



Member State Report Belgium

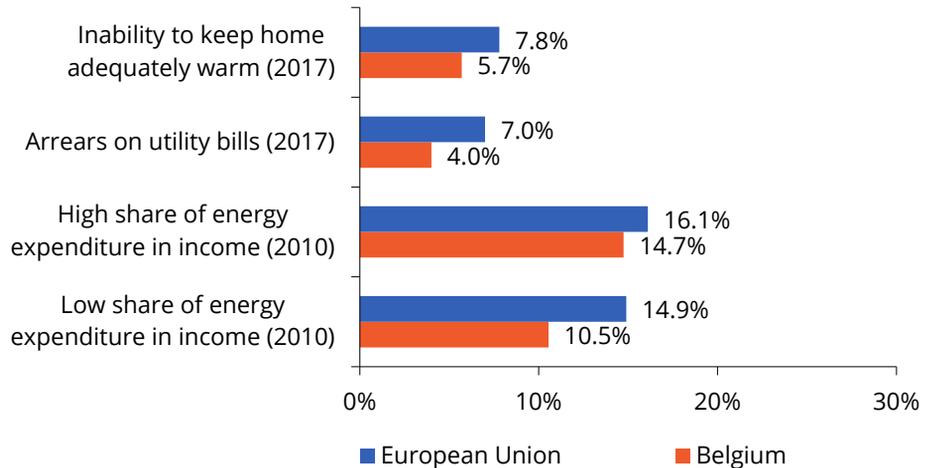
DATA & STATISTICS

This Member State Report of the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) provides an overview of the energy poverty situation in Belgium at a glance. With key indicators, policies and publications, it offers an understanding of the key aspects of energy poverty in Belgium.

Belgium performs better than the EU average on the household-reported indicators. 5.7% of households were unable to keep the home adequately warm in 2017, and 4.0% were in arrears on utility bills.

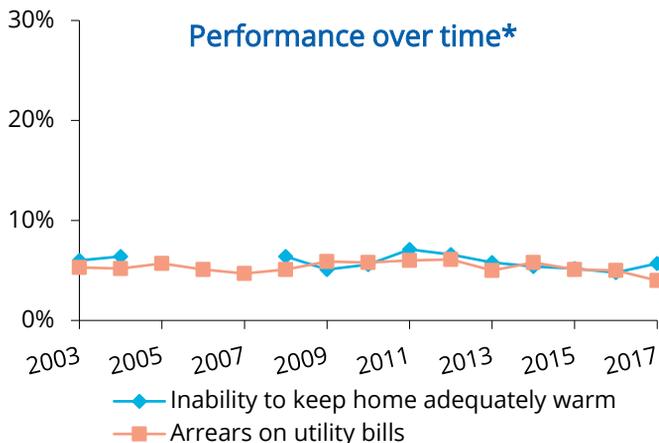
Belgium is slightly better than the EU average for the expenditure-based indicators. 14.7% of households spend more than twice the median on energy, while 10.5% spend less than half the median.

Performance relative to EU average*



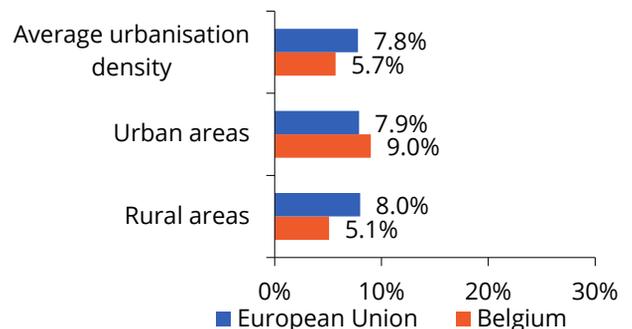
Energy poverty has been fairly stable in Belgium. The percentage of households in arrears on utility bills has been around 4–6%. The number of households unable to keep the home adequately warm was also stable. The years 2005–2007 have been removed as this data shows a structural break, which might be due to changes in the data collection methodology.

