

Addressing energy poverty and creating jobs - UK campaign and EU Energy efficiency directive

(29 February 2012) A broad coalition of trade unions including EPSU affiliates like UNITE, FBU and GMB, environmental organisations such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and WWF, anti-poverty campaigners, consumer groups and businesses are organizing a petition in the UK to ask the government to use the funding received from carbon tax for energy efficiency programmes. It is estimated that if this is done 9 out of 10 households can be lifted out of energy poverty. It would also create 200.000 jobs and cut CO2 emissions. The coalition has called for an Energy Bill Revolution.

Without such additional measures and with electricity and gas prices estimated to increase, fuel poverty could increase by 40% by 2016, rising from one in four to one in three households. In the UK energy poverty means that households spent more than 10% of their income to keep homes warm. The research for the campaign finds that 6.4 million households are now suffering from fuel poverty across the UK increasing to 9.1 million households in 2016.

The groups have launched [the petition here](#) to raise public and parliamentary support. To read more on [the research](#) or [the summary](#)

This research coincides with the vote in the European parliament's Energy Committee on the proposed directive on energy efficiency in which job concerns and energy poverty play a dominant role. The Parliament adopted its position demanding binding national targets for energy efficiency. The EP Press release on the vote states: "Energy efficiency can become a driver of the EU economy by reducing dependence on imports, creating jobs, freeing up financial resources, boosting competitiveness, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The EU has set itself the task of achieving 20% primary energy savings in 2020 (currently a non-binding target), but the Commission estimates that if no measures are taken, the EU will only achieve half of that by 2020. "This vote is a major sign that Parliament, with a majority including most political parties, takes rising energy costs and energy poverty seriously. Energy efficiency offers possibilities for job creation - notably in

the building sector. Now governments have a choice: protect citizens against energy poverty and create many job opportunities or allow big energy companies to make ever-increasing profits" said rapporteur Claude Turmes (Greens/EFA, LU).

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