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# Energy poverty 2022: Heating according to 3.2% of households not affordable

**In addition, 134 100 low-income households with above-average energy costs**

Vienna, 2024-03-18 – Even before the peak of the energy crisis in the second half of 2022, 129 500 households in Austria (3.2%) stated that they could not heat their homes adequately. Additionally, households that are burdened by above-average energy costs on a low income are also considered energy-poor. This affected around 134 100 households (3.3%) in 2022. Both aspects are examined in a study by Statistics Austria.

“More and more households in Austria are finding it difficult to cope with the high costs of heating, hot water and electricity. Even before the massive rise in energy prices in the second half of 2022, 129 500 households in Austria stated that they were unable to heat their homes sufficiently, which is 48 500 more than in the previous year. In addition, around 134 100 households had above-average energy costs on low incomes. People living alone, people with no more than a compulsory education and older people were particularly affected,” says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

## **Smaller and low-educated households are more likely to be unable to afford heating costs**

3.2% of all households in Austria could not afford to keep their homes adequately warm in 2022. This concerned 8.7% of households with people who have completed compulsory schooling or less. Single-person households (4.7%) and people living in cities (4.7%) were also higher affected than average.

66% of (according to this definition) energy-poor households lived in smaller apartments (up to 80 square meters) compared to 44% of non-energy-poor households. Households in apartments up to 80 square meters were also disproportionately likely (4.7%) to be unable to keep their home warm. Households living in rented accommodation were slightly more likely (4.4%) to be unable to keep their apartment adequately warm, as were those living in buildings constructed up to 1960 (4.6%).

## **134 100 low-income households are particularly burdened by high energy costs**

In 2022, 134 100 households with comparatively low incomes (3.3% of all households) also had above-average energy costs. Households with people who have completed compulsory schooling or less (8.1%), single-person households (6.4%) and households with people aged 75 and over (4.4%) were again disproportionately affected by energy poverty according to this definition.

Around 45% of energy-poor households with high energy costs lived in buildings built before 1960, compared to only 29% of non-energy-poor households. Accordingly, households in older buildings were affected by energy poverty at an above-average rate of 5.0%. By contrast, only 1.8% of residents in buildings constructed from 1991 onwards were energy poor.

The consumption of this group of energy-poor households for heating is 42% higher than that of non-energy-poor households. In contrast, energy-poor households use 20% less energy for hot water and 6% less energy for cooking than non-energy-poor households.

## Slight increase in energy-poor households

The data currently available on energy costs does not yet reflect the massive rise in energy prices in the second half of 2022. Nevertheless, there is a slight increase in the number of households that could not afford to heat their homes adequately. While 81 000 households (2%) were still unable to keep their home adequately warm in 2021, this figure rose to 129 500 (3.2%) in 2022. In contrast, the number of households with a low income and high energy costs remained at almost the same level (2020: 123 800, 2022: 134 100). However, if considering the share of households whose energy costs account for more than 10% of household income, we see an increase from 12.8% (2020) to 16.5% (2022).

Detailed results and further information on the study "Dimensions of Energy Poverty in Austria" can be found on our [website](#).

## Energy poverty in Austria

Data Source	Microcensus Energy 2021/2022	EU-SILC 2022
<b>Definition</b>	Households with higher-than-average expenses for energy and living	Households unable to keep their homes adequately warm
<b>Households affected by energy poverty</b>	Share of all households: 3.3%	Share of all households: 3.2%
<b>Disproportionally affected groups:</b>	Compulsory schooling or less: 8.1% Single person households: 6.4% Aged 75 and older: 4.4% Apartment in 1- to 2-family houses: 3.7% Small apartment up to 80 m <sup>2</sup> : 3.5% Rented apartment (not owned): 3.6% Year of construction before 1960: 5.0% Low population density area: 3.6%	Compulsory schooling or less: 8.7% Single person households: 4.7% Aged 35 to 54: 3.9% Apartment in multiple dwelling unit: 4.3% Small apartment up to 80 m <sup>2</sup> : 4.7% Rented apartment (not owned): 4.4% Year of construction before 1960: 4.6% High population density area: 4.7%

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Microcensus Energy 2021/2022 – Energy poverty, EU-SILC 2022.

**Information on methodology, definitions:** The current study (commissioned by e-control) takes a close look at energy-poor households for the fifth time. Energy poverty can be defined both by high energy costs combined with low income and by a forced reduction of energy consumption due to low income. Thus, more than one indicator is needed to measure energy poverty. The report uses two main indicators for a closer look at “energy poverty: high costs” and “energy poverty: adequate heating not affordable”. Additionally, several energy poverty indicators discussed at the national and international level are calculated and compared. As the results show, the group of affected households strongly depends on the definition and the threshold levels of the indicators. If the thresholds are set too narrowly or if too many criteria have to be met, low case numbers do not allow for a clear distinction of household groups that are particularly affected.

For this report, income data from administrative data and from the EU-SILC 2022 income survey (EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions, contains income information for 2021) were linked with data from the Microcensus Energy 2021/2022 (Microcensus Special Module Household Energy Use). Based on the Microcensus Energy data, it was possible to identify households that have an income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and – at the same time – are faced with above-average energy costs. A second group considered in the study are households who could not afford an adequate amount of energy for heating (Can you afford to keep the entire dwelling adequately warm?) according to the EU-SILC 2022 dataset. This indicator allows for the analysis of households that use less energy than they would actually like or need. The two approaches to energy poverty largely affect different households, but these are often found in similar socio-demographic groups. The two datasets were also used to calculate other possible energy poverty indicators and to briefly analyse their differences and overlaps. All results in this report are presented at the household level.

**Data timeliness:** The Microcensus Energy retrospectively surveyed energy costs for the 2021/2022 heating period, while EU-SILC asked about energy costs in the first half of 2022. The energy data collected therefore does not yet reflect current developments in the cost of living, in particular the massive price increases in the energy sector for private households from the second half of 2022 onwards. Results during the year, such as those from [How we are today](#), are not considered in the report.

**If you have any questions on this topic, please contact:**

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