



Conclusion of the **Nationwide** citizens' assembly on energy costs

Table of Contents

Section I Introduction	5
Voice of the assembly participants	8
The citizens' path towards solving the problem of energy poverty in Poland	10
Section II A conversation unlike any other – the citizens' assembly method	13
“We can talk, after all”	14
A conversation based on facts	16
So that no one is left behind	17
“Poland in a nutshell”	18
A return of faith in democracy	20
Section III Energy poverty – verdict of the citizens' assembly	23
General conclusions	26
A significant concurrence of opinions	26
Longing for a better state	26
First strategy and funds, then action	29
Energy poverty and its three main causes	30
High energy costs: grid modernization and RES	30
Low energy efficiency of buildings: towards a simple, result-oriented system	32
Low income: affordable housing and precisely targeted support	33
The assembly as part of a greater whole	36
Section IV Table of all adopted solutions	38

Text by: Maria Belina Brzozowska, Magdalena Geringer-Nurczyńska,
Maria Jagaciak, Maria Perchuć-Zółtowska, Kuba Wygnański

Quantitative data analysis: Jan Herbst

Graphic design: Klara Jankiewicz

Photos from the citizens' assembly: Wojciech Radwański

Proofreading: Katarzyna Pawłowska

Translation: Textem

The publication is available on the Creative Commons licence
Attribution – NonCommercial – NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)

Warsaw 2022



SECTION I
Introduction

The citizens' assembly was a part of a broader undertaking that we called the Civic Council on Energy Costs – by this we wanted to emphasize that we need a joint reflection of many communities on this issue, with each community bringing a different perspective, and that only the intersection of these will point to the best solutions. Certainly, the voice of experts matters, but it brings little

if the discussion is not joined in by decision-makers and the citizens themselves, who have to consent to those solutions – especially when these entail some restrictions or commitments on their part. **Ever more often, vital public issues require a social contract. The more citizens themselves are its co-authors, the greater the chance of this happening.** This is the core sense behind undertaking activities such as those described in the present report.



This time, the process concerned energy costs and in particular the issue of the so-called energy poverty. Until recently, this term was known to specialists alone. Currently, the concept not only is gaining recognizability, but also describes the situation of ever more Polish families. This phenomenon has numerous causes and numerous consequences, not only economic, but also environmental, health-related, and even geopolitical. In order to tackle it, we need a wide range of regulatory, financial, organizational, educational etc. instruments. **Actions must be taken on**

the level of individuals, neighbourhoods, local administration units, but also countries, and even entire Europe. Social organizations, businesses and public administration all have a job to do in this regard. Taking all the above into consideration, we can hardly count on there being one simple solution to the problem of energy poverty. What we need is an entire spectrum of well-synchronized measures. Their identification and review by the assembly participants was the essence of the entire process.

Ultimately, the spectrum consists of more than 100 various recommendations – some general and rather fundamental, others detailed (and even technical). Many of them should become material for the development of a long-term, coherent strategy to reduce the scale of energy poverty in Poland. The existence of such a strategy is the first and foremost demand, as follows from the almost unanimous verdict of the assembly participants.

From the perspective of the assembly organizers, we found it extremely enlightening and uplifting that the participants were able and willing to go beyond their narrow, individual perspectives and thinking in terms of own benefits in their debates and decisions. What prevailed were the much broader category of the common good as well as sensitivity to the situation of other groups of citizens, which is often much worse than that of the assembly participants. In other words, **it turned out that, in a group of randomly selected people – thanks to a well designed process of education and deliberation – the participants are ready to set aside the role of “consumers of politics” and become policy makers.** They have become citizens. The prudence of their decisions could in our opinion put to shame many politicians, who find it difficult to break away from a way of doing politics imposed by four-year terms and ad hoc interests, not always in the spirit of thinking about the common good or the long-term public interest.

Kuba Wygnański, President of the Shipyard Foundation

Can citizens find a solution to complex problems debated by experts and politicians? The belief that the answer is affirmative encouraged the Shipyard Foundation to organize a nationwide citizens' assembly concerning energy poverty, and the Copernicus Science Centre to support it.

Due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, energy poverty has become a part of the everyday experience of many families in Poland and elsewhere in Europe. Yet the context of this social problem encompasses more than just the confusing logic of geopolitics. Lurking in the background, we can find such complex issues as human-made global warming, which threatens us and our children with a climate crisis, the particularities of the various ways of obtaining energy, or an analysis of the effectiveness of various forms of state intervention and modes of social organization.

“(…) there is always a well-known solution to every human problem – neat, plausible, and wrong”, wrote Henry Louis Mencken, known as the “Sage of Baltimore”. In order to solve complex problems, we need not only expert knowledge, but also the ability to understand various perspectives and to look for compromise, faith in the goodwill of others, trust in the wisdom of collective reflection, and readiness to collectively take responsibility for our common fate. This is why I am sure that citizens who participate in a well prepared decision-making process can find a better solution than politicians.

Robert Firmhofer, CEO of the Copernicus Science Centre



More information about the Nationwide citizens' assembly on energy costs (including its regulations, description of methodology, programme, materials, recorded presentations etc.) can be found on the websites:

www.naradaoenergii.pl

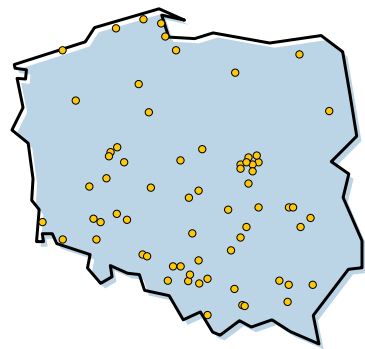
www.facebook.com/naradaobywatelska



Voice of the assembly Participants

The text below was drafted by the assembly Participants, with the aid of our team, and adopted in an almost unanimous vote.

We come from different parts of Poland, we are of different ages, we deal with different issues on a daily basis, and we also have different views and baggage of experience. If it were not for the Nationwide citizens' assembly on energy costs, our paths would probably have never crossed. And yet, as a group of randomly selected Poles, as diverse as our society is, we came together to look for ways to counteract poverty in Poland. This pressing issue concerns a growing number of our fellow country people and calls for an urgent action in order to effectively support those most severely affected.



As citizens, we are concerned about the scale of energy poverty in the country and the lack of relevant long-term policy from public authorities in this area, which we have been experiencing for many years. We do not want to be indifferent to the serious challenges which we face as a society and which we must tackle together. We see our participation in the assembly as a civic duty and our contribution to the fight against this phenomenon. Taking care of the common good in this way is – according to the Constitution – a duty for each and every one of us, but at the same time a great honour.

The experience of participating in the assembly showed us the value of involving ordinary citizens in public affairs and convinced us that better democracy is possible. It fits perfectly with the efforts to increase civic participation in the decision-making process – it involves cooperation between authorities, social dialogue and implementation of the principle of subsidiarity, which strengthen citizens' rights. Moreover, participation in the assembly has shown us that despite our differences, we are able to engage in a substantive and constructive discussion on this socially important topic.

Although we were randomly selected, the results of our work are not random. We have been supported in choosing the best ways to combat energy poverty by experts in various fields, who provided us with knowledge, marshalled information and answered our questions. We trust that the effort we have all made, the time we have spent, the joint reflection and the many hours of discussions for the sake of the most needy citizens of our country will not be in vain, and that our voice – the voice of Poland in a nutshell – will be heard. We address our list of recommendations for action to the central and local authorities and to all institutions, organizations and public figures who can help put them into practice. We urge you to read the report and take the solutions we have chosen into account in the coming period when developing local and national policies to combat energy poverty. To a certain extent, the responsibility for implementing our verdict lies with ourselves, but we realize that decision-makers – present and future – can play the greatest role in this action..