Performance over time*



Disaggregated data of the household-reported indicators suggest that energy poverty in Belgium is mostly a problem for urban households, which struggle more than rural ones. In addition, disaggregated data point to tenants living in apartments as being particularly susceptible to energy poverty. Based on the data, energy poverty seems to be mostly an urban problem in Belgium.

Inability to keep home adequately warm (2017)*



About the EU Energy Poverty Observatory

The EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) is an initiative by the European Commission to help Member States in their efforts to combat energy poverty. It exists to improve the measuring, monitoring and sharing of knowledge and best practice on energy poverty. EPOV has been developed by a consortium of 13 organisations. This report was authored by Navigant.

*Household-reported indicators taken from Eurostat [here](#) and [here](#) on April 16, 2019. Expenditure-based indicators calculated by EPOV based on HBS data. Disaggregated data of household-reported indicators calculated by EPOV based on Eurostat provided data.



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KNOWLEDGE & RESOURCES

Belgium is one of the most active countries in terms of research, policies and activities in the field of energy poverty. The first major study on energy poverty in Belgium was published in 2011 (Huybrechs, Meyer and Vranken). Since then multiple other studies on the issue have been published. In 2015, the King Baudouin Foundation initiated an annual publication called the Energy Poverty Barometer, which produces energy poverty statistics and analyses for Belgium.

A wide range of energy poverty policies have been implemented in Belgium. On the federal level, a *social tariff for natural gas and electricity* exists, which aims to help certain vulnerable consumers afford sufficient energy. The measure is funded through general levies on electricity and natural gas prices. The federal tariff has been extended in certain regions to encompass additional socio-economic groups.

All three regions (Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia) have some type of *disconnection protection during winter* to prevent indebted households from being exposed to cold temperatures. Some regional utilities have provisions to install prepayment meters or power limiters that aim to reduce debt accumulation. All regions also provide *energy and renovation grants* to facilitate the improvement of domestic energy efficiency.

Local social services provide multiple services to households experiencing energy poverty. Financial aid is available for paying the electricity and natural gas bills, as well as for households that use heating oil, kerosene or propane gas to heat their home (*electricity and gas fund, social heating fund*). In addition, they also help households negotiate payment plans and in some cases assist to improve energy efficiency. There are also a [significant number of initiatives](#) targeting energy poverty, such as the *Energy Savers*, the Platform against energy poverty, and Revert.

Selected measures	Type of measure	Organisation	Target groups
Disconnection protection during winter (Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia)	Disconnection protection	Regional government	Indebted households
Electricity and gas fund and Social heating fund	Social support	National government, Local government	Indebted households
Energy Savers	Energy audits, Building insulation	NGO	Vulnerable households, Indebted households,
Energy and renovation grants (Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia)	Building insulation, Heating system	Regional government	No specific target group
Grants for social insulation projects for rental buildings	Building insulation	Regional government, Grid operator	Vulnerable households, Private tenants, Social housing
Social tariff for natural gas and electricity	Social tariff	National government	Vulnerable households

Selected Publications

- Huybrechs, F., Meyer, S., and Vranken J. (2011) [Energy poverty in Belgium \(in Dutch and French\)](#)
- Storms, E., and Meyer, S. (2012) [An introduction to energy poverty in Belgium](#)
- Bartiaux, F., Van der Linden, M., Debast, N. & Baudaux, A. (2014) [Energy poverty \(in French\)](#)
- Baudaux, A. (2014) [Energy poverty in Brussels: first results of a qualitative survey](#)
- Delbeke, B., and Meyer, S. (2015, 2016, 2017) [The energy poverty barometer \(2017 edition\)](#)
- Lahaye W., Bartiaux F., and Sibeni A. (2016) [Living in energy vulnerability: continuous mental arithmetic and limited possibilities \(in Dutch\)](#)
- Goedemé, T. et al. (eds.) (2017) [Poverty, energy and living: creative ideas for a future without energy poverty \(in Dutch\)](#)

For definitions of the terms used in this report [click here](#). The EPOV website provides an extensive collection of Knowledge & Resources. [Click here](#) for more information and to contribute additional policies, publications and other resources.

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