

D1. RESEARCH RESULTS

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Project Reference: CERV-2025-CITIZENS-CIV — Proposal No. 10125085

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2026 | Consortium of *STEP UP*.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction of the Project

Energy poverty and climate change are connected challenges in Europe *[I, 22; I,24]* but their effects are not experienced equally *[I, 34; I,27]*. University students aged 18 to 25, especially those in large cities, face rising rents, limited income, poor housing and increasing energy costs. *STEP UP* responds to this gap through research, training, practical energy-saving materials and participatory activities, including energy discussion groups and collective assemblies. It aims to train and empower young professionals to become energy mentors to engage young citizens, particularly students and renters, in assessing energy poverty and participating in decision-making. *STEP UP* also aims to increase access to reliable information on energy poverty and enhance youth participation in energy-related discussions. Through energy mentors, seminars, assemblies and cooperation with civil society, universities, policymakers and youth activists, *STEP UP* connects climate action with social justice, democratic participation and youth empowerment.

1.2 Research Methodology

The *STEP UP* research in each country was led by the national partner organisations: *Assoutenti and IDEE IN FUGA* in Italy, *Virage Énergie* in France, *DECO* in Portugal, and *4C Cooperate Communicate Create Change* in Greece. It aimed to engage young citizens, particularly students and renters, in assessing energy poverty and participating in decision-making. Also, it aimed to increase access to reliable information on energy poverty and enhance youth participation in energy-related discussions.

The research combined three main sources: desk research on European and national regulations and interviews and best practices by students, universities, policymakers, energy stakeholders, and an online survey. The evidence base included questionnaire translations and *Survio App* survey exports, literature review, policy mapping, comparison between national frameworks, case studies, and expert consultation. The student survey covered demographics, housing, dwelling energy performance, financial burden, seasonal changes, energy-use restrictions and policy preferences. It also used a vignette so students could recognise energy poverty through a real-life situation rather than only through technical definitions. Survey participants were recruited through partner universities, student organisations, youth communities, and civil society groups in the four participating countries. For the interviews, the partners selected the experts specifically from their respective networks with the intention of reaching out not only universities, but also public authorities, energy agencies, social housing actors, organisations of consumers, representatives of civil society, and stakeholders in student housing. Accordingly, semi-structured interviews between 45 to 60 minutes long were carried out online or in person between the assigned period of data collection with a total of 4 experts in Italy, 7 in France, 11 in Portugal, and 5 in Greece. Participation was voluntary, and participants received information about the research before taking part. All survey respondents provided consent before submitting their responses. Their identities were anonymised, while interviewees were named only where they expressly agreed to attribution. All personal data were processed in accordance with GDPR requirements. The findings will guide the next phases of *STEP UP*, including training, energy mentor activities, workshops, assemblies and dissemination.

2. Desk Research

This desk research brings together the national analyses carried out in Italy, France, Portugal and Greece within WP1 of *STEP UP*. It examines how energy poverty is recognised, measured and addressed, with particular attention to university students and young people aged 18 to 25. Across all four countries, students face high energy costs, poor-quality housing, insecure or temporary rented accommodation and limited awareness of available support, while rarely being treated as a distinct vulnerable group in energy poverty policies.

2.1 Italy

National context

Italy recognises energy poverty in policy and planning documents. OIPE estimates indicate that energy poverty affected one in ten Italian households, with estimates ranging from 7.7% to 9% in 2023, depending on the indicator *[I, 34]* , and rising to 9.1% in 2024, equivalent to around 2.4 million households and the highest figure on record *[I, 35]*. Eurostat EU-SILC recorded that 8.6% of the population were unable to keep their home adequately warm in 2024 *[I,18]*, slightly below the EU-27 average of 9.2% *[I,19]*. Although these indicators are not student-specific, they provide the context for assessing the situation of students living away from home. This group is relevant because students who study outside their region often rely on private rental housing, where energy costs, poor housing quality and limited control over heating can increase exposure to energy hardship. MUR records more than two million students in 2024/2025 *[I, 33]*. In 2023/2024, 401,720 students, roughly one in five, studied outside their region of residence and depended heavily on private rental housing. *[I,32]*

Recognition of energy poverty

Italy does not have a single legally established definition. Instead, energy poverty is assessed through several complementary indicators, including the *PNIEC-OIPE* indicator on minimum affordable energy expenditure and Eurostat's inability-to-keep-warm indicator. *OIPE* was established by ministerial decree on 29 March 2022 under *Legislative Decree 210/2021 [I, 26; I, 29]*. In 2024, the incidence rate reached 11.4% among households with minors and was around 2.5 times higher in households whose reference person was foreign-born *[I, 34]*. Hidden energy poverty is concentrated among vulnerable groups: 56% of households are in the two lowest expenditure deciles and around 40% are in the coldest climatic zones. Students, young people and renters are not explicitly recognised.

Key policies and institutions

MASE chairs *OIPE* and steers the implementation of *PNIEC [I, 26; I, 27]*. *ARERA* regulates the social bonus, vulnerable-customer regime and consumer protection measures. *INPS* administers *ISEE* and *DSU* declarations *[I, 20]*. *MUR* oversees higher education and student accommodation *[I, 32; I, 33]*, while regional right-to-study agencies manage student grants and accommodation services. Civil society actors, including *Assoutenti APS [I, 8]*, *SUNIA-CGIL* and *UDU [I,37; I,38; I,39]*, monitor consumer rights and developments in student rental costs. The main institutional gap is that energy protection, student welfare, and accommodation policy are managed separately.

Overview of relevant policies and measures

The main instrument is the *ARERA* social bonus for electricity, gas, water and waste bills. From 1 January 2026, *ARERA Resolution 2/2026/R/com* raised the standard *ISEE* threshold to EUR 9,796, while households with at least four dependent children remain at EUR 20,000 *[I, 6]*. *Decree-Law 19/2025* introduced an extraordinary EUR 200 electricity contribution for customers with *ISEE* up to EUR 25,000 *[I, 5]* . Reform 1.7 of the *PNRR* set a target 60,000 new student beds by 30 June 2026 *[I,30; I,31]*. *ENEA-CTI* classified 45.3% of Italian residential buildings in energy classes F and G in 2024. *[I, 13]*

Access, operationalisation and implementation in practice

Two barriers limit student access. The social bonus is linked to a supply contract held by a member of the *ISEE* household, while students often live in rooms where the contract is held by a landlord or flatmate. The *ISEE* rules applicable to university students generally include living away from home in their family household of origin, unless they have maintained a separate registered residence for at least two years and earned an annual personal income above approximately EUR 9,000 *[I, 20]*. *SUNIA-CGIL* and *UDU* report annual single-room rent increases of about 6% to 8% in major university cities, with rents of EUR 637 in Milan, EUR 506 in Bologna and EUR 503 in Rome *[I, 38; I, 39]*. *ARERA* issued around 7.6 million electricity and gas social bonuses in 2023, worth about EUR 2.4 billion *[I, 3]*, although students remain poorly reached.

Key challenges and policy gaps affecting students

The Italian framework operates at the level of the household and the energy supply contract, while students often experience hardship individually, within shared accommodation and without contractual control. Existing support does not adequately address opaque "all-inclusive" energy charges, poor conditions in the private rental market or young tenants' limited bargaining power.

Ongoing national and local initiatives / best practices

A. *Reform 1.7 of the PNRR, student accommodation*

Country / city: Italy

Implementing organisation(s): *Ministry of Universities and Research*; *Special Commissioner for University Accommodation, Manuela Manenti [I, 21]*

Timeframe: 2022-2026 (final target: 30 June 2026) *[I, 30]*

Target group(s): University students, especially low-income away-from-home students

Objectives: Create 60,000 new student beds and reduce pressure on the private rental market.

Activities and approach: Public and private implementing bodies apply through calls funded by a EUR 1.2 billion allocation. The 2024 call provides EUR 19,966.66 per bed *[I, 31]*

Relevance to students or young people: At least 30% of the beds must be reserved for low-income students and offered at rents at least 15% below the market rates for 12 years. *[I, 36]*

Outcomes or results (if available): Implementation is ongoing. A key gap is that the measure does not establish specific energy-performance standards or regulate energy costs included in rents.

B. SUNIA-CGIL and UDU campaigns against "caro affitti"

Country / city: Italy (Bologna, Milan, Rome, Florence, Padua, Turin and Naples)

Implementing organisation(s): *SUNIA-CGIL* and *Unione degli Universitari,* with broader student and third-sector partners *[I, 37; I, 39]*

Timeframe: Campaigns, 2022-2025

Target group(s): Away-from-home students, student tenants and young renters

Objectives: Monitor student rent trends, oppose excessive rents and pressure from short-term rentals, and advocate for rent caps and increased public student housing.

Activities and approach: Annual rent surveys, tenant guides, public demonstrations (including the 2023 tent protests), parliamentary hearings and dialogue with *MUR*, municipalities and regional agencies.

Relevance to students or young people: Directly focused on students and relevant to energy vulnerability as all-inclusive rental packages often hide energy charges.

Outcomes or results (if available): The campaigns helped place student rents on the national agenda, influenced the *PNRR* requirement to reserve 30% of beds for low-income students at below-market rents, and produced one of the few publicly available time-series datasets on student rents in Italy *[I, 38]*

C. Assoutenti APS and GenerAzione CER

Country / city: Italy (Tuscany, Basilicata, Campania, Liguria, Lazio and Sicily)

Implementing organisation(s): *Assoutenti APS*, *MIMIT* and the *University of Naples Parthenope [I, 8; I,9]*

Timeframe: Ongoing institutional activity; *GenerAzione CER* runs from 2024-2026

Target group(s): Consumers in financial hardship, vulnerable customers, upper-secondary pupils and young people under 35

Objectives: Provide consumer assistance, information on energy rights and energy literacy among young people, including participation in renewable energy communities.

Activities and approach: Consultation work involving *CNCU* and *ARERA*, local helpdesks, public communication, the *Ambiente* in classe initiative, *Simula-CER* and a *Green Lab* training programme for ten young Sustainability Mentors.

Relevance to students or young people: The programme targets at least 600 students and 300 members of the public and offers a peer-to-peer model relevant to *STEP UP.*

Outcomes or results (if available): The project is ongoing. Assoutenti has publicly welcomed increase in the *ISEE* threshold to EUR 9,796 and the extension of the social bonus to district heating users *[I, 6]*

Identified gaps and structural challenges: A central gap in Italy is the systemic invisibility of students as vulnerable energy users. They are treated as learners or welfare recipients, rather than vulnerable energy consumers. Household-level indicators, contract-based eligibility and university *ISEE* rules can misclassify away-from-home students *[I, 20]*. Structured accommodation covers only a minority, while the private rental market leaves energy performance and cost sharing largely unregulated.

2.2 France

National context

France combines a housing crisis with changing energy policy. *ONPE*'s 2025 dashboard indicates that at least one in five people is affected by some form of energy poverty *[F, 31]*. It records 10.8% of households spending more than 8% of available income on conventional energy bills *[F, 31]*, 35% reporting cold conditions in winter 2024/2025 *[F, 31],* 49% reporting excessive heat in summer 2025 *[F, 31]*, and 60% of respondents aged 18 to 34 reporting difficulty paying energy bills *[F, 31]*. Student union surveys report that 41.5% of students live in dwellings with thermal issues and that 62% are exposed to thermal discomfort *[F, 12]*. *OVE* found that 14% reported unsanitary housing and 20% reported financial difficulties so severe that they could not meet basic needs. *[F, 13]*

Recognition of energy poverty

The *Grenelle II Law* of 12 July 2010 incorporated energy poverty into French housing regulation *[F, 26]*. In practice, policy relies heavily on household indicators and the 8% expenditure benchmark *[F, 7]*. Student organisations more often frame the problem as thermal discomfort, inadequate housing or high energy costs *[F, 3; F, 5]*. Government reports rarely mention student energy poverty directly, while *Chaire HOPE*'s 2018-2023 work shows that students are exposed to energy poverty, although often unseen. *[F, 2; F, 6]*

Key policies and institutions

Energy-poverty institutions, programmes and measures include *ONPE [F, 29; F, 30; F, 31]*, the energy cheque *[F,28]*, *CEE*, *Slime [F, 33], Toits d'abord [F, 18]* and low-tech or DIY initiatives *[F, 6]*. Housing-energy actors include *ANAH [F, 1]*, *ADIL*, *France Rénov' [F, 16]* , *FSL* and *DPE*. Student and social support is delivered through *Crous*, *CAF*, *CCAS* and *APL/ALF/ALS [F, 13; F, 24].* Students are not usually formally excluded from these measures, but most instruments do not reflect their tax status, mobility or housing arrangements. *[F, 8]*

Overview of relevant policies and measures

France uses financial aid, renovation support and practice-based support. The energy cheque is the main energy-specific aid *[F, 28]*, while housing allowances by *Crous and CAF* are generally more accessible to students, depending on family income and housing status *[F, 13; F, 26]*. Renovation policy is led through *ANAH* and *France Rénov' [F, 1; F,16]* , but subsidies usually require action by the property owner. Practice-based approaches include *DPE* labels, energy-saving guides, small repairs, appliance advice, low-tech methods and DIY support. *[F, 6]*

Access, operationalisation and implementation in practice

Energy-check rules exclude many students because eligibility often requires them to have filed taxes separately from their parents for two years and to hold an energy contract in their own name *[F, 17]*. Students in shared housing, all-inclusive rents, or still declared as dependants in their parents' tax household therefore miss the main energy-specific aid *[F, 8]*. Renovation aid is also largely inaccessible because students are usually tenants, move frequently, and cannot force landlords to improve the energy performance of their accommodation *[F, 16]*. Low-tech and DIY practices can help, but they require tools, space, time and institutional support *[F, 6]*.

