due to the participatory approach implemented throughout the project lifetime, the outcomes will be applicable outside of the project's geographical and time boundaries as well.

RENOVERTY will support around 115 households in getting adequate home renovations that will enhance their quality of life and also lower their energy bills. Furthermore, the project's replication activities will indirectly impact around 1150 vulnerable households at the national level and in other regions that can implement relevant policies in the rural areas after the project lifetime.

For more information about the project, visit the website at this link: <https://ieecp.org/projects/renoverty/>

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About RENOVERTY

RENOVERTY will foster energy efficiency building upgrades in the energy poor households of CEE, SEE, and SE countries by establishing the methodological and practical framework to build renovation roadmaps for vulnerable rural districts in a financially viable and socially just manner.

Specifically, the project aims to deliver tools and resources to support local and regional actors to build and execute operational single or multi-household roadmaps for rural areas. A scalable model will also be created to ensure the wide geographical replicability and implementation of the roadmaps by different actors at the EU level. Strategically, the project will contribute to minimize logistical, financial, administrative, and legal burdens caused by a complex and multi-stakeholder home renovation process.

Additionally, RENOVERTY will ensure that building retrofits consider the social dimension by incorporating security, comfort, and improved accessibility in the roadmaps to further improve the quality of life of vulnerable populations. Over the project's three years, seven pilots located in Sveta Nedelja (Croatia), Tartu (Estonia), Bükk-Mak & Somló-Marcalmente-Bakonyalja Leader (Hungary), Zasavje (Slovenia), Parma (Italy), Coimbra (Portugal), and Osona (Spain) will implement the roadmaps, while wider integration of rural and peri-urban development is foreseen in the long run.



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