The citizens' path towards solving the problem of energy poverty in Poland

September 2022

October 2022

November 2022

December 2022

12.09 – 20.10.2022

Sampling

-  **111** interviewers
-  **113 000** answered calls
-  **221** preliminary consents to participate in the assembly
-  **96** recruited persons that made up "Poland in a nutshell", including 8 persons from local councils



13.10.2022

Shipyard Foundation before the Senate Special Committee on Climate Affairs

22-23.10.2022

Education weekend



75 assembly participants
20 experts presenting a topic
3 positions of so-called parties
470 questions from assembly participants
 approx. **6 hours** of presentations
 approx. **4 hours** of discussion and replies by experts

5-6.11.2022

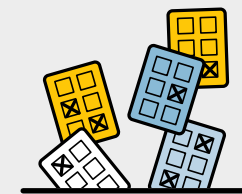
Deliberation weekend



78 assembly participants
10 tables
11 moderators
10 experts
 approx. **10 hours** of talks about solutions
10 group rotations at the tables
60 new solutions to counteract the issue of energy poverty developed by the assembly participants

16.11.2022

Voting on solutions





approx. **100** solution proposals
77 persons voting online, including
10 persons supported by
7 technical assistants


6.12.2022


Conclusion of the Nationwide citizens' assembly on energy costs


What solutions were adopted?


 creating a 15-year strategy for action


 modernizing the electricity grid, particularly with a view to connecting to it renewable energy sources

 more precise targeting of measures and funding – first and foremost at those most in need


 increasing the share of renewable energy sources in the Polish energy mix


 enabling the operation of prosumer energy (i.e. so-called local energy communities)

 more information about the problem and available solutions

 more accessible energy counselling – greater scale and more effective outreach

 a "one-stop-shop" to deal with all issues related to improving the energy efficiency of a building

 increasing the availability of affordable, energy-efficient housing

 supporting local solutions (grassroots and local government) to address energy poverty



SECTION II

**A conversation unlike
any other – the citizens'
assembly method**

“We can talk, after all”

The Citizens’ Assembly on Energy Costs was the first nationwide process of its kind in Poland (the method had been used before in other countries, including Canada, France, the United Kingdom, or Ireland, and in Poland – for the time being – only at municipality level). Therefore, there is no denying that this was a kind of experiment. As organizers, we were not sure until the last moment how many people would ultimately come to Warsaw for the first weekend of the assembly, how many would stay with us until the end of the process, and how the discussions would proceed. As one assembly participant summed it up: “it turned out that we can talk, after all”. We believe that this was possible above all thanks to the goodwill of the assembly participants and the belief that their involvement was needed. **Even though the assembly had no host on the government side, the belief in the importance of the topic of conversation was so strong that all those who came for the first weekend stayed with us until the end of the process.**

As organizers, we tried to ensure that the standards of the assembly were met to the fullest extent possible, including ensuring the best possible conditions for discussion. From the organizational point of view, we believe that the following helped to guide the discussion:

- talking in small groups, where each person had a greater chance to speak,
- rotating the composition of the groups at the tables – there were ten rotations throughout the assembly, so the participants talked to different people at the tables in most rounds – this way, they were able to learn about numerous positions and viewpoints,
- ensuring a safe environment for the discussions – all were moderated and had a set duration.



“The moderators ensured that everyone had the opportunity to speak their mind. This is crucial. Often there is no time to hear another person.”

– Assembly Participant

The experimental nature of our activities also led us to carry out more extensive evaluation activities than usual. Among other things, two evaluation surveys¹ were included in the process: one at the beginning and one at the end. In a survey completed at the end, the vast majority of assembly participants concluded that people attending events such as the assembly could comfortably express divergent views on energy poverty (98%, an increase of 19 percentage points since the launch of the process).



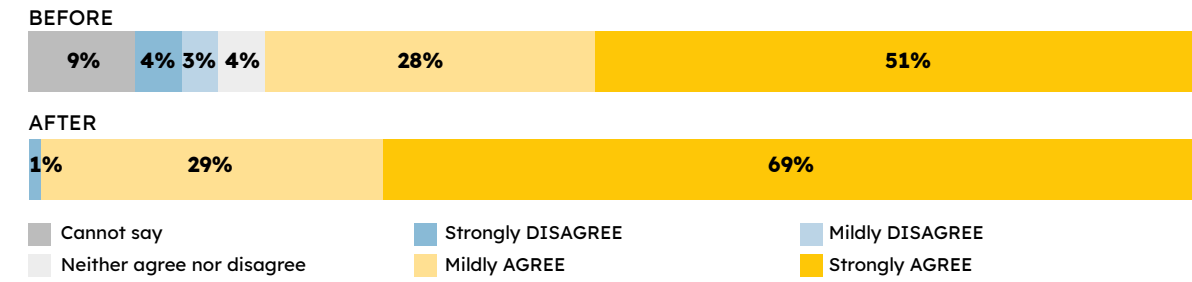
The number of questionnaires filled in “BEFORE” the assembly was 76, and “AFTER” the assembly – 73. Contrastive analyses are based on the answers of 68 assembly participants who submitted both questionnaires (“BEFORE” and “AFTER”).

An exception are questions that were not subject to comparison in the “BEFORE” and “AFTER” questionnaires (they were asked in one of the surveys only). In those cases, the calculations are based on all answers in the relevant questionnaire.

The number of assembly participants who took part in the voting was 77.

¹ Research material was also provided by the Method Observers.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: People attending such events are free to express divergent views on energy poverty*.



* In the graphs presented, the labels next to the bars do not necessarily add up to exactly 100% due to rounding and the omission of category labels in the case of very small numbers.

“Even if we were to argue at this assembly, (...) perhaps something good would come out of it, and we don’t have enough opportunities to talk about various socially sensitive topics”.

– Assembly Participant

Prof. Paulina Pospieszna, Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań:

“Citizens’ assemblies are a popular form of involving citizens in local as well as national decision-making processes in Western Europe, Australia and the United States. They are part of the development of deliberative democracy, which complements representative democracy. In Central and Eastern Europe, such solutions are growing increasingly popular thanks to the involvement of third sector representatives in transferring experiences from abroad and adapting them to the characteristics of the countries in the region. Assemblies are regarded as innovations in democracies, as they aim to improve the public policy-making process through deliberative processes and citizen involvement, and are therefore increasingly supported by authorities at the local or national level. Research shows that citizens’ assemblies help to boost the acceptance of public decisions and thus trust in institutions and the authorities, and therefore contribute to improving democracy. As a researcher, I am very pleased to be able to follow the organization of citizens’ assemblies in Poland and the fact that they are becoming a tool not only for improving political decisions and developing various policies, but also for influencing citizens themselves. The assembly organized by the Shipyard Foundation, which was the first grassroots assembly held at the national level in Poland, involved many communities in the preparation and improvement of the process. As a representative of the academic community, I had the opportunity to propose that the Foundation measure the impact of the assembly on the participants, i.e. investigate whether citizens perceive the process as effective in deciding on various policies, and whether the assembly has an impact on perceptions of the individual’s agency and role in society, as well as on trust in institutions and on perception of democracy. This openness of the organizers to cooperation results in assemblies in Poland being of better quality and catching up with the standards that have long been developed in mature democracies”.

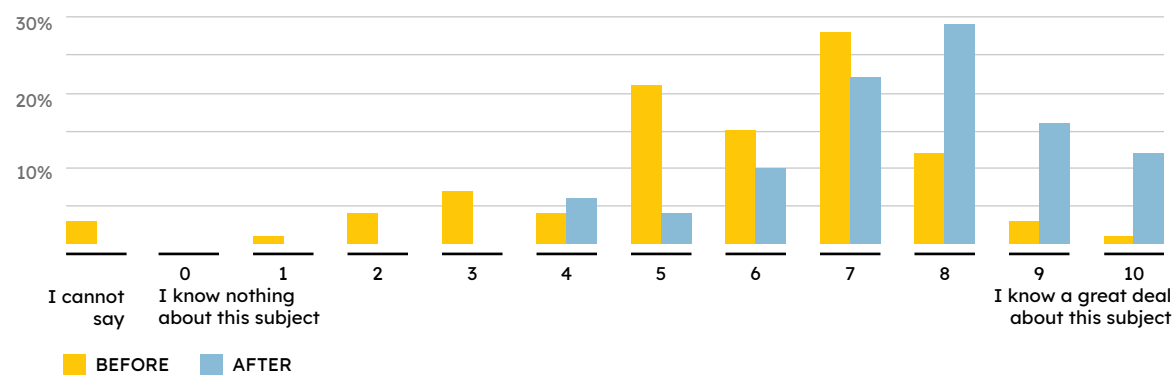
A conversation based on facts

In order to participate in the assembly, you do not need to be an expert on energy poverty. However, professional expertise could not be lacking in the process. In order for the assembly participants to be able to responsibly draft proposals for solutions to the problem of energy poverty, the first weekend of the assembly was dedicated to education. This weekend event, which brought together experts specializing in energy poverty, including in particular energy costs, energy efficiency and low incomes, was certainly a major challenge for the assembly participants, mainly due to the massive amount of data and facts they had to deal with. Furthermore, over the course of the educational weekend, the experts presented their proposed solutions to the problem.