Key challenges and policy gaps affecting students

French policy is shaped by "familialisation", the expectation that families remain responsible for students *[F, 24; F, 27]*. Household statistics miss students who underheat, share bills or do not hold contracts in their own name *[F, 11]*. Landlord relations are another barrier: when facing energy poverty, only 20% of students speak to their landlord, and in two-thirds of those cases the landlord does not act. *[F, 12]*

Ongoing national and local initiatives / best practices

A. Chaire HOPE initiative on student energy poverty

Name of the initiative/project: *Chaire HOPE*

Country / city: France, primarily the Grenoble area

Implementing organisation(s): *Chaire HOPE* with universities, teaching institutions, local authorities, NGOs, *CCAS*, energy providers and students

Timeframe: 2018-2023, specific focus on students from 2020 *[F, 2]*

Target group(s): Households experiencing energy poverty, with students included as a specific target group since 2020 *[F, 2]*

Objectives: Coordinate research and action on energy poverty, especially the relationship between adequate energy access, health and well-being *[F,2; F, 6]*

Activities and approach: Stakeholder networking, research projects, student engagement, professional expertise, knowledge transfer and the development of practical tools for students *[F, 6]*

Outcomes or results (if available): The initiative produced a collection of resources on student energy poverty, a student wiki and a practical guide for students *[F, 6]*. It also received the 2021 “Training, Mobilisation and Communication” award from *Stop à l’Exclusion Énergétique*. *[F, 34]*

B. *Slime programme (Service local d’intervention pour la maîtrise de l’énergie, meaning Local Energy Management Response Service).*

Country / city: Many cities, metropolitan areas and departments in France.

Implementing organisation(s): *CLER Solutions*, a subsidiary of the *CLER* network, coordinates the programme. *Slime* is implemented by local authorities. In 2026, 49 local authorities were participating, covering 37% of French territory.

Timeframe: Created in 2013 and still running; the programme supports a long-term intervention methodology.

Target group(s): The *Slime programme* benefits households categorised as energy poor. Eligibility criteria may differ between regions. The default criteria include the *National Housing Agency*'s categorisation grid for "poor households", based on taxable income.

Objectives: The *Slime programme* enables local authorities to develop ambitious, proactive policies to combat energy poverty. It aims to simplify the process through which households access the assistance they need to overcome energy poverty. *[F, 33]*

Activities and approach: Local actor coordination, training, household visits, personalised counselling, support with small appliances and referrals to longer-term measures. *[F, 33]*

Relevance to students or young people: Not student-specific, but its counselling and local coordination model can be adapted for students. A *RAPPEL/Slime* workshop produced a report on solutions to student energy poverty. *[F, 33]*

Outcomes or results (if available): 99,000 households identified and guided over the programme's lifetime *[F, 31]*. In 2024, each visited household received counselling and small-appliance support, saving an average of EUR 170 in the first year; 65% took a concrete follow-up action. In Gironde, four out of ten assisted households were lifted out of energy poverty. [F, 31]

C. *Atelier 21's project on student energy poverty: Solidarité énergétique* (or Energy Solidarity*)*

Country / city: France; Atelier 21 is based in Paris.

Implementing organisation(s): *Atelier 21 with FabLabs*, repair cafés, student associations, universities, collectives and community spaces

Timeframe: 2022 to present; The online community was active mainly until 2023-2024

Target group(s): Students affected by energy poverty and wider civil society

Objectives: Promote DIY and low-energy solutions, peer advice and local student awareness events *[F, 6]*

Activities and approach: Step-by-step guides, tutorials, local events, practical energy toolkits and a *Discord* community with substantial student participation *[F, 6]*

Outcomes or results (if available): The initiative organised seven events and published at least 30 tutorials or tools *[F, 6]*. Although its reach was limited, it won the 2022 *Stop à l'Exclusion Énergétique* award and is referenced in *Chaire HOPE* materials *[F, 6; F, 34].*

Identified gaps and structural challenges: France's main gaps are invisibility, inadequate indicators, weak student outreach, fragmented institutions and inaccessible aid. Energy cheque and renovation rules do not match students' fiscal status, contract status or mobility *[F, 8; F, 16; F,17]*. Effective measures need to reach universities, student residences and social hubs, combine students with technical and welfare actors, and support practical collective solutions. *[F, 4; F, 5; F, 27]*

2.3 Portugal

National context

Energy poverty in Portugal is structural and persistent. *ONPE-PT* estimates that between 699,000 and 1.7 million people live in energy poverty *[P, 14]*. Recent indicators show that 15.7% of the population cannot keep homes adequately heated in winter and that 29.9% live in dwellings without adequate summer thermal comfort *[P, 14]*. Since 2021, higher energy bills, rent increases and the shortage of affordable housing have deepened the link between energy poverty and housing poverty *[P, 2; P, 11]*. The *Long-Term National Strategy* to *Combat Energy Poverty 2023-2050* aims to eradicate energy poverty by 2050 *[P, 7]*. Students and young people are not formally recognised as vulnerable, although studies by *NOVA University Lisbon* show significant thermal discomfort among higher education students, especially those living away from home in private rentals. *[P, 20; P, 6]*

Recognition of energy poverty

Portugal explicitly recognises energy poverty in strategic policy. Its definition follows *Directive (EU) 2023/1791*: the inability to access essential energy services, such as heating, cooling, lighting and domestic energy, that guarantee comfort, health and quality of life *[P, 12]*. In practice, policy is often operationalised through the concept of the "vulnerable consumer", based mainly on income and social benefit eligibility *[P, 8; P, 15]*. Students, young people and tenants are not explicitly named. *[P, 7]*

Key policies and institutions

The *ELPPE 2023-2050* is the main framework and is linked to the *National Energy* and *Climate Plan* and *PRR*-funded energy retrofits *[P, 7; P, 17]*. *ERSE* regulates the social energy tariff, introduced in 2010 and automatically granted to eligible vulnerable consumers *[P, 15; P, 10]* The *Environmental Fund* manages *Vale Eficiência* and the *Support Programme* for *More Sustainable Buildings [P, 17; P, 16]*. *ONPE-PT* monitors indicators and action plans *[P, 8; P, 9]*, *DGEG* handles planning and regulation, *ADENE* promotes energy efficiency and literacy [P, 1], and municipalities and regional energy agencies support local delivery. *[P,19]*

Overview of relevant policies and measures

The *ELPPE* has four pillars: housing energy efficiency and decarbonisation, access to essential energy services, integrated territorial action, and energy literacy *[P, 7]*. One quantitative target is to reduce the population unable to maintain adequate thermal comfort to below 1% by 2050 *[P, 7]*. Measures include the social energy tariff, support for bottled gas, temporary price stabilisation mechanisms, insulation, window replacement and efficient systems *[P, 15; P, 17; P, 18]*. The 2022-2026 National Housing Plan links adequate housing to energy poverty. *[P, 18]*

Access, operationalisation and implementation in practice

Identification relies heavily on indirect income indicators such as social tariff eligibility *[P, 8; P, 15]*. Students usually gain access only through membership of an eligible household or an energy contract in their own name, both of which are uncommon in student rentals. Tenancy status, split incentives, informal rentals *[P, 2; P, 20]*, shared housing and high mobility limit access to renovation and efficiency measures *[P, 2; P, 18]*. Administrative complexity, upfront costs and limited targeted communication further reduce uptake. *[P, 17; P, 7]*

Key challenges and policy gaps affecting students

The central challenge is institutional invisibility. "Vulnerable consumer" criteria do not cover displaced students, working students or international students whose hardship is real but not captured by income or benefit status [P,7 ; P, 8] Student rental housing often has low energy efficiency, poor insulation and no direct energy contract *[P, 2; P,20]*. Existing indicators miss thermal discomfort, self-rationing, health effects, academic impacts and psychological well-being. *[P, 14; P, 4]*

Ongoing national and local initiatives / best practices

A. *Housing and Energy Desks (BHE)*

Country / city: Portugal, nationwide network of local offices

Implementing organisation(s): *DECO*, *Portuguese Association for Consumer Protection*

Timeframe: Ongoing

Target group(s): Low-income families, energy-vulnerable consumers, tenants, the general public, young people and students

Objectives: Improve access to housing and energy information, reduce costs and support more efficient homes.

Activities and approach: In-person advice on bills, tariff plans, social measures, public programmes and home energy efficiency options; *EVA Platform* online tools and courses *[P, 1]*

Relevance to students or young people: Relevant to young private renters who need support with contracts, charges and available measures.

Outcomes or results (if available): *EVA* has more than 8,000 registered users in its online courses. *BHE* improves energy literacy and access to existing support. [P, 1]

B. Energy Route

Country / city: Portugal, nationwide

Implementing organisation(s): *ADENE* with municipalities, schools, universities and local entities

Timeframe: Ongoing

Target group(s): Local communities, vulnerable consumers, young people, students and the general public

Objectives: Promote energy literacy and informed participation in the energy transition.

Activities and approach: Travelling workshops, educational sessions, interactive activities and information on efficient consumption, renewable energy and public support. *[P, 1]*

Relevance to students or young people: Includes schools, universities and youth communities, helping students recognise energy vulnerability and manage energy use.

Outcomes or results (if available): Raises awareness across regions and reaches groups with limited access to technical energy information. *[P, 1]*

C. Transition Point

Country / city: Portugal, nationwide mobile initiative

Implementing organisation(s): Civil society organisations under the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Climate and Biodiversity programme,* with local partners

Timeframe: Ongoing

Target group(s): Local communities, energy-vulnerable groups, young people and the general public

Objectives: Support a just energy transition through local energy literacy, practical guidance and community empowerment.

Activities and approach: Mobile community space, awareness activities, personalised energy counselling, technical support and practical efficiency advice. *[P, 1]*

Relevance to students or young people: Useful for students living away from home or in rental housing because it provides accessible practical information.

Outcomes or results (if available): Strengthens community capacity and offers a replicable mobile model for reaching people without specialised support.

Identified gaps and structural challenges

Portugal formally recognises energy poverty, although its measures remain centred on income, social benefits and the conventional vulnerable consumer *[P, 7; P, 15]*. Students in private, informal or shared rentals often lack the contracts or documentation required for support *[P, 2; P,18]*. Guidance alone cannot address housing and eligibility barriers *[P, 2; P,7]*

2.4 Greece

National context

Greece faces severe energy poverty. *Eurostat EU-SILC* reports that, in 2024, 19% of the population could not afford adequate heating. National monitoring using the I&Ileq indicator shows a fall from 13.8% of households in 2016 to 11.1% in 2018, followed by increases to 12% in 2020 and 12.4% in 2021 *[G, 7].* Energy poverty is driven by low incomes, high energy costs and inefficient housing *[G, 6]*. In Athens, more than 71% of dwellings fall within the three lowest energy-efficiency classes *[G, 4]*. The problem is year-round: 72% of households were unable to keep warm in winter and also had difficulty cooling their homes in summer. *[G, 5]*

Recognition of energy poverty

Greece explicitly recognises energy poverty in national policy documents and uses the *I&Ileq indicator [G, 7].* A household is energy poor when its actual energy consumption or expenditure is below the level needed to cover minimum energy needs and its adjusted income is below the relevant threshold *[G, 6].* The *Energy Law* also defines vulnerable consumers, including financially vulnerable people, those dependent on an uninterrupted supply, elderly people, people with health problems and residents of disadvantaged areas *[G, 3].* Students, young people and renters are not named separately.

Key policies and institutions

The *NECP* provides the broader strategic framework, while the National Action Plan to *Combat Energy Poverty* defines measurement and policy measures *[G, 7].* The *Ministry of Environment and Energy* is the main authority, supported by the *NECP Monitoring Group and the National Energy Poverty Observatory*. *EPAH* contributes evidence and European-level support *[G, 6]*, Greece has set targets to reduce energy poverty by 50% by 2025 and 75% by 2030 compared with 2016 levels. *[G, 7]*

Overview of relevant policies and measures

The framework includes protective, structural and informational measures *[G, 7]*. The *Social Residential Tariff (KOT)* reduces electricity tariffs for vulnerable consumers. The heating allowance supports low and middle income households with heating costs *[G, 6]*. *Exoikonomo* and related schemes provide funding for insulation, heating-system replacement and energy-efficiency improvements. During the energy price crisis, Greece also used temporary electricity bill subsidies and emergency compensation *[G, 6]*. These measures remain tied to household, income, property or contract criteria. *[G, 7]*

Access, operationalisation and implementation in practice

Students may be formally eligible in some cases, while access in practice is limited *[G, 7]*. Many do not hold utility contracts, live in shared flats or pay bills through rent. Eligibility rules linked to tax declarations, residence documentation or household income can misrepresent students living away from home, although they are still attached to parental households *[G, 2]*. Administrative complexity, delayed support and poor outreach further reduce access *[G, 4]*.

