

In an op-ed for Balkan Green Energy News, Lira Hakani of the Environmental Center for Development, Education and Networking presents the key findings of the Evaluation of Energy Performance of Buildings from the Perspective of Energy Poverty.

This evaluation report, the first of its kind in Albania, uses the concept of energy poverty and follows the same line concerning the challenge of meeting citizens' continuing demand for more electricity or other forms of energy for their life activities. The concept connects citizens and the environment in a direct and strong way; enables golden opportunities for the standard of living through the sustainable development goals; and is very relevant to the Albanian reality. The environmental vigilance network "An eye for the environment!" carried out this evaluation with the financial support of the Swedish Embassy in the framework of the Support for Civil Society Organizations in Albania Program (SENIOR II) implemented by the Regional Environmental Centre in Albania.

The report evaluates the typology of buildings, the cost of electricity against income, the use of electricity and quality of life as a phenomenon closely related to energy poverty. Energy poverty refers to a situation where a household cannot access energy services at home to a level that it could meet its social and material needs (Bouzarovski et al. 2010). The indicators determining energy poverty include energy efficiency in buildings, energy cost, and household income. This concept is powerful and it analyses three important pillars: energy policies, social policies, and practices of energy efficiency.

The evaluation of energy poverty was carried out in July-September 2017 in five cities in Albania -Shkodra, Tirana, Elbasan, Vlora, and Berat - which all vary concerning geographic coverage and profile. The sample consisted of 1,954 units and the target group consisted of six categories: 1) vulnerable households; 2) randomly selected households; 3) public education institutions (kindergartens, schools, and universities); 4) public administration; 5) public health institutions; and 6) hotels.

The data was collected using a questionnaire borrowed and adopted from the Reduce Energy use And Change Habits project, which made the evaluation for all former Yugoslav countries. In Albania, this study was conducted for the first time. The questionnaire for the household units contained 50 questions: 18 questions of a socio-economic and health character, and 32 questions of an energy character. The questionnaire for the other units (public education institutions including kindergartens, schools, and universities, public administration, public health institutions, and hotels) contained only 32 questions of an energy character.

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