In addition, knowledge about energy poverty was available in the information materials and on the project website www.naradaoenergii.pl, where we had collected verified information and reports on the diagnosis of the problem, inspiring solutions and good practices.

In the light of the process, of which the educational part was an indispensable element, we consider it very important that the assembly participants declared at the end that their knowledge of energy poverty had increased.

How do you assess the state of your knowledge about the problem of energy poverty?



”

“A huge amount of often surprising knowledge”.

“I used to think we had much to do. Now, after these meetings today, I know we have very much to do”.

“The amount of information surprised me”.

“The knowledge we are gaining here today should be familiar to everyone. Often it is basic information that is lacking”.

– Paneliści i Panelistki

So that no one is left behind

One of the challenges in citizens’ assemblies is to ensure that the participants think about solutions for the common good of all citizens. To facilitate this, we prepared so-called “personae” based on data from available analyses, which represented the types of people most often affected by energy poverty. Thanks to that, the assembly participants could more easily imagine their perspective. We talked about the common good before the deliberation weekend (i.e. before a structured, moderated conversation among the assembly participants, once they were equipped with knowledge after the educational weekend).

Kuba Wygnański illustrated it for instance thus: “As you design a policy, imagine (...) as if you were designing the rules of a board game – design them, remembering that you don’t know who you will be in this game. Don’t assume that you will be the lucky and wealthy ones, because it may turn out in this game that you will be someone else, someone extremely poor. (...) Try, when thinking about these solutions (...), that our responsibility as a community is to leave no one behind”.

“We [assembly participants] as a society have shown strategic thinking, thinking about various things. We have demonstrated that it is possible to talk about the things that matter most, to show the way, it really works. We were not driven by vested interests, showing the essence of action in the short term, with just the coming winter in mind. I’m glad that as a society, we are still thinking strategically”.

– Assembly Participant

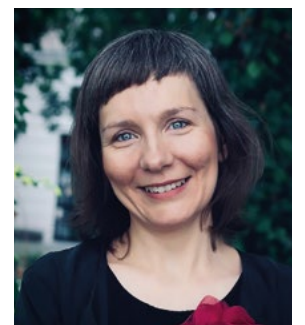
“In social discussions, I think (...) we often don’t know how to talk to each other, we don’t have time to hear the other person, and we try very hard to force through our own topics, our own opinion, and we don’t always pay attention to the fact that other people might see it differently”.

– Assembly Participant

Agnieszka Pędzich, Fundacja Pole Dialogu (Field of Dialogue Foundation):

“The results of the assembly are a product of the opinions that the participants had had before they came here and all that they learned in conversations with the expert group and in many discussions with each other – that is, with people from other parts of Poland, in different life situations, with different experiences, and often with completely different opinions.

A second process was also happening in parallel with the intensive work on the assembly’s complex topic and the search for the best solutions to the difficult problem of energy poverty. And here was this group of nearly 100 randomly selected people, becoming more and more of a community from meeting to meeting – and one that makes room for other perspectives, that is curious about each other and that cares about the common good and about a Poland in which we can all see and hear each other and in which no one is left alone. The experience of such a meeting is, in our view, no less an outcome of this assembly and all other participatory activities”.



“Poland in a nutshell”

By using the method of a citizens’ assembly, with participants selected at random, we were able to achieve not only a group that was diverse, but one that would certainly not have had the opportunity to meet in any other setting. As a result, it was possible to really clash different views during the assembly and to look at the problem of energy poverty from various perspectives.

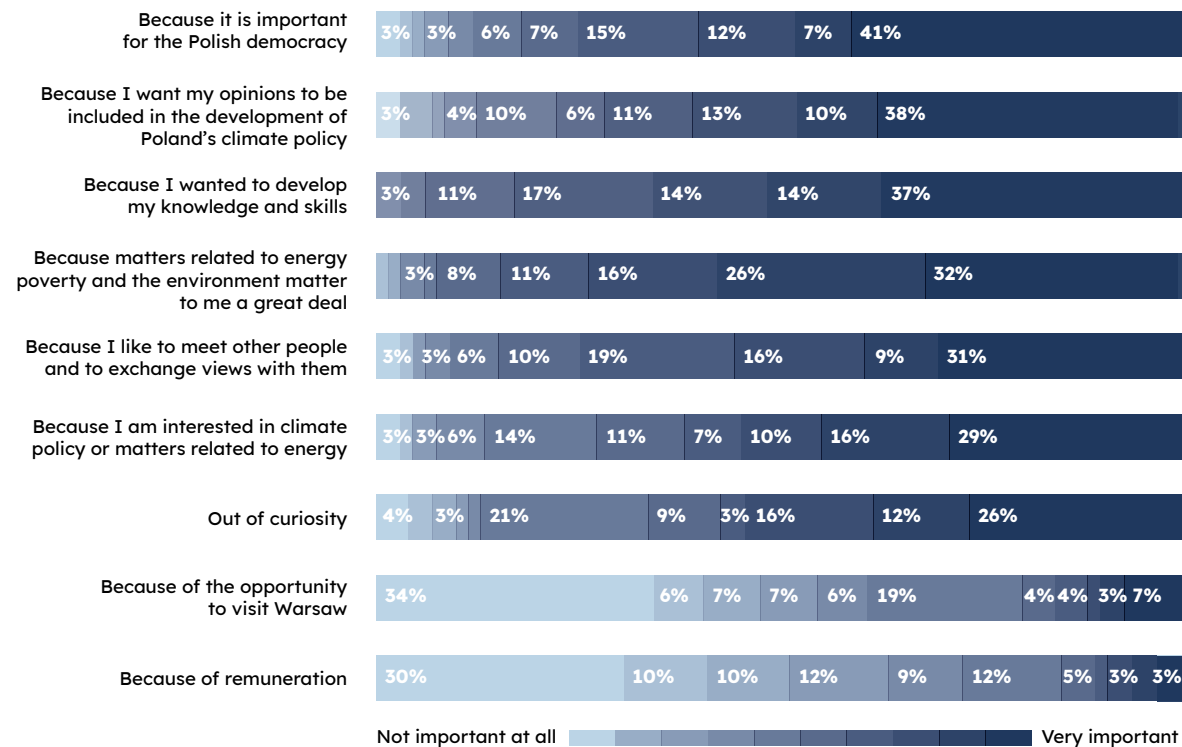
We refer to the group of assembly participants as “Poland in a nutshell” because it is a representation of adult Poles (over 18 years of age), among whom the distribution of gender, education, place of residence and income level is similar to that in the entire population of our country. We are aware that the group includes people with different political views.

Recruitment to the assembly, which was carried out over the phone, was a major challenge – it required quickly convincing the person on the other end of the phone (if they even answered a call from an unknown number) to take part in an unprecedented experiment in Poland.

As soon as after the first meeting of the assembly, however, we could tell that despite their various socio-demographic characteristics, the participants also had a strong element in common: most of them from the outset declared the reason for their participation in the assembly to be its importance for Polish democracy.

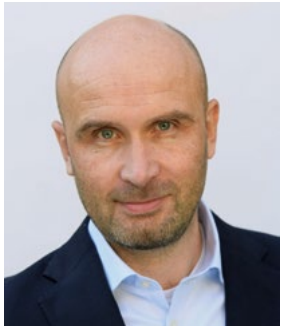
A summary of other motives is presented below:

Why did you decide to participate in the Citizens’ assembly on energy poverty?



Marcin Korolec, Instytut Zielonej Gospodarki (Green Economy Institute):

“The first nationwide citizens’ assembly in Poland, hosted by the Shipyard Foundation, is over. It took place under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, in the shadow of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, at a time of rampant inflation and Europe’s greatest energy crisis since World War II. The results of the assembly, as I understand it, are clear: the overwhelming majority of participants were in favour of a green, more inclusive transformation. This is encouraging, because it is the only way towards true energy sovereignty, and indeed true sovereignty for our country.



A representative group of Poles have expressed their opinion in a very precise and unambiguous way. It would now be important for those in power to honestly respond to the demands expressed during the assembly. I hope that this voice of the citizens will also be a point of reference during programme discussions among all political parties during the upcoming election campaign in Poland. The verdict that it is time for a green transition has been given and is unequivocal – now it is time to discuss how best and fastest to implement it”.