Key challenges and policy gaps affecting students

The main gaps are structural exclusion, unsuitable indicators, a lack of student housing measures, low awareness and growing cooling demand *[G, 5]*. Students in private rented or temporary

accommodation often occupy old, inefficient dwellings and have limited power to improve insulation, heating or cooling *[G, 4]*. Renovation schemes focus on owners, while affordability measures focus on recognised vulnerable households. *[G, 6]*

Implications for further research and consultation

Further research should test whether indicators capture students who self-ration energy, underheat or avoid cooling *[G, 6]* Consultation should examine whether students should be recognised as a vulnerable group, how support can reach those without energy contracts, and what measures are needed for private rentals, shared housing and university residences. [G, 2]

Ongoing national and local initiatives / best practices

A. *Energy Poverty Alleviation Office (GAEF)*

Country / city: Greece, Athens

Implementing organisation(s): *Municipality of Athens* with support from *CRES*, *Electra Energy* and private partners *[G, 7]*

Timeframe: Ongoing

Target group(s): Vulnerable households, low-income residents, renters and, indirectly, young people and students

Objectives: Provide targeted support to households facing energy poverty through advice, casework and access to assistance.

Activities and approach: Energy counselling, help navigating social and energy measures, vulnerability identification, referrals, awareness activities, support with equipment and municipal tax reductions for people identified as highly vulnerable.

Relevance to students or young people: Not student-specific. It has more flexible criteria and local advisory roles could be adapted for students facing informational and administrative barriers. *[G, 4]*

Outcomes or results (if available): Widely cited as a promising local operational model for improving access beyond formal eligibility. *[G, 7]*

B. Students Switch Off Campaign

Country / city: Greece, selected universities and wider European implementation

Implementing organisation(s): *Students Switch Off*, originally developed by *NUS UK* with *SOS-UK*; in Greece, the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens was a notable partner

Timeframe: Ongoing in Europe since the early 2010s; Greek implementation approximately 2014-2018

Target group(s): University students, especially those in student residences or halls of residence

Objectives: Encourage energy-saving behaviour and sustainable habits in student accommodation.

Activities and approach: Peer engagement, residence competitions, energy-use feedback, workshops, incentives and rewards for efficient student groups or buildings.

Relevance to students or young people: Directly student-focused and adapted to student housing contexts.

Outcomes or results (if available): Participating universities reported energy reductions of around 5% to 15% in student residences, along with higher awareness and longer-term behaviour change.

C. enCOMPASS behavioural energy-awareness project

Country / city: Greece, as a pilot site in an EU project

Implementing organisation(s): Greek partners, including *CERTH* and the *National Documentation Centre [G, 2]*

Timeframe: 2016-2019

Target group(s): Households, schools, users of public buildings and students

Objectives: Promote energy-saving behaviour through digital tools and awareness of consumption patterns.

Activities and approach: Real-time platforms for monitoring energy use, behavioural nudges, feedback systems, awareness campaigns and student/school engagement.

Relevance to students or young people: Students were included as a key audience for energy literacy and behavioural change. *[G, 2]*

Outcomes or results (if available): The project showed that feedback tools can influence energy behaviour and increase awareness among students and households.

Identified gaps and structural challenges

Greek measures address energy poverty, while students are still poorly recognised *[G, 7]* Indicators and eligibility systems rely on income, expenditure, arrears or formal responsibility for bills, which can miss students attached to parental households, sharing accommodation or paying utilities informally *[G, 6]*. Local advisory and behavioural initiatives reduce information gaps, while they do not resolve issues of housing quality, affordability, contract status or lack of student-specific recognition *[G, 4]*

Conclusion

Across Italy, France, Portugal and Greece, energy poverty is recognised through energy, welfare and housing policy, although students remain largely invisible. Support is usually tied to household income, formal utility contracts, property ownership or established categories of vulnerability. These criteria do not match the experience of students in shared flats, temporary rentals, university residences or inefficient private housing.

3. Case studies and expert consultations

Introduction

STEP UP continued WP1 through expert consultations in Italy, France, Portugal, and Greece. The interviews complemented the desk research and student survey by gathering practical evidence from universities, energy agencies, public authorities, civil society organisations, housing actors, consumer organisations, and student-accommodation stakeholders. This chapter presents the main evidence, statistics, names, and organisations most relevant to *STEP UP,* with an emphasis on the visibility of student energy poverty, housing conditions, policy gaps, and practical responses.

3.1 Italy

Background and role

The Italian consultations combined civil society, political, academic, and technical perspectives. Ovidio Marzaioli is a lawyer and deputy chairman of *Movimento Consumatori*, active on *ARERA* electricity, gas, water issues, and in the *National Council of Consumers and Users*. Luca Squeri is a Forza Italia MP from Milan and a member of the *Tenth Committee* on *Productive Activities*. Paolo Esposito is a professor at the *University of Naples Parthenope*, with around ten years of work on energy-poverty indicators and the *Italian Observatory* on *Energy Communities*. Mauro Pellegrino is a mechanical engineer, *EGE*, and energy-management expert with around twenty years of experience.

Energy poverty and students: general assessment

Student energy poverty is recognised, although it is poorly measured. Marzaioli reported recurring cases among students living away from home, especially in Milan, Rome, and Naples. Squeri linked energy costs to the right to education, together with rent and university fees. The consultations used a 15% energy-bill share of income as the energy-poverty threshold. *Assoutenti* cited more than 9% of Italian households in energy poverty, while around 50% of university students were described as living away from home. Vulnerable groups include international, working, low-income, and older students who manage bills independently.

Housing conditions and structural factors

Housing quality is a major driver. Nearly 70% of Italy's housing stock predates 1980, and many student flats have worn windows, no double glazing, old gas boilers and inefficient appliances. Students often rent cheaper accommodation in outlying areas or historic centres in Naples, Bologna, Milan and Bari. Poor insulation, outdated heating and cooling systems and weak safety standards affect comfort, study and well-being. Flat energy fees also reduce transparency. One Salerno student renting in Naples received an extra EUR 450 energy adjustment without a clear breakdown.

Policy frameworks, support measures and gaps

Italy has relevant instruments, while they are not integrated around students. Squeri cited *PNRR* provision for 60,000 student housing places linked to energy-efficiency requirements and the Housing Plan to restore 60,000 public homes out of 800,000 State-owned homes. A Ministry of University rent-support fund of around EUR 10 million was also mentioned. Relevant actors include *EDISU/ADISU* agencies, regional *CRUI* coordination, universities and *ACER* in Campania. Main gaps are fragmentation, limited resources, uneven regional implementation and weak communication.

Policy measures and solutions

Interviewees recommended renovation, the *Green Homes Directive*, renewable energy, social housing and targeted vouchers for students away from home or working students. Squeri stressed reduced gas dependence, more renewables, future nuclear capacity and *Renewable Energy Communities*. Esposito called for coordination between universities, regions, *ADISU/EDISU*, *ACER*-type agencies and local authorities. Pellegrino proposed regulating flat energy fees, requiring monthly consumption reports, linking agreed-rent student contracts and the 10% flat-tax scheme to the property's energy rating, and making tax benefits conditional on a minimum energy class.

Universities and community-based action

Universities were identified as information and coordination hubs. They can run awareness campaigns, connect students to *ADISU/EDISU* and housing agencies, support task forces, and work with student associations, local authorities, and non-profit organisations. Pellegrino emphasised practical training on contracts, tariffs, consumption timing, efficient appliances, and the risks linked to electric heaters or blankets. University help desks supported by student associations and consumer organisations are directly relevant to *STEP UP* training and outreach.

Final reflections and vignette

All respondents who addressed the vignette considered it energy poverty. A 21-year-old student in a 40 m² rented flat, avoiding heating, using an electric blanket, and spending 18% of income on energy exceeds the 15% threshold. Marzaioli warned of risks to well-being and academic performance. Esposito described the case as not uncommon, and Pellegrino considered the problem more widespread than assumed.

3.2 France

Background and role

The French consultations included field, consumer, academic, and housing-management perspectives. *RAPPEL* is a network of around 100 professionals working on energy poverty across energy, social and housing sectors. *MNE* is an independent public institution created around 20 years ago after energy-market liberalisation, with around 45 employees working on information, mediation, and advocacy. Academic input came from *Fondation pour le Logement des Défavorisés*, *Roubaix*, *Chaire HOPE,* and a European institute working on energy poverty and just transition. Other perspectives included a student energy-comparator start-up active since 2021 and a residence manager covering 200 residences and 20,000 apartments.

Energy poverty and students: general assessment

France legally recognised energy poverty in 2010 and created *ONPE* in 2011, while student targeting became more visible mainly after 2020 through *Chaire HOPE*. *MNE*'s 2,000-respondent *Baromètre de l'Energie* shows that young people report more bill-payment difficulties and more cold at home, although the data use age rather than student status. *MNE* is known by only around 40% of the population despite being listed on bills. Vulnerable groups include low-income, isolated, international, and non-European students, students from African countries or French overseas territories, and students in private rentals or poor *CROUS* residences.

Housing conditions and structural factors

Housing is the main structural driver. Students face frequent moves, short rental periods, fear of landlord conflict, weak bargaining power and intense pressure in urban rental markets. Private rentals were repeatedly described as the highest-risk segment, including attic rooms, basements, poor insulation, moisture, mould, unofficial subletting and spaces below the legal 9 m² threshold. One expert cited rents of EUR 700-1,000 for a shared room or 12 m² space in Nice. *CROUS* residences vary greatly, and one academic reported around 30 years of disinvestment and a one-year social-housing wait in Lille.

Policy frameworks, support measures and gaps

Students are not explicitly included in national or local energy-poverty policy. Existing aid is based on resources, tax status, housing benefits or renovation, not student status. The energy cheque, around EUR 150 and sometimes cited as EUR 150-200 maximum, was considered insufficient and often inaccessible because many students remain attached to their parents' tax household. APL helps many students, although it is not linked to dwelling quality. France Rénov' and *ANAH* support mainly reach owners, while students are tenants. The Climate and Resilience Law ban on renting thermal sinks is promising, while weakened DPE calculations were criticised.

Policy measures and solutions

Recommended measures include better student data, stronger renovation funding, student-specific bill support, landlord obligations and counselling. *RAPPEL* called for a higher *ANAH* budget, tripling the energy cheque and support through *Slime*, *Bail Rénov'*, *Territoire 0* exclusion énergétique and assisted self-rehabilitation. *MNE* recommended banning full electricity shut-offs all year by reducing supply to 1 kVA, creating a last-resort energy supplier, restoring automatic energy-cheque allocation and improving *FSL* financing. The broker proposed extending *CSPE* tax relief to students or under-25s, worth around EUR 120 per year.

Universities and community-based action

Universities and *CROUS* can identify, inform and support students, while they need partnerships with social, housing and energy actors. Suggested actions include campus awareness, legal support against non-compliant landlords, practical energy literacy, help reading bills, normal energy-cost estimates before lease signing and links to existing aid. *Chaire HOPE* was cited as a useful model. Student associations can make the problem visible when supported by local authorities, energy providers, residence managers and consumer organisations.

Final reflections and vignette

The vignette matches French evidence on self-restriction, "heat or eat" choices and hidden discomfort. Experts argued that diagnosis is the first priority because France lacks regular, comparable student data. Key figures include the 2013 *Enquête Nationale Logement*, still-unavailable 2020 results, an older estimate of 20% of households in energy poverty, energy bills rising 30% in five years, fixed charges of EUR 26 per month before consumption, 50-55% annual apartment turnover in residences, and 60% of one manager's residences being social residences with utilities included.

3.3 Portugal

Background and role

The consultations held in Portugal involved representatives from organisations with expertise in the areas of the environment, local government, energy, research, and building energy efficiency, ensuring broad representation of perspectives relevant to the national context. Representatives from *ZERO* (Islene Façanha), *S.ENERGIA* (Susana Camacho), *RNAE* (Jorge Baptista), *ADENE* and *ONPE-PT* (Manuel Casquiço, Rita Gomes Varela, and Madalena Santos), *CENSE/FCT NOVA*, *CHANGE* and *EPAH* (João Pedro Gouveia), *CENSE* and the *LIFE HORIS* project (Inês Valente), *FELPT* (Tiago Vicente), *CENSE/FCT NOVA* (Carolina Castro), and Lisboa *E-NOVA* (Nuno Clímaco).

These consultations made it possible to gather input on the main challenges, opportunities, and needs associated with the implementation of energy efficiency policies and measures in Portugal, as well as to identify relevant experiences and practices developed at the local level. Among the examples highlighted, *S.ENERGIA* presented the work carried out in collaboration with the Baixa da Banheira Parish Council and a health centre highlighting the role of partnerships between local authorities, energy agencies, and community-based organisations in promoting energy efficiency, combating energy poverty, and strengthening the capacity to respond to community needs.

Energy poverty and students: general assessment

Student energy poverty in Portugal is real, under-recognised and poorly measured. Students are usually included in household or general vulnerable-population categories. The most vulnerable groups are displaced students, international students, students from Portuguese-speaking African countries or the Global South, low-income and middle-class students whose families stretch budgets, and students in private or informal room rentals. Carolina Castro's study provides the strongest student-specific evidence: 848 valid responses from higher education students between September 2022 and April 2023 across the North, Centre, Lisbon Metropolitan Area and Alentejo. It found displaced students most vulnerable in winter and summer, with Alentejo most critical. Energy poverty among higher education students in Portugal remains a largely unrecognized and insufficiently studied issue. In most national assessments, students are grouped under the general categories of households or vulnerable populations, which makes it difficult to identify their specific needs. Among the most vulnerable groups are students living away from home, international students, students from Portuguese-speaking African countries (*PALOP*) and other countries in the Global South, low-income students and those from middle-class families facing economic hardship, as well as those living in private or informal housing.

