

National Strategy against Energy Poverty 2019-2024 in Spain

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Perspective on National Strategy against Energy Poverty 2019-2024 in the policy debate

In October 2018, the Spanish Government issued a Royal Decree [1] relating to urgent measures for energy transition and consumer protection. Among other actions, this decree established the need to develop a National Strategy against Energy Poverty (NSEP). In April 2019, after an open public consultation conducted over a three-month period, the Spanish Government approved the NSEP 2019-2024 [2], [3]. This document has been drafted by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and incorporate many of the contributions sent to the public consultation. The main proposals of this strategy can be summarized in six points:

1. It gives an official definition of energy poverty and vulnerable consumers.
2. It estimates the number of energy poor in Spain based on the indicators proposed by the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV), thus setting reduction targets for 2025.
3. It proposes to carry out a deep analysis of energy expenditures of Spanish households (both actual and required energy expenditure¹ [4], [5]).
4. It analyses the shortcomings of the current social tariffs and proposes a unique aid for all energy uses² to be designed and implemented in the future.

¹ the theoretical annual expenditure required to attain a necessitated level of domestic energy services.

² Currently there are two types of mitigating measures: (1) the social electricity tariff, which is a discount on the electricity bill financed by energy utilities; (2) the Thermal Social

5. It proposes short-, medium- and long-term structural measures, such as energy retrofits of vulnerable households' dwellings.
6. It proposes measures to raise people awareness on energy poverty and improve households' information in respect of energy use and support programs available to consumers, e.g. the implementation of an official web page on energy poverty.

The implementation and monitoring of the NSEP is planned as follows:

- Implementation period: from 2019 to 2024.
- Participation of regional and local administrations, as well as stakeholders (NGOs, energy companies, Academia, etc.) and social groups affected.
- Annual monitoring of the different actions defined in the NSEP.
- Final evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the NSEP at the end of its validity period.

In November 2020, the Ministry for the Ecological Transition updated the energy poverty indicators estimated in the strategy [6] by using the data of the 2019's Household Budget Survey [7].

Currently (January 2021), the Ministry is working on the design of the first action plan to implement the NSEP.

Research perspective on National Strategy against Energy Poverty 2019-2024

Several academic studies have been sent to the public consultation conducted before the publication of the NSEP. Indeed, many of them are mentioned in the National Strategy, e.g. [8], but most of these works are not public.

Further developments and information on the abovementioned proposals have been published or are expected to be published shortly. Among them, several studies on low-cost energy retrofit of buildings [9], [10] have been proposed as an example of structural measures to tackle energy poverty. Moreover, a proposal for an energy-needs-based Thermal Energy Cheque [11] was sent recently to the Ministry's team in charge of designing the NSEP implementation.

The European Social Policy Network recently published an analysis of the NSEP [12], pointing out some weaknesses of the operational development of the

Allowance, which is a transfer in cash for residential thermal uses such as heating, domestic hot water and cooking, financed by the Spanish Government.

strategy, e.g. difficulties in coordinating the regional and local administrations, and lack of basic budgetary commitments.

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