“So this Poland is not quite that stupid, this collective wisdom has worked out quite well for us. I think that this is a sort of vox populi vox dei before the elections; now might be a good time for us to put some pressure on those in power. As a representation of voters from various parties, we have shown what direction we like, so maybe this will now give those in power something to think about.”

– Assembly Participant

“I’ve been telling back at home what I’m participating in and my friends have asked me how they could get involved.”

– Assembly Participant

Someone could say that in order to find out the opinions of the Poles on the subject of energy poverty, it would be enough to carry out an opinion poll. **However, the unquestionable advantage of the citizens’ assembly was the opportunity for a group of people from all over Poland to meet, discuss, and learn about other points of view, and sometimes even change their views.** In a survey at the end of the panel, 71% of the participants said that they had sometimes found themselves changing their minds on the topics discussed.

“Looking at what I learned during the assembly and [what] I heard from the participants, in many places I changed my mind and my view on some things”.

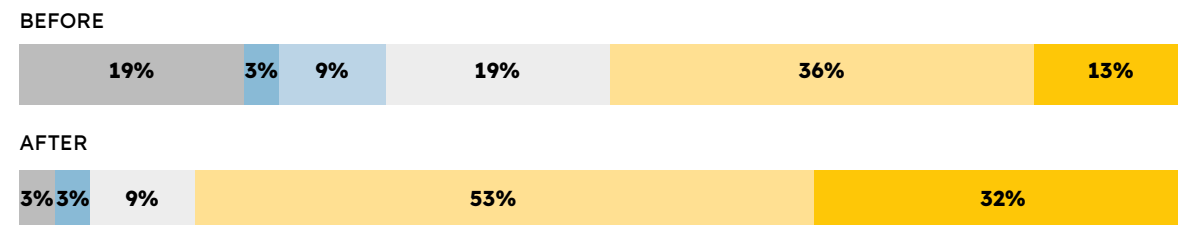
– Assembly Participant

A return of faith in democracy

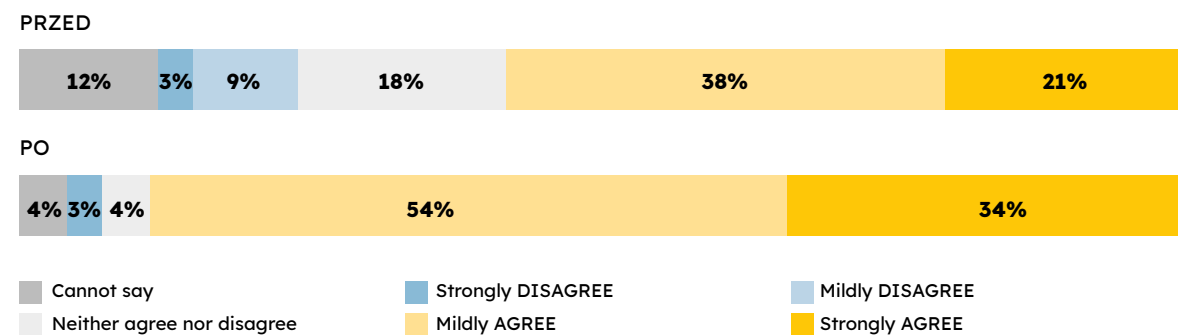
As an organization that, almost from its inception, has been involved in supporting the development of civic participation in Poland, we are happy to see that people who were uncertain or even sceptical about participating in the assembly have come to believe that talking in this format makes sense.

The results of the surveys at the end of the panel reveal that participation in the process definitely influenced the sense of self-confidence and agency of “ordinary” citizens as well as the possibility for them to propose, with the help of experts, valuable solutions.

Those who participate in such events are sufficiently informed and competent to contribute to policy-making on energy poverty.



People who participate in such events are capable of taking fair and honest decisions concerning energy poverty.



At the end of the assembly, 77% of the participants felt that when it comes to energy poverty, the everyday experiences of ordinary people are just as important as scientific and expert knowledge (an increase of 30 percentage points since the beginning of the process).

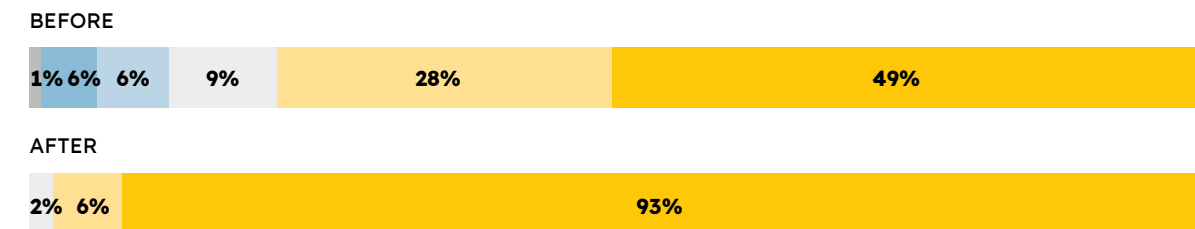
Even those who had had no similar experiences (i.e. had not previously participated in public debates or public consultations, for example) – and they made up for almost 70% of the group – appreciated the value of the assembly.



“I have regained my faith in people, in education, in democracy and in its directness”
– Assembly Participant

At the end of the process, those who participated in the Nationwide citizens’ assembly on energy costs were overwhelmingly (99%, an increase of up to 44 percentage points since the beginning of the process) of the opinion that such processes should be organized on other topics, as well, and that they can contribute to increasing citizens’ impact on important policy decisions.

Citizens’ assemblies such as the Assembly on energy poverty should be organized on other topics, as well.



Citizens’ assemblies such as the Assembly on energy poverty can contribute to increasing citizens’ impact on important policy decisions



Legend: Cannot say (grey), Neither agree nor disagree (light grey), Strongly DISAGREE (dark blue), Mildly DISAGREE (light blue), Mildly AGREE (orange), Strongly AGREE (yellow)



SECTION III

Energy poverty – verdict of the citizens’ assembly



During the first nationwide citizens' assembly, we sought answers to the question:

“How to counteract the problem of energy poverty in Poland?”

Many months of preparation enabled us to see the complexity of the matter with all its threads and the ideas for solving it. The structure of the entire process – as suggested by experts – was based on three elements influencing the plight of people in an energy poverty crisis: high energy costs, low energy efficiency of buildings and low income. This was reflected in the structure of

the education and the deliberation parts of the assembly as well as the ballot paper. Approximately 100 solutions were subject to the deliberative process conducted on 16 November. More were developed during the process: about 60 were proposed by the experts and the so-called parties, while further 60 were added by the participants during the process. All proposals were marshalled and edited by the Shipyard Foundation team, subject to the approval of the experts and the assembly participants. As a result, the voting list was somewhat shorter (about 100 solutions), although we realize that we set a difficult and demanding task for the voters, anyway. Below you can find a summary of the results of voting by the assembly participants. The solutions were arranged on the ballot papers in four blocks:

1. the jointly drafted position of the assembly participants, that is the so-called preamble, which we have included in this report;
2. general recommendations, consisting of cross-cutting themes on the topic of energy poverty;
3. directional and detailed solutions organized under three thematic areas (high energy costs, low energy efficiency of buildings and low income);
4. main directions for solutions, from which three most important ones had to be selected.

Each solution was rated on a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with an additional option for those with no opinion on the issue. When referring to percentage support later in the text, we will analyse the yes votes, i.e. covering both the “strongly agree” and the “rather agree” category.

In this chapter, we have included our analysis of the results combined with comments from the experts accompanying us from the beginning of the process. **This is an extensive package of solutions, intended primarily for the central government, but also partly for local government or local communities, and even for individual citizens.**

The complete results of the vote for each solution are attached, as well.



General conclusions

A significant concurrence of opinions

At first glance, the voting results show a great convergence of views among the assembly participants as well as their enthusiasm in assessing the various solutions subject to voting, whose vast majority met with overwhelming support (“strongly agree” and “rather agree” votes). In the remainder of this section, we will therefore refer to the percentage of votes awarded knowing that, as a rule, these differences in support are not major.