The study by Carolina Castro and João Pedro Gouveia represents, to date, the most comprehensive analysis of energy poverty among higher education students in Portugal. Based on a survey conducted between September 2022 and April 2023, which collected 848 valid responses from students in the North, Centre, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, and Alentejo regions, the authors analysed thermal comfort conditions and vulnerability to energy poverty among local and non-local students. The results show that the majority of students experience thermal discomfort in both winter and summer. However, non-local students report significantly higher levels of discomfort than local students, largely due to their reliance on the private rental market, which is characterised by older buildings with poor thermal performance. The Alentejo stands out as the region where displaced students are most vulnerable to energy poverty. The study concludes that it is necessary to strengthen student housing policies, improve the quality of student housing particularly in the private rental sector and in older buildings.

Housing conditions and structural factors

Housing is the central driver. Students in Lisbon and other markets face high rents, strong demand, scarce affordable supply, and private rooms with low energy performance. Informal renting, absence of leases, temporary residence and shared rooms make the problem invisible. Older buildings often have dampness, leaks, poor insulation, poor windows and poor comfort in winter and summer. Experts repeatedly highlighted the split-incentive problem: students do not own the dwelling, landlords decide on renovations, and students have limited bargaining power. Nuno Clímaco, consultant and specialist in building energy efficiency at *E-NOVA* in Lisbon, noted that policy has often focused on student housing supply rather than energy quality. Although new university housing meets more stringent thermal quality and energy efficiency requirements, the existing building stock generally still requires upgrades.

Policy frameworks, support measures and gaps

Students are not explicitly included as a target group in Portuguese energy-poverty policy. Existing instruments focus on households, traditional vulnerable groups or social-tariff recipients. *ADENE* interviewees highlighted the *Energy Certification System*, the Action Plan to *Combat Energy Poverty* and the developing *National Energy Literacy Plan*, where university students may become a priority audience. Rita Gomes Varela, Technical Specialist in the *Energy Transition Division of the Directorate for Industry and Energy Transition* at the *Energy Agency (ADENE)* and Member of the *National Observatory on Energy Poverty (ONPE-PT)* team, said that Portugal has no specific university-student measures. Social tariffs, renovation schemes, *Vale Eficiência*, *E-lar* and housing assistance are often inaccessible because students may not hold the energy contract, own the property or have formal rental status.

Policy measures and solutions

Experts proposed affordable and energy-efficient student housing, renovation, reuse of public or obsolete buildings and comfort standards for new residences. *RNAE* proposed minimum energy ratings for rentals, suggesting Class C as an intermediate minimum, tax incentives for landlords, support linked to housing performance and a VAT reduction to 6% for energy-efficiency improvements in student housing. *S.ENERGIA* proposed student-housing certification and portable window-insulation measures. *ADENE* experts called for targeted data collection, landlord support, emergency student support and efficiency vouchers. *Inês Valente* identified the *Transition Point* mobile model as transferable to support students, while *LIFE HORIS* was cited as a digital one-stop-shop approach.

Universities and community-based action

Universities are essential and at the same time underused. They can collect data, add energy-poverty questions to institutional monitoring, provide campus energy-support desks, link students to support schemes, influence landlords, define minimum housing-quality criteria and translate research into policy briefs. Energy literacy should begin before higher education through school curricula and textbooks, but universities can reinforce it across disciplines. Tiago Vicente, Director of the *Information and Education Unit at ADENE (the Energy Agency)* and President of *Future Energy Leaders Portugal (FELPT)*, stressed participatory initiatives and a structured energy-literacy network. Student associations and peer support can improve visibility and document lived experience, but they cannot replace housing and energy policy.

Final reflections and vignette

Most respondents considered the vignette to be energy poverty or hidden energy poverty, while noting that income, rent and motivation require fuller assessment. For *STEP UP*, the Portuguese evidence points to recognition of higher-education students, especially displaced students, as a vulnerable group, databases, better private-rental quality, more student housing; landlord incentives, and minimum energy standards. Key evidence includes the study of Carolina Castro's 848 responses and João Pedro Gouveia's specifically regarding energy poverty.

3.4 Greece

Background and role

The Greek consultations included five case studies, a student and youth sustainability perspective from *AUEB*, *Boroume*, municipal energy-poverty services in Athens, the medium-term rental platform *Nostus* and the consumer association *EKPIZO*. Organisations and initiatives mentioned include *ELECTRA Energy,* the *Municipality of Athens*, *ESN*, the *European Youth Card*, the *Erasmus+ app*, *RAE,* the *Ministry of Environment and Energy*, the *NECP committee*, *Reverter*, *Power Poor*, *DECO*, *NTUA*, *PPC*, *HEDNO*, *Icomat*, *Public and Aluminco*.

Energy poverty and students: general assessment

Student energy poverty exists in Greece, while it is institutionally invisible. Students are treated as part of the family household, temporary residents or tenants, and utility bills are often not in their name. Examples included shared gas bills of around EUR 80 per month, energy costs adding roughly 20% on top of rent, and students avoiding heating. *M.M*. cited Greek energy poverty as above 35%, while *E.* referred to around one in three households being affected. The *Municipality of Athens* found only 3 students in a dataset of around 700 people, showing a data gap rather than absence of need.

Housing conditions and structural factors

Housing is the main driver. Student flats in Athens, Thessaloniki and regional towns were described as old, poorly insulated, expensive and scarce, with poor window frames and pre-1980s building quality. *Airbnb*, *Golden Visa* investment, vacant properties and seasonal rentals reduce supply. One practice is renting to students until June, then switching to tourism until October. The student allowance of about EUR 1,000 per year may cover only two months of rent, since rents below EUR 400 are now hard to find. *S.M.* cited renovated 25 m² rooms at EUR 450 per month. *Nostus* reported growing demand for flatmates.

Policy frameworks, support measures and gaps

Students are not explicitly included in national or local energy-poverty policies. Existing support is fragmented: housing allowances, social tariffs, municipal fee exemptions, *Exoikonomo*, *Youth Pass* and vouchers help indirectly, while they do not create a student framework. The *Municipality of Athens* uses a 20-question *Power Poor*-based assessment and an energy benefit card with partner discounts. In two years, it recorded around 1,000 registrations, assessed 750 households, had around 200 cases awaiting evaluation, classified 450 as energy poor under the 10% income criterion, granted around 250 exemptions and found that 72% of classified cases involved women.

Policy measures and solutions

The strongest recommendations are student housing policy, rent support and energy-efficient accommodation. Renovation subsidies should target landlords, parents, municipal buildings, university property and rented homes because students usually do not own the property. *EKPIZO* proposed extending *Exoikonomo* and tenant clauses to students, including 100% subsidies for vulnerable households. The *Municipality* mentioned renovation support up to EUR 35,000 and the rental-market distortion of EUR 300 from a normal rental compared with EUR 900 from *Airbnb*. Energy communities were also proposed and one municipal project with 20 single-parent women had 4 selected for free electricity for 20 years. Greece has around 280 days of sunshine per year, although *HEDNO* grid-capacity limits remain a barrier.

Universities and community-based action

Universities can collect student data, send evidence to ministries, host energy advice points, provide energy-literacy training, offer free meals and heated study spaces, use real-estate assets for housing and advocate for better dormitories. *EKPIZO* proposed a university-municipality-consumer association one-stop shop model, similar to *DECO* in Portugal, for guidance on bills, rights, renovation options and eligibility. *NTUA* was repeatedly mentioned as a possible partner. *Nostus* highlighted verified medium-term rentals, all-inclusive pricing and partnerships with *ESN*, the *European Youth Card and Erasmus+*.

Final reflections and vignette

All respondents who addressed the vignette considered it energy poverty. A 21-year-old student in a 40 m² rented flat, avoiding heating, using an electric blanket and spending 18% of income on energy is above the 10% threshold and shows heat self-rationing. Most considered the case typical or likely typical, although student-specific data are missing. For *STEP UP*, the Greek evidence points to data collection, recognition of students as an affected group, adapted social tariffs and renovation schemes, redesigned housing support, tenant protection, green dormitories, affordable housing, and cooperation between universities, municipalities and consumer organisations.

Conclusion

Across the four countries, student energy poverty is a combined housing, income, energy-efficiency and social-policy problem. Students living away from home, international students, renters and low-income students are especially exposed to poor housing, high rent, weak thermal comfort and limited support. Existing measures often miss students because they depend on household-level data, formal contracts, property ownership, tax status or bills being in the student's name.

4. Online Survey

Introduction

The *Survio* platform was used in this online survey during the period, which lasted from April to June 2026, as part of the *STEP UP*. The survey aimed to gather responses from students about the socio-economic situation, housing conditions, energy expenditure, thermal comfort, awareness of energy poverty, coping strategies, and support measures. Participants were sent links to the survey, which they completed independently. The results can be considered descriptive rather than representative since the sample is self-selected and not very large, yet they still shed light on students' experiences.

4.1 Italy

Survey Overview and Methodological Note

The student survey in Italy was completed by 40 respondents between 31 March 2026 and 12 June 2026. It recorded 124 total visits and a 32.3% completion rate. The survey covered students' socio-economic profile, housing, energy costs, thermal comfort, awareness of energy poverty, coping strategies and support needs. The strongest evidence is that 82.5% limit energy use to reduce costs, winter discomfort reaches 32.5%, summer discomfort reaches 42.5%, and only 10% reported payment delays. In Italy, strain appears mainly through self-rationing, constrained comfort, family dependence, rental or substandard housing, and seasonal heating and cooling costs.

Respondent Profile

Respondents were aged 19 to 32, with the highest concentration at 22 years old. Females were 60% (24) and males 40% (16). The group was 95% Italian and 5% French, with 95% studying in Italy. Fields included Economics, Law, *DAMS*, Sciences, Engineering, and Business Management. Students in the 4th year or higher represented 32.5%, while 2nd and 3rd year students represented 25% each. Employment status varied: 35% studied full-time and were not employed, 52.5% combined their studies with part-time employment, and 5% worked full-time.

Income, Work, and Financial Support

Personal resources were limited or dependent on others: 25% reported no monthly personal income, 10% reported less than EUR 400, and EUR 400-599 was the most common income band at 35%. Family support was selected by 85%, part-time work by 37.5%, scholarships by 2.5%, and student loans by no one. This profile leaves students with little flexibility when high or unexpected energy bills appear.

Housing Situation and Dwelling Conditions

Housing was mainly family-based or rented: 60% lived with family, 30% in rented apartments or houses, and 10% in sublet shared rooms. Dwelling size ranged from 12 to 200 square metres, with a median around 80 square metres. Most lived with others: 2 people, 3 people, and 4 people were the most common household sizes; only 2 respondents lived alone or with one other person. Heating was mainly centralised gas or district heating (70%), followed by electric heating (27.5%). Energy performance was moderate: 45% rated their dwelling at 3, 17.5% at 1, 17.5% at 4, and 12.5% as excellent. Technical heating, cooling or insulation problems were reported by 17.5%.

Energy Costs, Payment Pressure, and Energy Rationing

Monthly energy costs were most often EUR 50-99 (37.5%) or EUR 100-200 (17.5%), while 20% were unsure of their costs. Only 10% delayed or avoided paying energy bills because of cost, but

42.5% limited energy consumption frequently and 40% did so occasionally, totalling 82.5%. Payment default is therefore not the main sign of strain, since the self-rationing is.

Thermal Comfort and Energy-Saving Practices

Thermal comfort was seasonal. In winter, low comfort scores 1-2 affected 32.5% of respondents, including 10% at score 1 and 22.5% at score 2. In summer, low comfort reached 42.5%, and only 7.5% selected the highest comfort score. The most common practices were dressing for the season (65%), switching off unused appliances (55%), adjusting the thermostat (35%), reducing hot-water use (27.5%), and using electric blankets or portable heaters (10%).

Awareness and Recognition of Energy Poverty

Awareness was moderate: 40% knew the term energy poverty well, 37.5% had heard it , while they were unsure of its meaning, and 22.5% had not heard it. Knowledge was lower: 27.5% rated themselves at level 1, 30% at level 2, and only 10% at levels 4 or 5. When shown a concrete scenario of a student struggling with energy costs, 70% identified it as energy poverty, showing that lived experience is easier to recognise than formal terminology.

Policy Preferences and Support Needs

Respondents prioritised material support: 70% chose direct economic aid or electricity vouchers, 55% tax relief on student energy bills, 42.5% subsidies for energy-efficient appliances, 20% social housing, 20% awareness campaigns, and 12.5% energy renovation support. Open answers repeated tax relief, cash support, vouchers, government subsidies, and student-specific offers similar to public transport discounts.

Seasonal Patterns

Energy stress was strongest in winter (67.5%) and summer (55%). Behaviour changed in both seasons: 82.5% in winter (60% + 22.5%) and 82.5% in summer (57.5% + 25%). Thermal discomfort was reported by 57.5% in winter and 57.5% in summer. Time spent at home was highest in winter, when 80% spent significant time at home, followed by autumn at 57.5%; in summer, 67.5% spent less time at home. Student energy poverty therefore involves both heating and cooling.

Qualitative Analysis of Open Answers

Open answers combined ordinary saving with constrained comfort: switching off lights, unplugging devices, limiting hot showers, wearing blankets instead of heating, and managing laundry to save water heating. One respondent wrote: "*I eat mostly precooked or microwaved food, wash myself in pieces, limiting showers*." Others mentioned difficult landlords, refused repairs and inefficient appliances. Suggestions focused on targeted support similar to transport subsidies, landlord controls, higher housing standards, awareness, government-funded vouchers and direct subsidies. One respondent stated: "*We need awareness, savings and responsibility. To reduce energy waste, we need to be more sustainable and economical in our daily life at home*."