What explains this high degree of consensus and enthusiasm? On the one hand, it is the fact that the subject, in principle, is not controversial, so that the package of solutions does not arouse negative emotions. On the other hand, unanimity was additionally fostered by the method of the assembly – the participants discussed for many hours, getting to know each other’s positions and, consequently, bringing them closer together. No proposals for solutions so controversial as to clearly divide the assembly participants emerged during the debates. The fact that the solutions were jointly drafted by those involved in the process is likewise significant. **The proposals of the experts were rephrased and made more specific by the assembly participants during the discussion meetings, and their own proposals also appeared, which may have further fostered their willingness to support them.**

Longing for a better state

A yearning for a different way of legislating and quality of government than at present resounds in the assembly participants’ key decisions. At the top of the list of the adopted solutions are those that speak of synchronization and coordination of activities, simplification of procedures, a long-term strategy and solutions that genuinely remodel the system rather than applying ad hoc remedies. There is a desire for effective assistance, but the condition for this effectiveness must be the precision of action and the matching of appropriate (also non-financial) forms and tools.

This dream does not necessarily entail the centralization of management. **The assembly participants point to the need for a transparent, predictable, effective and friendly state. At the same time, they dream of it creating a framework in which citizens themselves can be active and various solutions developed at the local level (with the active participation of local government understood as a community of inhabitants) can be put into practice.** Consequently, centrally administered and new research councils, institutions or units were ranked further down the voting list and thus as less popular.

Joanna Furmaga, Polska Zielona Sieć (Polish Green Network):

“The excellent format of the assembly showed the great power of civic society. Those in power are handed a long list of things to do immediately on a silver platter. The recommendations clearly point out the extent of neglect and shortcomings we face at the level of state institutions. At the same time, it is worth noting the only recommendation that received 100% support: Tackling energy poverty requires also the promotion of local solutions based on citizens’ self-organization and self-government. This is an impressive result showing our maturity as a civic society. We believe in our own agency and effectiveness at the level of our small local communities. However, the state must do its part”.



Jakub Sokołowski, Instytut Badań Strukturalnych (Institute for Structural Research):

“The assembly participants and organizers have shown that a different politics is possible – one that focuses on exploring various perspectives and caring for the common good. It is particularly important that they have achieved this in times of the energy and climate crisis. On the one hand, the assembly participants proposed solutions that are progressive, socially just and efficient, that do not focus on vested interests, that take into account the common good and that are tailored to everyone’s individual capacities. On the other hand, the solutions are also innovative. In addition to the climate and energy crisis, the assembly participants considered other future crises that we will have to solve together, as well. This includes the demographic situation in Poland. The assembly participants proposed a number of innovative solutions to increase the availability of council housing, simplify access to benefits or move from energy-inefficient houses to flats. The role of researchers will now be to verify the assembly participants’ intuitions and preferences and assess what impact their proposed solutions may have”.



Joanna Maćkowiak-Pandera, Forum Energii (Energy Forum):

“Energy costs are grabbing the attention of Poles. The debate around this topic is clear evidence that the Poles expect energy transition to be given a high priority, as they realize that energy prices will have an impact not only on the economy and finances, but also on the security, health and quality of the life of citizens.

Among the most anticipated actions is the development of an up-to-date energy strategy for the next 15 years. Moreover, the recommendations from the meeting show high support for the development of RES and an awareness that this requires investment as well as legislative and organizational changes (e.g. improving the conditions for establishing energy communities). Many of the recommendations relate to improving the living conditions of the energy poor or those threatened by such poverty because of low energy efficiency in buildings. The expectation is repeatedly expressed that local authorities will be allowed to play a more active role. Furthermore, it is worth noting that one of the priority recommendations is the need to adequately address the problem of high energy costs.



The list of demands presented in the course of the Shipyard Foundation’s process is long and comprises comprehensive changes that in the long term will allow us to achieve European climate goals. In order for these goals to become reality, the next challenge will be to identify which of the demands should be given priority in the current budgetary situation”.

”

Joanna Sadzik, Szlachetna Paczka (Noble Gift):

“We are in for a hard winter – this is a phrase I hear in the media, from the people we help, but also from neighbours. It is usually followed by an explanation as to why it is so, sometimes also who is to blame. However, a group of randomly selected Poles thought differently, discussed the solutions, and came to an agreement, and we have a result. The recommendations look far into the future, but there are also some to be implemented here and now. There are recommendations for the government, the parliament and the local authorities, but it is great that some of the recommendations are directed at local communities. We are able to solve local problems in small communities, often without a formal structure”.



”

Patrycja Płonka, Stowarzyszenie Gmin Polska Sieć „Energie Cités” (Association of Municipalities Polish Network “Energie Cités”):

“Energy poverty is a widespread problem in Europe, with many households spending a significant proportion of their income on energy bills while experiencing difficulties in securing basic energy needs. Tackling it requires action at all levels, and in order to identify the most desirable measures, it is important to involve as wide a range of society as possible, not only experts but also ordinary citizens. That is why initiatives such as the Nationwide citizens’ assembly on energy costs are most welcome. I hope that its results and recommendations will be taken into account in the planning of national, regional and local strategies and actions to support people at risk of energy poverty. It is important that the assembly participants drew attention to the special role of local governments and communities. Being closest to the citizens and knowing their needs best, local governments are able to effectively support the most vulnerable, for example by educating, providing advisory services, investing in renewable energy sources, or subsidizing or assisting in obtaining funding for improving the thermal efficiency of buildings or changing the heat source”.



”

Bartłomiej Głuszak and Monika Michniewicz, Federacja Organizacji Socjalnych Województwa Warmińsko-Mazurskich FOSa (Federation of Social Organizations of the Warmian-Mazurian Province FOSa):

“The FOSa Federation has been working on the topic of the social effects of communication exclusion for a long time. The need for a range of solutions in this area correlates with proposals in the field of energy exclusion, such as neighbourhood support or dedicated support programmes. The results of the assembly on the one hand point to the need for systemic, multi-sectoral changes that require time and decisions at the national level. On the other hand, they confirm the need to implement concrete grassroots solutions, here and now, such as neighbourhood support or dedicated support programmes”.



”

Monika Kosińska, Federacja Konsumentów (Consumers’ Federation):

“There needs to be a long-term energy strategy for the country for the next 15 years, the grids need to be developed, the development of renewable sources in energy production needs to be increased. But we must not forget households, consumers, who need help and support in this process of change. But, as the assembly participants showed, this is the responsibility of all of us, not just the state; the role of local governments and the self-organization of local communities are equally important”.

**First strategy and funds, then action**

We repeatedly encouraged the participants to be bold and think strategically, going beyond the framework of the current system and its legal solutions. We posed questions about the cost of the proposed solutions, their effectiveness and the precision with which they reach the needs of the energy poor. This may have contributed to the fact that the assembly participants found that the development of a long-term, national energy strategy is a prerequisite for effectively reducing the extent and impact of energy poverty.

The central recommendation in this area is the development of a strategy for the next 15 years (99% support for this, with half of the voters additionally identifying it as one of the three solutions that should be prioritized), secured with funding. A possible way of securing money for the implementation of the strategy could be to use a solution introduced by the European Union – 92% of the voters support the creation of an Energy Transformation Fund, which would enable at least 70% of the revenue from the EU ETS emissions trading scheme (which goes to the Polish budget anyway) to be redirected for climate and environmental purposes.

The decisions taken by the citizens’ assembly are, in this dimension, bold and difficult and escape the political pattern, often confined by the limits of a four-year election contract.

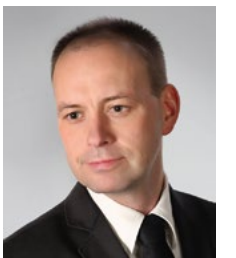
“As far as the results are concerned, (...) I am satisfied; (...) leaving aside minor differences, we have set our sights on solutions that are forward looking; not patching a hole for a quick fix, but something that will give us more for the future”.

– Assembly Participant

”

Łukasz Pytliński, Instytut Ekonomii Środowiska (Institute of Environmental Economics):

“The results of the vote prove that, in uncertain times, Poles expect decisive action from those in power to create a clear strategy for the long-term development of the energy sector in Poland. The events of recent months have exposed the weakness of the domestic energy sector and shown that the reluctance to thoroughly reform the sector, which has equally characterized politicians of almost all options at the helm over the past decades, has, in the situation of a serious crisis such as the one we are currently experiencing, led to a serious threat to Poland’s energy security, on a both national and individual level. Paradoxically, this crisis may become an opportunity to change the way we think about the energy sector in Poland and allow us to lay foundations for a new long-term strategy, in which the main place will be given to energy efficiency and prosumer energy as the key areas in building energy security and independence for Poles. Thus, support for programmes aimed at reducing energy consumption in the sector of both single- and multi-family buildings, modernization of energy and heat sources, development of RES installations, as well as effective communication with the addressees of these programmes should become, in the opinion of the citizens, one of the priorities of government policy for the coming years. It should be added that this is not just another poll result, but the voice of citizens who have been provided with objective knowledge in the area under analysis, and the very fact that these citizens became involved and were willing to devote their time to a discussion about Poland proves that they are people who care, which further emphasizes the significance of this result”.



”

Energy poverty and its three main causes

As we have mentioned, the structure of the entire assembly debate process was based on three elements that influence the plight of those in the energy poverty crisis: high energy costs, low energy efficiency of buildings and low income. Below is a summary of the key findings in these three areas.

High energy costs: grid modernization and RES

This is perhaps the most surprising result of the panel, as it is not obvious at first glance: in this area, **the assembly participants were almost unanimously and most strongly in favour of upgrading the energy grid** (97% of votes). This entails a whole package of measures, from adapting it to accommodate and manage energy from renewable sources (99% support) and

developing prosumer installations (97%), to introducing regulations to enable the construction of direct lines (95%). This direction shows courage and a focus on strategic thinking, as, according to the experts speaking at the assembly, it requires a great deal of resources and a long time horizon, but at the same time is a necessary step to lower energy costs in the long term. Importantly, **the modernization of the grid must also be followed, according to the assembly participants, by a tightening of the system: in particular through greater supervision of the companies' market activities in terms of energy and raw material pricing.**

The modernization of the grid is intended, among other things, to render the sources of energy more flexible. This leads to the second most important recommendation in this area, i.e. RES. **The assembly participants explicitly stated that renewable energy sources are the direction in which the Polish energy sector should develop.**

At the same time, they would like to pave the way for activities aimed at faster development of the so-called production market (where citizens generate energy for their needs on their own) as part of various forms of energy communities, based on ecological sources such as wind (93% for the abolition of the famous “10h” law), solar or biomass (although its recognition as a source of RES is sometimes criticized by some circles). It is as much about removing legal barrier and, providing additional funding and subsidy programmes as it is about doing research in search of innovative solutions. To illustrate the point, one could repeat after the assembly participants: “unleash (green) energy and put it in the hands of the community”.

In this context, it is also worth drawing attention to one of the most important sources of energy generation in Poland at present (individually and through the system of power plants producing electricity), namely coal². **The assembly participants are not ready to say goodbye to coal for good.** On the one hand, one in four people mentioned the need for consistent elimination of fossil fuels from Poland's energy mix as one of the three most important recommendations, while

² Cited after: Sokółowski J. and Frankowski J., Jak poprawić jakość życia osób ubogich energetycznie?, IBS Policy Paper, 2021.

on the other hand, all solutions relating to coal and other fossil fuels, including gas (stopping imports of energy resources from Russia or ending mining) have relatively the least support among voters – although still quite high, at around 70%. At the same time, there is no consensus on poor-quality solid fuels – 87% of the voters were in favour of the Ministry of Climate and the Environment raising coal quality standards for households while guaranteeing its availability. There may be a kind of sentiment in these choices, perhaps also an expression of solidarity with energy poor people, who will simply need time to switch to another type of heating.



Wojciech Szymalski, Fundacja Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju (Institute for Sustainable Development Foundation):

“As demonstrated by the results of the Civic Council on Energy Costs, the Poles want a clear goal and more empowerment in the area of energy. I am delighted that one of the most popular recommendations is to prepare a long-term energy strategy. This shows that most of us do not really know where we are going with our energy at the moment, and it is not certain that our politicians do either.

Furthermore, I am very pleased that the assembly proved that as a society, we are for the most part ready for the challenges of the energy transition, although we also accept that it will not happen as quickly as we would like and that fossil fuels must stay with us for some time yet. However, they must be phased out consistently. According to at least 24% of the assembly participants, this consistency in the elimination of fossil fuels is one of the most important recommendations. This is an area for action”.



”

Zuzanna Rudzińska-Bluszcz, Fundacja ClientEarth Prawnicy dla Ziemi (ClientEarth Lawyers for the Planet Foundation):

„Stocznia zrobiła rzecz niebywałą i precedensową – dała głos i wiedzę wybranym losowo „The Shipyard Foundation did an unprecedented and unprecedented thing – it gave voice and knowledge to randomly selected citizens, i.e. the mythical Sovereign. After consultation and debate, the Sovereign has spoken. The results of the assembly show that the so-called “ordinary people” better those in power when it comes to their vision of a green Poland and their determination to bring about change. The assembly took place at a difficult time, during



the most serious energy crisis in decades. The huge popularity of recommendations for the development of renewable energy sources proves that it is in RES that the Poles see the foundation of our energy security and a way to reduce energy costs. And they want specifics – a long-term green energy strategy, a well-developed grid infrastructure and transparent financial management through the establishment of an Energy Transformation Fund.

The assembly participants not only demand the right to cheap and clean renewable energy, but also want to participate in its production. The massive support for the

creation of energy communities or the development of photovoltaic installations not only in rural areas, but also in towns and cities – on the roofs of blocks of flats and other houses – shows that Polish people are eagerly awaiting changes in legislation. As the president of an environmental organization, I feel great satisfaction. I hope that the results will push those in power to take concrete decisions – for example to unblock the bill on onshore windmills, to set more ambitious climate targets or to remove the problems of connecting RES sources to the energy grid. At the end of the day, as the Constitution states, the Republic of Poland is the common good of all citizens. Not of those in power.”

Low energy efficiency of buildings: towards a simple, result-oriented system



Many experts have pointed out that for more than three million people, a home with heat escaping through draughty doors, uninsulated walls or an inefficient heat source is often one of the most important problems pushing them into a difficult situation³. Difficult mainly because of the cost of financing the relevant investments. According to the assembly participants, the answer to this is, first and foremost, **a well-functioning and simple system of support for those investments – from a good information policy, supported by counselling and energy audits, to wise and precisely operating support programmes that reward energy efficiency⁴. This system should be as simple as possible, guide through the whole procedure (from advice to application and handling to settlement) and be available locally.** The overall vision should, in the opinion of the voters, be complemented by information activities aimed at changing energy use habits.

³ Cited after: Sokolowski J. and Frankowski J., Jak poprawić jakość życia osób ubogich energetycznie?, IBS Policy Paper, 2021.
⁴ Of course, where this investment is rational – many recommendations related to relocation and improved housing availability can be found in the following section.

Therefore, the supported solutions included improving the flagship smog-fighting programme Clean Air, which has been in place for years.

In order for it to be able to aid people in an energy poverty crisis, it should be more accessible to them, mainly financially. The list of improvements supported by more than 90 per cent of the voters included: annual adjustment of eligible costs and subsidy amounts, faster disbursement and an increase in the maximum subsidy amounts based on income thresholds, or allowing payment before costs are incurred, i.e. so-called pre-financing. It is equally important to support with public funds mainly such investments that involve improving energy efficiency and the so-called deep energy renovation of buildings.

Moreover, the assembly participants pointed to new solutions and support programmes for energy efficiency (95% of votes). Here, the attention of the voters focused primarily on the creation of a separate support path for investments in multi-family and historic buildings. Thus, it is apparent that the problems of energy poor people living also in larger towns and in other types of buildings are recognized.

In order for support programmes to work, more outreach is needed. The assembly participants’ choices show primarily the need for a campaign that reaches elderly people more indirectly (e.g. through outpatient clinics or Universities of the Third Age) and that is more focused on education (e.g. as part of school classes). **The system should be complemented, according to the assembly participants, by more extensive activities of energy advisors and energy auditors** – most of the solutions related to this topic were supported by around 90% of the voters. The auditors should assist in diagnosing the energy needs of the household, while the advisors should provide knowledge and help people “enter” the support system. In order to achieve this, advisors should first of all be more accessible to vulnerable people, mobile (thus reaching energy poor households directly) and present in every commune.

Justyna Glusman, Fala Renowacji (Wave of Renovation):

“We are glad that as Fala Renowacji, we were able to serve the assembly participants with our knowledge – we carry out advocacy activities as well as research and analysis for effective improvement of the energy renovation support programmes in Poland and abroad on a daily basis. From our point of view, it is important that the recommendation with the most votes in the energy efficiency block concerns the intensification of education and information activities in the area of energy efficiency improvement. And, at the same time, the runner-up is the need to modify the existing support programmes for energy efficiency – this is the second most supported recommendation in this section and also one of the goals of the Fala Renowacji Association. A positive result is that the assembly participants were also in favour of a strong role for local government and an active attitude of residents in the context of combating energy poverty. This is the only recommendation with a 100% vote.”