Five Best Practices

Best Practice 1: Student Energy Voucher Scheme

What should be done: Establish targeted energy vouchers or billing discounts for enrolled students, similar to public transport student passes.

Who should act: Government and energy utilities.

Evidence from the survey: 70% selected direct economic aid, and open responses repeatedly requested student-specific offers.

Best Practice 2: Rental Housing Standards and Landlord Oversight

What should be done: Enforce minimum housing standards for rental properties and create dispute resolution for student tenants on heating, cooling and insulation.

Who should act: Municipality and regional government.

Evidence from the survey: 17.5% reported heating or insulation problems, and open responses identified unresponsive landlords and inefficient appliances.

Best Practice 3: Seasonal Energy Hardship Support Fund

What should be done: Create a fund with extra support during winter and summer, when energy stress is highest.

Who should act: Universities and regional government.

Evidence from the survey: 67.5% reported winter stress and 55% summer stress linked to energy bills; thermal discomfort reached 32.5% in winter and 42.5% in summer.

Best Practice 4: Awareness and Information Campaigns Linking Formal Terms to Lived Experience

What should be done: Connect formal energy poverty terminology to concrete student scenarios and available support.

Who should act: Universities, NGOs and government communication agencies. Evidence from the survey: 37.5% had heard the term but were unsure of its meaning, while 70% correctly identified an energy-poverty scenario.

Best Practice 5: University Energy Efficiency Retrofitting and On-Campus Support

What should be done: Prioritise energy-efficient retrofitting of student housing managed by universities and provide on-campus heating and cooling spaces during peak seasons.

Who should act: University.

Evidence from the survey: 45% rated dwelling energy performance at level 3, 42.5% selected appliance subsidies, and 82.5% reported seasonal energy-conservation practices.

4.2 France

Survey Overview and Methodological Note

The student survey in France was completed by 41 respondents between 30 March 2026 and 8 June 2026. It recorded 127 visits and a 32.3% completion rate. It examined socio-economic profile, housing, energy costs, thermal comfort, energy poverty awareness in housing, coping strategies and preferred support measures. Results are descriptive because the number of respondents is low and the sample is not representative.

Respondent Profile

Respondents were aged 19 to 24, with an average age of 21. Most were near the end of their studies: 63.4% were 21 or 22 years old and 63.4% were in the 4th year or higher. Women represented 70.7%. Sciences Po Lille was overrepresented and has a majority of women students.

In total, 92.7% studied in France and all of them were French. Most studied political science or social sciences in a *Grande École*, with others in engineering, communication, law and minor fields. More than half did not work, 12.2% had part-time employment, and 36.6% were in internships or apprenticeships mandated by the curriculum.

Income, Work, and Financial Support

Income was heterogeneous: 22% reported less than EUR 400 per month, while 26.8% reported more than EUR 1,000. Family support dominated at 85.4%, and bursary income was used by 22%. Low or dependent income can limit the ability to absorb unexpected bills, while the relatively large high-income share may mean fewer respondents are at risk of energy poverty in their housing.

Housing Situation and Dwelling Conditions

Most respondents lived in private rentals: 46.3% in an apartment and 36.6% in shared accommodation. Dwelling size ranged from 11 to 150 square metres; larger figures reflected shared houses. A total of 43.9% lived alone and 46.3% lived with one or two more people. Heating was mostly electric (85.4%), followed by gas (12.2%). Energy performance was spread across scores 2, 3 and 4 out of 5, with only 9.8% rating their dwelling at 1. Also, 68.3% reported no technical issues with heating, cooling or insulation. This suggests modern and equipped dwellings, although the unusual pattern may reflect the sample's lack of representativeness.

Energy Costs, Payment Pressure, and Energy Rationing

Energy costs created medium pressure. The most common monthly band was EUR 50 to EUR 99, selected by 42.5%, while 22% did not know their energy cost. Only 4.9% delayed or avoided paying energy bills in the last year, probably because many respondents came from higher-income families. Even so, 58.5% limited energy consumption often and 19.5% did so occasionally, so housing energy poverty appears mainly as self-rationing rather than late payment.

Thermal Comfort and Energy-Saving Practices

Summer discomfort was more extreme than winter discomfort: 19.5% selected low winter comfort scores, while 41.5% selected extremely low or low summer scores. Winter comfort was more distributed, while summer was polarised. The most common practices were changing indoor clothing habits (80.5%), lowering thermostat or AC settings (75.6%), and turning off appliances when not in use (75.6%). Reducing hot-water use, relying on blankets, or using portable heaters instead of central heating were uncommon.

Awareness and Recognition of Energy Poverty

Awareness was very high: 61% knew the term energy poverty, 29.3% had heard it, while were unsure, and 9.8% had not heard it. Self-rated information was also relatively high, with 48.8% rating themselves at 3 out of 5 and 31.7% at 4 out of 5. A total of 82.9% identified the vignette as energy poverty. This may be linked to the political and environmental science profile of respondents or to self-selection by students already familiar with the topic.

Policy Preferences and Support Needs

Respondents prioritised practical support: direct financial aid (65.9%), tax alleviation on student energy bills (61%) and renovation subsidy (53.7%). Open answers mentioned renovation more often, at 51.2%, while financial aid appeared in 41.5% of open answers. Many respondents wanted

renovation to be mandatory rather than only subsidised, and they often framed financial aid as broader housing support rather than energy-only support. The issue was therefore seen as both affordability and housing quality.

Seasonal Patterns

Energy stress was overwhelmingly strongest in winter: 97.6% selected winter as the season with the most financial stress from energy bills. Air conditioning is rare in France, so summer did not usually increase energy costs. Seasonal answers still showed major changes in energy habits in winter and partly in autumn, with thermal discomfort strongest in winter and summer. Time spent at home was rare only in summer; in other seasons students were often at home, while only around 20% were always at home. High summer discomfort despite less time at home suggests that heat remains serious for some respondents.

Qualitative Analysis of Open Answers

Open answers described self-privation and changes in practice: lowering the thermostat, heating only some rooms, using oven heat, stopping use of hairdryers, vacuum cleaners and electronics, wearing warmer clothing, or leaving the dwelling for parents', friends', libraries or gyms. Suggestions focused on social and renovated housing, taking the issue more seriously, better identifying students in need, and easier access to blankets, humidity regulators and energy-efficient appliances. Respondents called for universities, the state and other actors to coordinate action, including regulation and broader societal changes such as car bans and greener cities.

Five Best Practices

Best Practice 1: Housing renovation

What should be done: Pass regulations that make renovations financially assisted and mandatory, with attention to summer thermal discomfort.

Who should act: Government.

Evidence from the survey: Open answers showed strong concern about housing quality and called for renovation, including mandatory renovation.

Best Practice 2: Identification of students in need

What should be done: Conduct large surveys involving all actors and reaching students directly. Government should regulate and finance them; municipalities and universities should conduct them; NGOs and energy providers should strengthen them.

Who should act: University, government, municipality, NGO, energy provider and other actors.

Evidence from the survey: Heterogeneous answers, some extreme coping measures and open answers show varied needs that are hard to identify.

Best Practice 3: Student financial aid

What should be done: Make energy in housing more accessible through a student energy tax reduction and student energy cheque, with energy providers helping to identify students and facilitate voucher use and energy price changes.

Who should act: Government and energy providers.

Evidence from the survey: Closed answers strongly supported financial aid, including 65.9% for direct aid and 61% for tax alleviation; open answers also pointed to state responsibility.

Best Practice 4: Appliance assistance

What should be done: Help students change appliance practices through best-practice knowledge, university communication campaigns, low-energy-use appliances, NGO lending, municipally assisted warm cloth or blanket banks, and short-term renting for shared energy-efficient appliances.

Who should act: Universities, municipalities and NGOs.

Evidence from the survey: Appliance practice changes were common, and open answers mentioned subsidies, renting possibilities and aid kits.

Best Practice 5: Social student housing

What should be done: invest in better quality and availability of social student housing by building new capacity and renovating poor-quality social residences with public funding.

Who should act: university, government and municipality.

Evidence from the survey: results show a need for better-quality housing and broader action; open answers called for student bursaries or social housing.

4.3 Portugal

Survey Overview and Methodological Note

The student survey in Portugal was conducted among 40 respondents between 5 May and 16 June 2026. It analysed socio-economic profile, housing, energy costs, thermal comfort, perceptions of energy poverty, mitigation strategies and support measures. The questionnaire recorded 124 visits and a 32.3% completion rate. Because the sample was small and not selected through probabilistic procedures, results are indicative rather than representative of Portuguese students, although they provide a starting point for future analysis.

Respondent Profile

Respondents were mainly young adults aged 18 to 49, with a median age of 22. Women represented 60%. Nationality was mostly Portuguese, with a few Brazilian or Portuguese-Brazilian participants. Fields included environmental studies, land-use planning, urban planning, geography, public health, social sciences, engineering, nursing, sociology, anthropology and international relations. Second-year students were 37.5%. Employment status was evenly exposed to financial vulnerability: 40% studied without a job, 40% worked part-time, and 20% worked full-time.

Income, Work, and Financial Support

Many respondents had limited resources: 47.5% had no income of their own or less than EUR 400 per month, including 27.5% in the lowest category, and 60% reported monthly income below EUR 600. Family support was the main source of finance at 52.5%, followed by part-time work at 40% and scholarships at 17.5%. Low income or dependence on others reduces the capacity to cover high or unexpected energy bills.

Housing Situation and Dwelling Conditions

Housing was mostly family-based: 62.5% lived with family, 17.5% in rented accommodation, 12.5% in shared housing, and 5% in university dormitories. Living areas ranged from 10 to 250 m², with a median of about 75 m². Only 7.5% lived alone, while about 62.5% shared the home with three or

more people, spreading energy costs. Heating was mainly electric (52.5%), followed by gas or district heating (20%). Notably, 20% had no heating system. Energy performance was concentrated at score 3 (42.5%) and score 4 (35%).

Energy Costs, Payment Pressure, and Energy Rationing

Monthly energy costs were most often EUR 50-99, selected by 40%. Payment pressure was high: 45% had delayed or avoided paying energy bills because of cost. Self-rationing was also common: 27.5% frequently limited energy consumption and 57.5% did so occasionally, totalling 85%. Energy poverty therefore appears both in payment difficulty and in reduced consumption to control expenses.

Thermal Comfort and Energy-Saving Practices

Thermal comfort was relatively similar in winter and summer. Low comfort scores 1-2 were reported by 22.5% in winter and 17.5% in summer, while most answers fell in intermediate to high comfort ranges. The most common practices were turning off appliances and lights when not in use (92.5%), wearing clothing suited to the indoor temperature (80%), and reducing hot-water consumption (25%). Blankets or portable heaters may indicate limited comfort when driven by cost.

Awareness and Recognition of Energy Poverty

Knowledge of energy poverty was moderate, as 42.5% were familiar with the concept, 42.5% had heard of it, although they were unsure of its meaning, and 15% were unfamiliar with it. Self-rated knowledge was intermediate, with 37.5% rating themselves at 3 and 32.5% at 4. When presented with a scenario, 87.5% correctly identified energy poverty, showing that students can recognise the lived reality even if the formal policy concept is less clear.

Policy Preferences and Support Needs

Support preferences were practical and material: 77.5% selected direct financial support or electricity vouchers, 65% subsidies for energy-efficient appliances, 62.5% tax breaks on student energy bills, 37.5% home renovation subsidies and social housing for students, and 40% awareness or information programmes. Open answers stressed immediate financial support through subsidies, vouchers, discounts and assistance for vulnerable students, but also structural interventions: thermal insulation, window replacement, housing renovation, upgraded university dormitories, regulation of student housing standards and political recognition of the issue.

Seasonal Patterns

Energy stress was more pronounced in winter, although summer also mattered. About 70% identified winter as the season with the greatest energy-bill difficulty, while 35% cited summer. Energy habits changed most in winter and summer, with 90% reporting frequent or very frequent changes in winter and 75% in summer. Winter was the most uncomfortable season, with 77.5% rating it uncomfortable or very uncomfortable, followed by summer at 60%. Time at home was high across seasons, especially winter, when 95% stayed home frequently or very frequently.

Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

Open answers described shortening shower times, unplugging appliances, and managing ventilation and sunlight through windows. Some students reported winter comfort problems: one needed to "use three blankets to stay warm while sleeping," while another cited daily temperature fluctuations and the time needed to heat water. Suggestions focused on housing renovation, efficient appliances, university housing with good insulation, awareness lectures and workshops, and further studies on student energy poverty. Respondents wanted financial support, housing infrastructure and political recognition, not only general information.

Five Best Practices

Best Practice 1: Targeted financial support for vulnerable students

What should be done: Provide direct financial assistance, energy vouchers or electricity-bill discounts for students facing hardship.

Who should act: Government and energy providers.

Evidence from the survey: 77.5% supported direct financial assistance, while 45% had delayed paying energy bills due to cost.

Best Practice 2: Improve the energy efficiency of student housing

What should be done: Invest in thermal insulation, window replacement and energy-efficient renovation of private and student housing.

Who should act: Government, municipalities and universities.

Evidence from the survey: Open answers highlighted housing renovation as a priority, and 20% reported having no heating system.

Best Practice 3: Expand affordable, energy-efficient student residences

What should be done: Increase affordable student residences with good thermal performance and low operating costs.

Who should act: Government and universities.

Evidence from the survey: Participants repeatedly called for more affordable student housing with better insulation and energy efficiency.