”

Low income: affordable housing and precisely targeted support

The final area in which we asked the assembly participants to make decisions was related to low income. It could be said that **the most important solutions selected by the participants**

relate to two topics: steps towards more affordable housing and financial support for those actually experiencing poverty.

The assembly participants recognize the magnitude of the problem of the energy poor consisting in an energy inefficient building. **In addition to an entire package of adopted solutions for renovating and investing in these buildings, the assembly participants also specified proposals for alternative solutions in the form of a more affordable housing market, with a particular focus on energy efficient housing** (92% of the votes). Thus, it is clear that the direction of the solutions is towards relocation to reduce the need for expensive investments or high bills. The idea with greatest support was that to use publicly owned or vacant properties for rent. Various schemes to stimulate the housing market likewise gained the assembly participants' approval: social rental agencies, reformed housing allowances or financial incentives for developers. The elderly should not be relocated? This popular belief is contradicted by a solution which received almost 90% of the votes, namely to create a housing programme for the elderly who live in financially unaffordable, energy-inefficient homes.

When looking for solutions in this area, the assembly participants could not ignore topics related to financial support. **According to the participants, financial support is an indispensable element of the system for counteracting the problem of energy poverty. However, it must be precisely targeted, i.e. limited only to those most in need, simplified in terms of procedures and subject to greater supervision in terms of spending public funds. Voters pointed to solutions based on "meaningfulness" of the transferred funds** (i.e. such that involve paying for specific energy expenses), contrasting it with, for example, the current system of fuel allowances.

Katarzyna Przybylska, Habitat for Humanity Poland:

"The submitted recommendations are extremely interesting and their implementation would probably result in solving the energy challenges Poland is facing. It should be noted that the most important recommendations include both systemic ones, addressed to public authorities (such as "Poland's electricity grids should to be modernized and expanded as soon as possible to accommodate a higher share of renewable energy"), as well as those relating directly to household activities and energy use habits (such as "Education and information activities related to energy efficiency and changing habits in energy use should be intensified"). Another interesting aspect is the fact that strategic issues were addressed, such as multi-annual planning of energy activities, moving away from fossil fuels or setting up new institutions, as well as practical recommendations relating to the important issue of financing changes in the energy sector. This



demonstrates the assembly participants' comprehensive analysis of energy challenges and the preparation of consistent, complementary recommendations.

Among the most important recommendations, there was also one on the issue of housing ("New actions and public programmes to increase the availability of housing with an adequate standard of energy efficiency should be launched"). This is the only recommendation that goes beyond issues directly related to energy, but also addresses the pressing housing challenges. It is extremely gratifying that the assembly participants recognized the challenges related to housing and the need to increase the energy efficiency of the housing stock. Furthermore, the recommendations highlighted the need to ensure the availability and affordability of such housing. Undoubtedly, the energy and housing challenges are interlinked and it is worth implementing solutions that address both issues."



The final topic to be addressed concerns improvements in the labour market. More than 80% of the group saw potential in such measures, e.g. through job activation programmes, vocational training, counselling, assistance in finding a job or linking benefits to active job search.

Wojciech Szymalski, Fundacja Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju (Institute for Sustainable Development Foundation):

"From the angle of low income, another main problem of our society is visible – poor access to good quality housing. I was very surprised to see recommendations for more rental housing or new housing solutions, but this is a good thing. Thanks to this, I also learned something from the assembly participants, above all that the energy problem goes deeper than just the walls of a building."



The assembly as part of a greater whole

This undertaking, which is unusual for us, if only in terms of its scale and conclusions, is part of a greater whole and the fruit of a long-standing dream.

The idea for this type of activity appeared at the Shipyard Foundation more than two years ago, when Kuba Wygnański wrote an article entitled “Another idea of democracy” for the *Więź* quarterly. Before that, we had organized local citizens’ assemblies or a civic deliberation process on education on the back of the 2019 teachers’ strikes. Back then, we had a grassroots gathering of over 4,500 people in 150 locations across the country. We felt this was an important addition to the democratic system of public debate, an important space to discuss and propose systemic solutions. The idea germinated and we wanted to try it again, knowing that the list of issues to be solved in Poland was huge. We chose the topic of energy poverty. It seemed to be independent on the existing divisions, to be “lukewarm” in public opinion, but at the same time it was somehow urgent, because it affects every tenth Polish family. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has made the energy-poverty related topics of energy and energy sources particularly relevant to our security, and the galloping inflation has created an additional sense of uncertainty and fear, possibly driving more households into energy poverty.

Yet before we gathered nearly 100 randomly selected people in Warsaw, we encouraged local councils about energy costs across the country. Forty-five such meetings were held in Poland in the first half of 2022. They were attended by more than 700 people. During the councils, the participants addressed the same problem which was later deepened during the nationwide assembly. First, they learned about the problem of energy poverty and its possible solutions, and then discussed and voted for the best ones. The purpose of the councils was to gather the knowledge and opinions of local communities on the topic of tackling energy poverty and to complement the findings of the nationwide citizens’ assembly on energy costs with local voices, so that the ultimate findings of the whole project would include opinions from various levels – from local to nationwide.

The fear associated with the unpredictability of rising energy costs or loneliness in dealing with the problem clearly resounded during the local councils. The participants recognized the need for both systemic changes and very local solutions that would support energy poor people and, importantly, be implemented in a spirit of solidarity and respect for the climate. According to those taking part in the councils, further discussion is also needed, as the topic is as important as it is complex.

A summary of the local councils can be found at www.naradaoenergii.pl/zakonczylysmynarady-lokalne-okosztach-energii.

SECTION IV

Table of all adopted solutions

How to read the results below?

Recommendations developed by the assembly participants themselves are marked with the letter 'N' (as in "new"). Recommendations coming from experts are marked with an 'E'.

% "Agree" – the total % of "strongly agree" and "mildly agree" declarations

% "Disagree" – the total % of "strongly disagree" and "mildly disagree" declarations

% "Level of support" – the level of support for a given solution, measured as the arithmetic mean of the declarations taken as a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "strongly DISAGREE", and 5 – "strongly AGREE"; the answers of "No opinion" were not taken under consideration

PREAMBLE

Do you agree that the conclusion of the work of the Nationwide citizens' assembly on energy costs should start with the text of the preamble?

1,3%	97,4%	1,3%
No opinion	Agree	Disagree

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	5. Despite the current challenges with access to low-carbon energy, the authorities should increase the pace of change towards greater use of renewable energy sources in Poland	97%	1%	1%	0%	4,8 pkt.
N	8. A long-term national energy strategy for the next 15 years should be developed	99%	1%	0%	0%	4,8 pkt.
E	4. Actions by public authorities to reduce energy poverty should first and foremost target households that experience it most acutely	97%	1%	1%	0%	4,8 pkt.
E	7. Tackling energy poverty requires also the promotion of local solutions based on citizens' self-organization and self-government	100%	0%	0%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	12. There is a need to introduce transparency in the management of the energy market and to regulate related issues, with greater supervision of the activities of companies in the market	93%	3%	3%	1%	4,7 pkt.
E	11. An Energy Transition Fund should be established to redirect at least 70% of EU ETS revenues to climate and environmental objectives	92%	4%	3%	1%	4,6 pkt.
N	10. A central institution with branches at district level should be established to provide a comprehensive energy cost service on the basis of a single application	91%	1%	8%	0%	4,5 pkt.
N	9. The activities of public institutions at central and regional level to tackle energy poverty should be coordinated, e.g. by establishing a single institution	84%	9%	7%	0%	4,3 pkt.
E	13. A Scientific Council should be established at the Parliament that will participate for example in the meetings of committees dealing with energy issues	83%	8%	7%	3%	4,3 pkt.
E	6. Despite the challenges posed by the current crisis, Poland should continue to refrain from importing energy resources from Russia	84%	4%	12%	0%	4,3 pkt.