Best Practice 4: Raise awareness and provide practical guidance

What should be done: Organise workshops, training sessions and information campaigns on energy poverty and energy-saving practices.

Who should act: Universities and NGOs.

Evidence from the survey: Most students recognised situations of energy poverty, only 42.5% were familiar with the concept, and several respondents suggested awareness-raising activities.

Best Practice 5: Strengthen research and policy monitoring

What should be done: Conduct regular research on student energy poverty and include students more explicitly in national energy poverty policies.

Who should act: Government, universities and research institutions.

Evidence from the survey: Several open answers called for more studies, noting that students remain underrepresented in Portuguese energy policies.

4.4 Greece

Survey overview and methodological note

The student survey in Greece received input from 53 respondents in Greece between 3 April and 8 June 2026. It examined students' economic situation, housing, energy bills, thermal comfort, knowledge of energy poverty, coping strategies and preferred support. There were 118 visits and a 44.9% completion rate, counting only direct-link visits. Results show risk linked to low personal income, parental and spouse support, housing conditions, and lack of energy-saving technology. A total of 30.2% had postponed or skipped energy-bill payments, while 90.6% limited energy consumption at least occasionally, showing that many students cope by changing habits and sacrificing comfort.

Respondent profile

Respondents were mostly young Greek adults aged 18-25, with an average and median age of 22. Females represented 64.2%, males 32.1%, and 1.9% selected neither male nor female. Academic fields included economics, psychology, engineering, humanities, farming, medicine, sociology, anthropology, architecture, biotechnology, philology, business management, law, and computer science. Older students were more represented: 50.9% were in the 4th year or higher, 24.5% in the 2nd year, 13.2% in the 3rd year, and 11.3% in the 1st year. Employment status: 60.4% did not work, 22.6% worked part-time, and 9.4% worked full-time.

Income, work and financial support

The income profile was financially tight, as 5.7% had no monthly personal income and 47.2% reported less than EUR 400. Another 18.9% reported EUR 400-599 and 17% reported EUR 600-799. “Family support” was selected by 79.2%, “part-time work” by 30.2%, “scholarships” by 3.8%, no one selected “student loans”, and “another source” was selected by 3.8%. Low or dependent income gives students little flexibility when winter heating or summer cooling costs rise.

Housing situation and dwelling conditions

Housing was mixed, as 47.2% lived in rented apartments or houses, 39.6% with family members, 5.7% in dormitories, and 7.5% elsewhere. Dwelling size ranged from 3 to 150 square metres , although 3 square metres was likely a mistake. The median was 50 square metres. A total of 41.5% lived alone, 24.5% with one person, 18.9% with two people, and 15.1% with three people. Heating was central heating (50.9%), electric heating (45.3%), wood or pellet stoves (22.6%), no heating system (3.8%), or other (9.4%). Energy efficiency was mostly average: score 3 (45.3%), score 2 (20.8%) and score 4 (24.5%). Technical problems with heating, cooling or insulation were reported by 32.1%.

Energy costs, payment pressure and energy rationing

Energy costs imposed noticeable pressure. Monthly expenses were most often EUR 100-200 (37.7%), followed by EUR 50-99 (28.3%), EUR 20-49 (20.8%), and more than EUR 200 (7.5%). In the previous year, 30.2% postponed or neglected energy bills because of cost. Rationing was even more visible: 58.5% often saved energy to save money, 32.1% sometimes did so, and only 9.4% said cost was not the reason. Unpaid bills are therefore not the only indicator of energy poverty.

Thermal comfort and energy-saving practices

Thermal comfort problems appeared in winter and summer. On the 1-5 comfort scale, 20.8% reported low winter comfort and 26.4% low summer comfort. On the wider seasonal comfort scale, 69.8% were uncomfortable in winter and 62.2% in summer. The most common saving practice was dressing warmly or lightly indoors (83%), followed by reducing heating or air-conditioning settings (52.8%), turning off unused appliances (41.5%), using alternatives such as electric blankets or portable heaters instead of central heating (37.7%), and reducing hot-water consumption (32.1%).

Awareness and recognition of energy poverty

Awareness of energy poverty was low: 26.4% had heard the term before, 41.5% had heard it, although they were unsure what it meant, and 32.1% had never heard it. Knowledge self-assessments were also low, with 30.2% rating themselves at 1 and 37.7% at 2 on a 1-5 scale. However, 88.7% recognised the vignette as energy poverty, meaning students may recognise the everyday situation more easily than the policy term.

Policy preferences and support needs

Respondents preferred concrete help: tax reduction on student electricity bills was selected by 83%, direct monetary help or electricity vouchers by 66%, social housing by 56.6%, grants for energy-efficient electrical equipment by 45.3%, renovation subsidies by 34%, and awareness or education campaigns by 28.3%. Open answers mentioned low energy prices, heating allowances, help for students, tax breaks, social tariffs, good windows and insulation, student dormitories, direct government assistance, and grants for efficient appliances. Information is useful, while it cannot replace material assistance.

Seasonal patterns

Energy-related stress was strongest in winter, although it was not limited to it: 75.5% selected winter and 52.8% selected summer as stressful for energy bills, compared with 1.9% in spring and 5.7% in autumn. Energy habits and thermal discomfort changed most in winter and summer, when heating and cooling needs were highest. Respondents also spent more time at home in winter, with 83% selecting a form of "more often at home."

Qualitative analysis of open answers

Qualitative answers made the numbers more concrete. Some students reported ordinary saving practices, including ventilation at certain times, using a fan instead of air conditioning, using electrical devices less often, energy-saving cooking habits, and caution with the hot-water heater. More severe problems included warm blankets instead of heating, sharing one heater among students, not heating poorly insulated parts of a building, and working long hours to cover electricity bills. Suggestions asked for subsidised housing, tax breaks, affordable and energy-efficient housing, free or subsidised housing, heating solutions for student housing, energy-focused student programmes and grants to improve housing. One answer asked institutions to implement their findings instead of only conducting surveys.

Five best practices

Best practice 1: Relief on student energy bills

Action points: Set up special energy bill relief or electricity vouchers for financially constrained students.

Who should act: National and local authorities and energy supply companies. Survey data: 83% preferred a reduction in energy bill tax and 66% wanted cash payment or energy vouchers.

Best practice 2: Provide energy-efficient dormitories

What should be done: Develop dormitories with sufficient insulation, heating, cooling and hot-water systems.

Who should act: Universities and national and municipal authorities.

Survey data: Only 5.7% lived in dormitories, while 47.2% lived in rented houses and 32.1% faced heating, cooling or insulation problems.

Best practice 3: Finance the purchase of powerful devices and easy-to-do small renovations

What should be done: Provide grants for energy-efficient devices and small renovations for students in rented properties.

Who should act: Government, municipality and voluntary organisations. Survey data: 45.3% selected grants for devices and 34% chose grants for renovation.

Best Practice 4: Seasonal support for heating and cooling

What should be done: Develop student support tailored to heating needs in winter and cooling needs in summer.

Who should act: Governments, universities and local authorities.

Survey evidence: 75.5% reported winter energy-bill stress and 52.8% reported summer stress.

Best Practice 5: Practical advice combined with real support

What should be done: Establish university-based advice points on bills, tariffs, support, energy efficiency and tenants' rights.

Who should act: Universities, NGOs, local authorities and student services.

Survey evidence: 67.9% rated their knowledge about energy poverty and its causes at 1 or 2, while 88.7% recognised the phenomenon in a concrete situation.

Conclusion

In Italy, France, Portugal, and Greece, student energy poverty arises from many factors, such as low or unstable income, housing quality, heating and cooling needs, and insufficient means for dealing with energy issues. The degree of the issue among students varies from one nation to another, although the pattern is the same in all countries and shows that students tackling energy burdens sometimes postpone payments, reduce consumption, change their habits, and accept lower comfort levels. Students also expect support in the form of financial assistance, energy vouchers or tax relief, improved housing, upgraded halls of residence, energy-efficient appliances, seasonal support, informational materials, and research into their needs.

5. Comparative analysis

Analytical frame

This chapter compares Italy, France, Portugal and Greece through shared analytical axes, not through separate national summaries. Student energy poverty appears where students' living arrangements do not fit the administrative categories used by energy, housing and welfare policy. The clearest axes are contract status, tax or means-testing status, property ownership and statistical visibility. The countries converge because these mechanisms exclude students from support. They diverge in how hardship appears: payment arrears are most visible in Portugal and Greece, while Italy and France show hidden pressure through self-rationing, discomfort and limited formal assistance.

Comparability and limits of the evidence

The STEP UP surveys are indicative, not representative: Italy had 40 respondents, France 41, Portugal 40 and Greece 53. Completion rates were 32.3% in Italy, France and Portugal, and 44.9% in Greece when direct-link visits are counted. The samples also differ. French responses are strongly shaped by Sciences Po Lille and include a high female share of 70.7%, while Italy and Portugal each report 60% women and Greece 64.2%. Age, field of study, employment and housing also vary. The percentages should not be read as a national ranking. They identify recurring mechanisms and differences in experience.

Typology of exclusion mechanisms

Contract-holder exclusion

The first mechanism is exclusion through the energy contract. Support is easier to obtain when the person in difficulty is also the formal bill payer. In Italy, the social bonus is linked to a supply contract held by a member of the ISEE household*[I, 2; I, 3]*, while students may pay utilities through rent, a flatmate or a landlord. In France, students in shared housing, all-inclusive rents or family tax households may miss the energy cheque *[F, 17]*. Portugal shows the same problem when social-tariff or efficiency measures require a contract or formal documentation that room renters lack *[P, 15]*. Greece also links support to bills, residence and tax records. Students can face energy costs without being recognised as eligible energy consumers. *[G, 6]*

Tax and means-testing exclusion

The second mechanism is tax and means-testing exclusion. Italy's ISEE rules keep university students attached to the family of origin unless strict residence and income conditions are met *[I, 20]*. France has a similar logic: students attached to parents' tax households may look less vulnerable than their monthly budget suggests *[F, 8; F, 17]*. Portugal and Greece use broader vulnerable-consumer or household-income categories that do not clearly identify displaced, working or international students, or students with irregular family support *[P, 8; G, 3; G, 6]*. Family support is high: 85% in Italy, 85.4% in France, 79.2% in Greece and 52.5% in Portugal. Family dependence does not remove risk; it hides it inside another household's profile.

Property-ownership exclusion

The third mechanism is property-ownership exclusion. Renovation and energy-efficiency schemes usually act through owners, while students are tenants *[F,16; P, 17]*, subtenants or residents in shared accommodation. In Italy, experts linked hardship to old housing, worn windows, outdated

heating systems and unclear flat energy fees. In France, ANAH and France Renov mainly reach owners *[F, 1, F, 16]*, while students may live in private rentals, weak CROUS residences or other poor-quality housing. In Portugal, experts described informal renting, damp buildings, weak insulation and landlord-tenant split incentives. In Greece, Exoikonomo-type measures also need to reach landlords, parents, municipal buildings and university property *[G, 6]*. The person suffering discomfort is often not the person who can apply for renovation.

Statistical invisibility

The fourth mechanism is statistical invisibility. National systems measure households, vulnerable consumers, tenants or young people, but not students as a distinct energy-poverty group. Italy records the issue through household and expenditure indicators *[I, 34; I, 20]*. France has strong energy-poverty institutions but still lacks regular comparable student data *[F, 31]*. Portugal groups students under households or vulnerable populations *[P, 7]*. Greece shows the gap sharply: the Municipality of Athens found only three students in a dataset of around 700 people *[G, 4]*, suggesting a measurement gap rather than absence of need. Formal knowledge of energy poverty is uneven, but students recognise the situation. The vignette was identified as energy poverty by 70% in Italy, 82.9% in France, 87.5% in Portugal and 88.7% in Greece.

Convergence and divergence in student experience

Energy poverty appears as direct payment difficulty and hidden adaptation. Portugal shows the strongest payment pressure, with 45% delaying or avoiding energy-bill payments. Greece combines high payment difficulty, at 30.2%, with the strongest rationing pattern, as 90.6% limited consumption at least occasionally. Italy has lower payment delay, at 10%, but 82.5% limited consumption, indicating hidden strain before arrears. France has the lowest payment delay, at 4.9%, but 78% limited consumption occasionally, and summer discomfort was visible. The comparison does not show a simple hierarchy. Similar exclusion mechanisms produce different symptoms depending on housing markets, family dependence, seasonal needs and national support design.

Seasonality also shows convergence and divergence. Winter dominates in France, where 97.6% selected it as the season with greatest energy-bill stress, and it is also strong in Greece (75.5%), Portugal (about 70%) and Italy (67.5%). Yet summer cannot be secondary. Summer stress reached 55% in Italy, 52.8% in Greece and 35% in Portugal, while France reported high summer discomfort even where air conditioning is less common. STEP UP should analyse heating and cooling together.

Implications for STEP UP advocacy

The evidence points to priorities. The immediate priority is to make support reachable for students without their own energy contract, independent tax status or property rights. This means vouchers or bill relief, university and municipal advice points, seasonal emergency support and clear guidance on contracts, tariffs and tenants' rights. Structurally, STEP UP should change the conditions that reproduce exclusion: student-specific monitoring, eligibility rules recognising students as energy users, minimum standards for student rentals, transparent all-inclusive charges and renovation incentives or obligations for landlords and student-accommodation providers. Chapter 6 can present the conclusions; this chapter explains why these priorities follow from the same four mechanisms across the four national contexts.

6. General Conclusion

Overall, the *STEP UP* research shows that student energy poverty is not only a private financial problem, but a barrier to equal access to higher education. In Italy, France, Portugal and Greece, students often fall between policy categories: they may not hold the energy contract, may remain attached to the family tax household, may not own the dwelling, and may be statistically invisible as energy-poor students.

The response should be prioritised. Short-term or palliative interventions should address immediate hardship through vouchers, dedicated social tariffs, seasonal heating and cooling support, and temporary bill relief accessible even when bills are not in the student's name. Structural interventions should improve the conditions that create repeated hardship: decent, affordable, energy-efficient student housing, minimum standards for private rentals, transparent all-inclusive charges, and renovation incentives or obligations for landlords and student-accommodation providers. Enabling interventions should make these reforms possible through student-specific data collection, recognition of students as a vulnerable or at-risk category, and eligibility rules adapted to mobility, shared accommodation and family dependence. This sequence aligns with *STEP UP*'s mandate; energy mentors clarify rules, assemblies translate experiences into collective demands, and training enables students to interpret bills, document needs and advocate for housing.

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APPENDIX

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews lasting 45-60 minutes, conducted online or in person

Section 1: Background and role

(Purpose: contextualisation, not analysis)

1. Could you briefly describe your role and experience related to:
    - energy policy / housing / social policy / higher education…?

2. How does your organisation engage with students or young people, if at all?

Section 2: Energy poverty and students - General assessment

1. From your perspective, is energy poverty among university students a visible or recognised issue in your country?

2. Which student groups do you consider most vulnerable to energy poverty? (Optional)
    - e.g. low-income students, international students, renters, students in private housing…

3. To what extent do current definitions or indicators of energy poverty capture students' realities?

Section 3: Housing conditions and structural factors (Optional)

1. How would you describe the typical housing conditions of students in urban areas?

2. Are energy efficiency and housing quality for students addressed in current policies or programmes?

4. What are the main structural barriers students face regarding:
    - energy efficiency improvements,
    - access to affordable and adequate housing?

Section 4: Policy frameworks and gaps

1. Are students explicitly included in national or local energy poverty policies?

2. Where do you see the main gaps in current regulatory or policy frameworks regarding students?

3. How effective are existing support measures (e.g. subsidies, social tariffs, housing support) for students?

Section 5: Policy measures and solutions

1. Which measures do you consider most effective for addressing energy poverty among students?
    - Renovation subsidies
    - Direct financial aid / vouchers
    - Energy bill reductions or social tariffs
    - Student housing policies
    - Awareness and education programmes

2. Are there innovative or good practices (national or local) that could be scaled or transferred?

Section 6: Universities and community-based actions (Optional)

1. What role can universities realistically play in addressing energy poverty?

2. How effective do you think community-based actions (e.g. collective assemblies, peer support, student-led initiatives) can be?

Section 7: Final reflections (Optional)

1. What would you identify as the top priority for policymakers regarding student energy poverty?

2. Is there anything else you believe is crucial that is often overlooked in this discussion?

Section 8: Vignette comments (Optional)

Vignette example for reference: *“A 21-year-old student lives in a 40 m² rented apartment. During cold periods, they avoid using heating due to costs and rely on an electric blanket. Around 18% of their monthly income goes to energy bills.”*

Questions for the vignette

- From a policy perspective, would you consider this a case of energy poverty?
- How typical is this situation for students in your country?
- Which policy measures would be most appropriate or realistic in such cases?

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: Socio-demographic characteristics

1. Age: ___

2. Gender:
   - Male
   - Female
   - Non-binary / Other
   - Prefer not to say

3. Nationality: ___

4. Country of study**:**
   - Italy
   - Greece
   - France
   - Portugal
   - Other: ___
5. Field of study / degree programmes: ___

6. Current year of study:
   - 1st year
   - 2nd year
   - 3rd year
   - 4th year or higher

7. Employment status:
   - Full-time student (not employed)
   - Student with part-time job
   - Student with full-time job
   - Other: ___

8. Monthly personal income (including all sources such as family support, work, scholarships, etc.):
   - None
   - Less than €400
   - €400–€599
   - €600–€799
   - €800–€999
   - €1000+
   - Prefer not to say

9. Type of financial support for studies (multiple options possible):
   - Scholarship
   - Family support
   - Student loan
   - Part-time work

- Other: ___

Section 2: Housing conditions and energy efficiency of the dwelling

1. Current housing situation:
   - University dormitory
   - Rented apartment/house
   - Living with family
   - Subletting bedroom in shared apartment/house
   - Other: ___

2. Dwelling size (approx. in m²): ___

3. Number of household members sharing the dwelling: ___

4. Type of heating system:
   - Central heating (gas/district)
   - Electric heating
   - Wood / pellet stove
   - None
   - Other: ___

5. Energy efficiency of dwelling (self-assessed, 1=very poor, 5=excellent)
   Please consider factors such as insulation, windows, heating/cooling systems and how easily the dwelling maintains a comfortable temperature without excessive energy use:
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

6. Have you experienced technical problems with heating/cooling or insulation?
   - Yes (please specify): ___
   - No

Section 3: Financial burden of energy costs

1. Approximately how much do you spend **per month** on energy costs in your dwelling (electricity, heating, etc.)?
   - Less than €20
   - €20–€50
   - €50–€100
   - €100–€200
   - More than €200
   - I don't know

2. In the past year, have you delayed or avoided paying energy bills due to cost?
    - Yes
    - No

3. Do you ever limit your energy consumption to reduce costs?
    - Yes, frequently
    - Yes, occasionally
    - No

Section 4: Thermal comfort and self-limitation of energy use

1. On average, how comfortable is your indoor temperature during winter? (1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable)
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

2. On average, how comfortable is your indoor temperature during summer? (1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable)
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

3. What energy-saving behaviours do you practice in your dwelling? (multiple answers allowed)
    - Lowering thermostat or AC temperature
    - Using electric blankets/portable heaters instead of central heating
    - Dressing heavier in winter or lighter in summer indoors
    - Reducing hot water use
    - Turning off appliances when not in use
    - Other: ___

Section 5: Levels of knowledge and awareness regarding energy poverty

1. Before this survey, had you heard the term “energy poverty”?
    - Yes, familiar with it
    - Heard of it, but unsure of the meaning
    - No

2. How knowledgeable do you feel about energy poverty and its causes? (1=not at all, 5=very knowledgeable)
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5

3. Vignette example:

   “A 21-year-old student lives in a 40 m² rented apartment. During cold periods, they avoid using heating due to costs and rely on an electric blanket. Around 18% of their monthly income goes to energy bills.”

   Do you consider this student to be experiencing energy poverty?
    - Yes
    - No

4. Which policy or support measure would be most helpful for the student? (open-ended) ___

5. Which policy or support measure out of the following would be most helpful for the student (multiple answers allowed)?
    - Renovation subsidy
    - Tax alleviation on student energy bills
    - Direct financial aid / voucher schemes for electricity
    - Social housing for students
    - Awareness campaigns and education programmes
    - Subsidies for energy-efficient appliances
    - Other: ___

Section 6: Seasonal variations in experiences

1. During which seasons do you experience the most financial stress related to energy bills? (multiple answers allowed)
    - Winter
    - Spring
    - Summer
    - Autumn

2. How do your energy-related behaviours change across seasons? (Likert 1-5 scale for frequency of self-limitation)
    - Winter: 1=never, 5=always
    - Spring: 1=never, 5=always
    - Summer: 1=never, 5=always
    - Autumn: 1=never, 5=always

3. How does seasonal change affect your thermal comfort? (Likert 1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable)
    - Winter: 1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable
    - Spring: 1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable
    - Summer: 1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable
    - Autumn: 1=very uncomfortable, 5=very comfortable

4. How much time do you spend at your house during each season? (Likert 1=I am never there, 5=I am always there)
    - Winter: 1=I am never there, 5=I am always there
    - Spring: 1=I am never there, 5=I am always there
    - Summer: 1=I am never there, 5=I am always there
    - Autumn: 1=I am never there, 5=I am always there

Optional Open-ended Feedback

- Please describe any other difficulties or strategies you use to cope with energy costs: ___
- Any suggestions for universities, government or NGOs to support students facing energy poverty: ___



D1. RESEARCH RESULTS

Abstract in French

Co-funded by
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CE RAPPORT DE RECHERCHE A ÉTÉ RÉALISÉ AVEC LA CONTRIBUTION DE TOUS LES PARTENAIRES DU PROJET

Financé par l'Union européenne. Les points de vue et avis exprimés n'engagent toutefois que leur(s) auteur(s) et ne reflètent pas nécessairement ceux de l'Union européenne ou de l'Agence exécutive européenne pour l'éducation et la culture (EACEA). Ni l'Union européenne ni l'EACEA ne sauraient en être tenues pour responsables.

La précarité énergétique et la crise du logement constituent deux des défis sociaux les plus urgents auxquels l'Europe est confrontée aujourd'hui, et leurs effets ne se font pas sentir de la même manière au sein de la population. Les étudiants âgés de 18 à 25 ans, en particulier ceux qui étudient loin de chez eux, se trouvent particulièrement impactés par la hausse des loyers, des revenus limités et souvent instables, des logements locatifs privés de mauvaise qualité et des coûts énergétiques croissants. Pourtant, malgré leur exposition à ces différentes problématiques, les étudiants sont rarement reconnus comme un groupe vulnérable à part entière dans les politiques nationales de lutte contre la précarité énergétique, ce qui signifie que les mesures de soutien existantes n'ont, pour la plupart, pas été conçues en tenant compte de leur situation.

Ce rapport présente les conclusions de STEP UP (Student Energy Poverty – Uniting for Progress), un projet de recherche européen examinant la précarité énergétique chez les étudiants universitaires en Italie, en France, au Portugal et en Grèce. Il analyse la façon dont la hausse des coûts énergétiques, les conditions de logement inadéquates, les revenus limités et instables, ainsi que les conditions de location précaires affectent les étudiants, en particulier ceux qui vivent hors du domicile familial dans des logements privés ou en colocation.
Cette étude combine trois méthodes de recherche complémentaires : une recherche documentaire recensant les définitions nationales de la précarité énergétique, les politiques et les mesures de soutien ; des entretiens semi-directifs menés auprès de 27 parties prenantes dans les quatre pays partenaires du projet (universités, pouvoirs publics, agences de l'énergie, associations de consommateurs, acteurs du logement et société civile) ; et une enquête en ligne auprès des étudiants (174 répondants) portant sur les conditions de logement, les dépenses énergétiques, le confort thermique, les stratégies d'adaptation et les préférences en matière d'aides.

Les résultats montrent que, malgré des cadres nationaux divergents, les étudiants sont systématiquement absents des politiques de lutte contre la précarité énergétique dans les quatre pays : les règles d'éligibilité liées aux contrats d'énergie, au statut fiscal ou au contrôle des ressources, ainsi qu'à la propriété immobilière, excluent systématiquement les étudiants, qui vivent souvent en colocation, dans des logements informels ou chez des proches. En conséquence, les difficultés se manifestent moins par des factures impayées que par le rationnement volontaire, une baisse du confort et des stratégies d'adaptation comportementales : 80 à 90 % des répondants dans chaque pays limitent leur consommation d'énergie pour maîtriser les coûts, et une part importante d'étudiants souffre d'inconfort thermique aussi bien en hiver qu'en été.

L'analyse comparative identifie quatre mécanismes d'exclusion communs aux quatre pays — l'exclusion liée au titulaire du contrat, l'exclusion liée à la situation fiscale ou au contrôle des ressources, l'exclusion liée à la propriété immobilière et à l'invisibilité statistique — qui

expliquent pourquoi les mesures d'aide existantes ne parviennent généralement pas à atteindre les étudiants, malgré des besoins avérés. Le rapport conclut en classant les recommandations en trois niveaux : aide financière immédiate (bons d'achat, aide au paiement des factures, aide saisonnière), améliorations structurelles du logement (normes de location, logements étudiants économes en énergie, obligations des bailleurs) et mesures d'accompagnement (collecte de données spécifiques aux étudiants, reconnaissance officielle des étudiants en tant que groupe vulnérable, mentors en matière d'énergie, assemblées collectives et formations).

Le rapport de recherche complet en anglais est disponible en téléchargement gratuit sur le site web du projet : www.step-up-project.eu



D1. RESEARCH RESULTS

Abstract in Greek

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ΑΥΤΌ ΤΟ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΤΈΟ ΥΛΟΠΟΙΉΘΗΚΕ ΜΕ ΤΗ ΣΥΜΒΟΛΉ ΌΛΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΕΤΑΊΡΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΈΡΓΟΥ

Με τη χρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Οι απόψεις και οι γνώμες που διατυπώνονται εκφράζουν αποκλειστικά τις απόψεις των συντακτών και δεν αντιπροσωπεύουν κατ'ανάγκη τις απόψεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης ή του Ευρωπαϊκού Εκτελεστικού Οργανισμού Εκπαίδευσης και Πολιτισμού (EACEA). Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και ο EACEA δεν μπορούν να θεωρηθούν υπεύθυνοι για τις εκφραζόμενες απόψεις.

Η ενεργειακή φτώχεια και η στεγαστική κρίση αποτελούν δύο από τις πιο πιεστικές κοινωνικές προκλήσεις που αντιμετωπίζει σήμερα η Ευρώπη, ενώ οι επιπτώσεις τους δεν γίνονται αισθητές με τον ίδιο τρόπο σε όλες τις πληθυσμιακές ομάδες. Οι φοιτητές και οι φοιτήτριες ηλικίας 18 έως 25 ετών, ιδίως όσα άτομα σπουδάζουν μακριά από τον τόπο μόνιμης κατοικίας τους, βρίσκονται στο σημείο τομής αυτών των πιέσεων : αυξανόμενα ενοίκια, περιορισμένο και συχνά ασταθές εισόδημα, χαμηλής ποιότητας κατοικίες στην ιδιωτική αγορά ενοικίασης και αυξανόμενο ενεργειακό κόστος. Ωστόσο, παρά την έκθεσή τους σε αυτούς τους παράγοντες, οι φοιτητές/τριες σπάνια αναγνωρίζονται ως διακριτή ευάλωτη ομάδα στις εθνικές πολιτικές για την ενεργειακή φτώχεια. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι τα υφιστάμενα μέτρα στήριξης, σε μεγάλο βαθμό, δεν σχεδιάστηκαν λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τη δική τους κατάσταση.

Η παρούσα έκθεση παρουσιάζει τα ευρήματα του *STEP UP (Student Energy Poverty – Uniting for Progress / Φοιτητική Ενεργειακή Φτώχεια – Ενώνοντας Δυνάμεις για Πρόοδο)*, μιας ερευνητικής μελέτης που εξετάζει την ενεργειακή φτώχεια μεταξύ των φοιτητών στην Ιταλία, τη Γαλλία, την Πορτογαλία και την Ελλάδα. Διερευνά τον τρόπο με τον οποίο το αυξανόμενο ενεργειακό κόστος, οι ακατάλληλες συνθήκες στέγασης, το περιορισμένο και ασταθές εισόδημα και οι επισφαλείς ρυθμίσεις μίσθωσης επηρεάζουν τα άτομα που σπουδάζουν, ιδίως εκείνα που ζουν μακριά από το σπίτι τους σε ιδιωτικές ή κοινόχρηστες κατοικίες.

Η έρευνα συνδυάζει τρεις συμπληρωματικές μεθόδους: βιβλιογραφική έρευνα και καταγραφή των εθνικών ορισμών και πολιτικών μέτρων στήριξης για την ενεργειακή φτώχεια. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, εμπερικλύει ημιδομημένες διαβουλεύσεις με 27 εμπειρογνώμονες και εκπροσώπους ενδιαφερόμενων φορέων στις τέσσερις χώρες (πανεπιστήμια, δημόσιες αρχές, ενεργειακοί οργανισμοί, οργανώσεις καταναλωτών, φορείς στέγασης και οργανώσεις της κοινωνίας των πολιτών) και μία διαδικτυακή έρευνα μεταξύ φοιτητών/τριών (174 συμμετέχοντες/ουσες), η οποία κάλυψε τις συνθήκες στέγασης, τις ενεργειακές δαπάνες, τη θερμική άνεση, τις στρατηγικές αντιμετώπισης και τις προτιμήσεις ως προς τα μέτρα στήριξης.

Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι, παρά τις διαφορές μεταξύ των εθνικών πλαισίων, οι φοιτητές/τριες παραμένουν σταθερά αόρατοι/ες στις πολιτικές για την ενεργειακή φτώχεια και στις τέσσερις χώρες. Οι προϋποθέσεις επιλεξιμότητας που συνδέονται με τις συμβάσεις παροχής ενέργειας, τη φορολογική κατάσταση ή τον έλεγχο εισοδηματικών κριτηρίων και την ιδιοκτησία ακινήτων, αποκλείουν συστηματικά τα άτομα που σπουδάζουν, τα οποίοι συχνά ζουν σε κοινόχρηστες κατοικίες ή στο πλαίσιο άτυπων ρυθμίσεων ή ρυθμίσεων που συνδέονται με την οικογένειά τους. Ως αποτέλεσμα, οι δυσκολίες εκδηλώνονται λιγότερο μέσα από απλήρωτους λογαριασμούς και περισσότερο μέσα από τον αυτοπεριορισμό της κατανάλωσης, τη μειωμένη άνεση και την υιοθέτηση συμπεριφορικών στρατηγικών αντιμετώπισης. Σε κάθε χώρα, το 80–90% των

συμμετεχόντων δήλωσε ότι περιορίζει τη χρήση ενέργειας για να ελέγξει το κόστος, ενώ η θερμική δυσφορία επηρεάζει σημαντικό ποσοστό των φοιτητών/τριών τόσο τον χειμώνα όσο και το καλοκαίρι.

Η συγκριτική ανάλυση εντοπίζει τέσσερις κοινούς μηχανισμούς αποκλεισμού - τον αποκλεισμό λόγω μη κατοχής της σύμβασης παροχής ενέργειας, τον αποκλεισμό βάσει φορολογικών ή εισοδηματικών κριτηρίων, τον αποκλεισμό βάσει ιδιοκτησίας ακινήτου και τη στατιστική αορατότητα - οι οποίοι εξηγούν γιατί τα υφιστάμενα μέτρα στήριξης, παρά την τεκμηριωμένη ανάγκη, αποτυγχάνουν σε μεγάλο βαθμό να φτάσουν στα άτομα που σπουδάζουν. Η έκθεση καταλήγει οργανώνοντας τις προτάσεις της σε τρία επίπεδα: άμεση οικονομική ανακούφιση (κουπόνια, επιδοτήσεις λογαριασμών και εποχική ενίσχυση), διαρθρωτικές βελτιώσεις στη στέγαση (πρότυπα για τις ενοικιαζόμενες κατοικίες, ενεργειακά αποδοτικές φοιτητικές εστίες και υποχρεώσεις των ιδιοκτητών) και υποστηρικτικά μέτρα (συλλογή δεδομένων ειδικά για τους/τις φοιτητές/τριες, επίσημη αναγνώρισή τους ως ευάλωτη ομάδα, ενεργειακοί μέντορες, συλλογικές συνελεύσεις και κατάρτιση).

Η πλήρης ερευνητική έκθεση στα αγγλικά διατίθεται δωρεάν προς λήψη στον ιστότοπο του έργου: ***www.step-up-project.eu****.*



D1. RESEARCH RESULTS

Abstract in Italian

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QUESTO DELIVERABLE È STATO REALIZZATO CON IL CONTRIBUTO DI TUTTI I PARTNER DEL PROGETTO

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La povertà energetica e la crisi abitativa sono tra le sfide sociali più urgenti che l'Europa si trova oggi ad affrontare, e i loro effetti non si distribuiscono in modo uniforme tra la popolazione. Gli studenti universitari tra i 18 e i 25 anni, in particolare chi studia fuori sede, si trovano all'incrocio di queste pressioni: affitti in aumento, redditi limitati e spesso instabili, alloggi in affitto privato di scarsa qualità e costi energetici crescenti. Nonostante questa esposizione, gli studenti sono raramente riconosciuti come un gruppo vulnerabile distinto nelle politiche nazionali sulla povertà energetica, il che significa che le misure di sostegno esistenti non sono state pensate tenendo conto della loro situazione.

Questo report presenta i risultati del progetto STEP UP (Student Energy Poverty – Uniting for Progress), uno studio di ricerca che esamina la povertà energetica tra gli studenti universitari in Italia, Francia, Portogallo e Grecia. Il progetto indaga come l'aumento dei costi energetici, gli alloggi inadeguati, il reddito limitato e instabile e le condizioni abitative precarie incidano sugli studenti, in particolare su coloro che vivono fuori sede in alloggi privati o condivisi.

La ricerca condotta nell’ambito del progetto ha combinato tre metodi complementari: una desk research che mappa le definizioni nazionali di povertà energetica, le politiche e le misure di sostegno; consultazioni semi-strutturate con esperti, coinvolgendo 27 stakeholder nei quattro paesi (università, autorità pubbliche, agenzie energetiche, organizzazioni dei consumatori, attori del settore abitativo e società civile); e un sondaggio online rivolto agli studenti (174 rispondenti) su condizioni abitative, spesa energetica, comfort termico, strategie di adattamento e preferenze di sostegno.

I risultati mostrano che, nonostante quadri normativi nazionali differenti, gli studenti risultano costantemente invisibili nelle politiche sulla povertà energetica in tutti e quattro i paesi: i requisiti di accesso legati al contratto energetico, allo status fiscale/ISEE e alla proprietà dell'immobile escludono sistematicamente gli studenti, che spesso vivono in situazioni condivise, informali o legate al nucleo familiare. Di conseguenza, il disagio si manifesta meno attraverso bollette non pagate e più attraverso l'autolimitazione, la riduzione del comfort e strategie di adattamento comportamentale — con l'80–90% dei rispondenti in ciascun paese che limita il consumo energetico per controllare i costi, e il disagio termico che colpisce una quota consistente di studenti sia d'inverno che d'estate.

L'analisi comparativa individua quattro meccanismi di esclusione comuni — esclusione legata all'intestazione del contratto, esclusione fiscale/da means-testing, esclusione legata alla proprietà dell'immobile e invisibilità statistica — che spiegano perché le misure di sostegno esistenti non riescano in gran parte a raggiungere gli studenti, nonostante un bisogno documentato. Il rapporto si conclude organizzando le raccomandazioni su tre livelli: sostegno finanziario immediato (voucher, aiuti sulle bollette, sostegno stagionale), miglioramenti strutturali dell'edilizia (standard per gli affitti, alloggi studenteschi efficienti

dal punto di vista energetico, obblighi per i locatori) e misure abilitanti (raccolta dati specifica sugli studenti, riconoscimento formale degli studenti come gruppo vulnerabile, mentori energetici, assemblee collettive e formazione).

Il report di ricerca completo in inglese è disponibile gratuitamente per il download sul sito del progetto: www.step-up-project.eu.



D1. RESEARCH RESULTS

Abstract in Portuguese

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ESTA ENTREGA FOI REALIZADA COM O CONTRIBUTO DE TODOS OS PARCEIROS DO PROJETO

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Financiado pela União Europeia. Os pontos de vista e as opiniões expressas são as do(s) autor(es) e não refletem necessariamente a posição da União Europeia ou da Agência de Execução Europeia da Educação e da Cultura (EACEA). Nem a União Europeia nem a EACEA podem ser tidos como responsáveis por essas opiniões.

A pobreza energética e a crise da habitação são dois dos desafios sociais mais prementes que a Europa enfrenta atualmente, e os seus efeitos não são sentidos de forma igual por toda a população. Os estudantes universitários com idades compreendidas entre os 18 e os 25 anos, especialmente os deslocados, sofrem particularmente com várias situações: rendas elevadas, rendimentos limitados e muitas vezes instáveis, habitações privadas ou quartos para arrendamento de má qualidade e custos energéticos crescentes. No entanto, apesar desta exposição, os estudantes raramente são reconhecidos como um grupo vulnerável distinto nas políticas nacionais de pobreza energética, o que significa que as medidas de apoio existentes, na sua maioria, não foram concebidas tendo em conta a sua situação.

Este relatório apresenta as conclusões do STEP UP (Student Energy Poverty – Uniting for Progress), um estudo de investigação que analisa a pobreza energética entre estudantes universitários na Itália, França, Portugal e Grécia. O estudo investiga de que forma o aumento dos custos energéticos, as condições de habitação inadequadas, os rendimentos limitados e instáveis e os contratos de arrendamento precários afetam os estudantes, em particular aqueles que vivem longe de casa em alojamentos privados ou partilhados.

A investigação combina três métodos complementares: investigação documental que mapeia as definições, políticas e medidas de apoio nacionais em matéria de pobreza energética; consultas semiestruturadas a especialistas com 27 partes interessadas nos quatro países (universidades, autoridades públicas, agências de energia, organizações de consumidores, agentes do setor da habitação e sociedade civil); e um inquérito online a estudantes (174 inquiridos) que abrange as condições de habitação, as despesas com energia, o conforto térmico, as estratégias de adaptação e as preferências em termos de apoio.

Os resultados mostram que, apesar dos diferentes quadros nacionais, os estudantes são sistematicamente ignorados nas políticas de pobreza energética nos quatro países: as regras de elegibilidade ligadas a contratos de energia, ao estatuto fiscal, à avaliação dos recursos económicos e à propriedade imobiliária excluem sistematicamente os estudantes, que muitas vezes vivem em quartos partilhados, informais ou ligados à família. Por outro lado, as dificuldades manifestam-se menos através de contas por pagar do que através do auto-racionamento, da redução do conforto e de comportamentos de adaptação — com 80 a 90% dos inquiridos em cada país a limitarem o consumo de energia para controlar os custos, e o desconforto térmico a afetar uma parte substancial dos estudantes, tanto no inverno como no verão.

A análise comparativa identifica quatro mecanismos de exclusão comuns — exclusão dos titulares de contratos, exclusão por critérios fiscais ou de rendimentos, exclusão por

propriedade imobiliária e invisibilidade estatística — que explicam a razão das consecutivas falhas nas medidas de apoio existentes, em grande parte, em chegar aos estudantes, apesar da necessidade documentada. O relatório reúne as recomendações em três níveis: apoio financeiro imediato (vouchers, apoio ao pagamento de contas, ajuda sazonal), melhorias estruturais na habitação (padrões de arrendamento, alojamento estudantil energeticamente eficiente, obrigações dos senhorios) e medidas facilitadoras (recolha de dados específicos sobre estudantes, reconhecimento formal dos estudantes como grupo vulnerável, mentores em matéria de energia, assembleias coletivas e formação).

O relatório de investigação completo, em inglês, está disponível para download gratuito no site do projeto: ***www.step-up-project.eu***