SECTION: HIGH ENERGY COSTS

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	16. Poland's electricity grids should be modernized and expanded as soon as possible to accommodate a higher share of renewable energy	99%	0%	1%	0%	4,9 pkt.
E	17a. The modernization of Poland's electricity grid should become a priority	97%	0%	1%	1%	4,8 pkt.
E	20. Faster development of prosumer installations should be promoted	98%	0%	3%	0%	4,8 pkt.
E	15d. Planning and administrative procedures accompanying investments in renewable energy sources (RES) should be simplified	97%	1%	1%	0%	4,8 pkt.
N	15l. Measures to increase the use of RES in housing communities and cooperatives should be supported	98%	1%	1%	0%	4,8 pkt.
E	18. Actions should be taken to accelerate the development of various forms of energy communities that invest in renewable energy sources	98%	0%	3%	0%	4,7 pkt.
N	15e. Targeted subsidies (i.e. subsidies which cannot be used for anything else) for communes for the construction of RES installations serving the inhabitants of the commune should be launched	96%	1%	3%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	17b. Legal barriers to grid expansion should be removed by introducing regulations allowing the construction of direct lines	95%	4%	0%	1%	4,7 pkt.
E	19e. The development of energy communities in towns and cities, and not only in rural and urban-rural communes should be enabled	95%	3%	0%	3%	4,7 pkt.
E	15n. The development of larger RES sources (e.g. wind and photovoltaic farms) should be facilitated by imposing an obligation on distribution network operators to connect them	98%	1%	1%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	17d. The grid should be used efficiently through grid sharing by different sources (e.g. solar, wind) that produce energy at different times of the day	98%	1%	1%	0%	4,7 pkt.
N	15m. Information and education activities that demonstrate the benefits of RES investments in cities and homes should be undertaken	95%	3%	3%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	15f. A more favourable and predictable system to support domestic solar PV installations, modelled on the discount system that operated until April 2022, should be created	92%	4%	3%	1%	4,7 pkt.
N	17h. Investments in energy storage and development of RES energy storage technologies should be made	89%	6%	3%	3%	4,7 pkt.
N	19l. Local authorities should organize educational and informative activities for residents on the benefits of energy cooperatives	95%	1%	4%	0%	4,7 pkt.

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
N	15p. Investments in research on new RES and on better use of existing RES should be made	95%	3%	3%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	19b. A government support programme for energy cooperatives (e.g. those producing electricity and heat from biogas for rural areas) should be launched	94%	3%	3%	1%	4,6 pkt.
E	15l. The Ministry of Climate and the Environment should introduce quality standards for household biomass to avoid the introduction of contaminated and harmful commodities	91%	4%	3%	3%	4,6 pkt.
E	15k. Activities aimed at the commissioning of biogas sources (where heat is waste energy) should be carried out by more than a dozen local authorities by 2030	89%	8%	0%	4%	4,6 pkt.
E	19h. Energy cooperatives covering at least buildings belonging to communal institutions should be established in all communes in Poland over the next few years	94%	3%	3%	1%	4,6 pkt.
N	17i. The public, residents, local authorities, generators, operators and independent experts should be guaranteed a place in the decision-making process for grid modernization	85%	9%	3%	4%	4,5 pkt.
E	19c. The Ministry of Climate and the Environment should launch educational and information measures on energy cooperatives for local authorities and businesses	92%	3%	4%	1%	4,5 pkt.
E	15g. The potential of onshore wind energy should be unlocked, including the abandonment of the requirement to maintain a minimum distance between a wind power plant and the nearest buildings (the so-called 10h rule)	88%	5%	6%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	15j. Pilot zero-carbon farms using agro-voltaic, biomass, biogas and organic farming solutions should be launched	92%	6%	1%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	21a. In particularly disadvantaged and peripheral communes, programmes should be implemented where low-income residents could receive upfront funding for prosumer installations	92%	4%	4%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	17c. The grid should be used efficiently by balancing energy supply and demand, e.g. through the introduction of smart meters	85%	6%	5%	4%	4,5 pkt.
E	21b. Communes should be enabled to set up local cooperative RES energy production and distribution systems with state support and to transfer surplus energy to low-income people	89%	4%	6%	1%	4,5 pkt.
N	15c. The Ministry of Climate and the Environment should raise coal quality standards for households while guaranteeing its availability	86%	9%	4%	1%	4,4 pkt.
E	17f. More transparent information on the grid and available connection capacities should be provided by system operators (Polskie Sieci Elektroenergetyczne and distribution entities, e.g. Tauron Dystrybucja)	82%	8%	4%	6%	4,4 pkt.
E	19f. The development of energy communities should be facilitated by removing the obligation for an energy cooperative to meet at least 70% of its members' energy needs	89%	5%	3%	4%	4,4 pkt.
N	19j. Legislation to protect energy cooperatives from takeover by a commune or a private company should be implemented	83%	9%	4%	4%	4,4 pkt.
N	15a. The energy production and supply system in Poland should be reviewed and its inefficient elements should be closed down	85%	10%	4%	1%	4,4 pkt.
N	15h. Investment in pumped storage (hydro) power plants should be increased	85%	9%	3%	4%	4,3 pkt.
E	15i. At least 60 local governments or municipal companies should invest in low-cost renewable energy sources including, for example, geothermal sources by 2030	87%	8%	4%	1%	4,3 pkt.
E	23c. A subsidy programme for the replacement of old household appliances with equipment of a higher energy class by low-income earners should be launched	89%	3%	9%	0%	4,3 pkt.
E	19a. The Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on renewable energy (the so-called RED II Directive) should be implemented in Poland	78%	9%	5%	8%	4,3 pkt.
E	19d. A competition for communes should be launched to encourage them to become more involved in the development of energy cooperatives	80%	9%	9%	3%	4,3 pkt.
E	19g. An obligation to establish at least one energy cooperative in every district in Poland within the next few years should be introduced	80%	12%	5%	4%	4,2 pkt.
E	22. Measures to enable households to replace worn-out household appliances or to use shared facilities (e.g. laundry facilities) should be launched 81% 13% 6% 0% 4.2 pts N 23b. A programme to assess the level of energy consumption of household	81%	13%	6%	0%	4,2 pkt.
N	23b. A programme to assess the level of energy consumption of household appliances for low-income people should be launched	82%	9%	9%	0%	4,1 pkt.
E	17g. Energy distribution companies should be spun off from large capital groups	71%	18%	3%	9%	4,1 pkt.
N/E	15o. Obligation to stage and set deadlines for investments in larger installations should be introduced Renewable energy sources - failure to start construction in due time should result in withdrawal of the investment permit	76%	12%	8%	5%	4,1 pkt.
E	14. Fossil fuels should be eliminated from Poland's energy mix as soon as possible	69%	14%	17%	0%	3,9 pkt.
N	17e. The modernization of Poland's power grid should be financed from public bonds issued specifically for this purpose	64%	18%	9%	9%	3,9 pkt.
N	15b. No new investments in coal and gas should be made	65%	19%	14%	1%	3,8 pkt.
N	23a. A network of generally accessible local laundries should be organized as an alternative to using own old washing machines	64%	18%	15%	3%	3,7 pkt.
N	15f. Investments should be made in small local nuclear power plants (subject to the availability of this technology)	58%	13%	22%	8%	3,7 pkt.

SECTION: ENERGY EFFICIENCY						
Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	30. Existing energy efficiency support programmes should be modified	98%	1%	1%	0%	4,8 pkt.
E	31m. Eligible costs and subsidy amounts under national programmes should be subject to annual adjustment, so that they are in line with the actual prices of products, services and raw materials	96%	3%	0%	1%	4,7 pkt.
E	24. Education and information activities related to energy efficiency and changing habits in energy use should be intensified	95%	3%	3%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	28. New energy efficiency solutions and support programmes should be introduced	95%	4%	1%	0%	4,7 pkt.
E	29b. A state programme to support investment in improving the energy efficiency of multi-family buildings should be created (similar to the Clean Air programme for single-family housing)	95%	3%	1%	1%	4,6 pkt.
E	29a. A "one-stop-shop" for all matters related to subsidies and loans for the energy renovation of buildings located as close as possible to the place of residence should be introduced	92%	3%	5%	0%	4,6 pkt.
N	25c. The subject of energy efficiency should be introduced into the programme of Universities of the Third Age	94%	5%	1%	0%	4,6 pkt.
E	31k. Clear performance requirements should be introduced for investments under the Clean Air programme	92%	5%	1%	1%	4,6 pkt.
N	25d. Information on the possibilities of obtaining support in achieving energy efficiency should be published in places which are frequented by potential consumers (e.g. outpatient clinics)	90%	4%	3%	4%	4,6 pkt.
E	31j. Incentives for comprehensive renovation that permanently addresses the problem of energy poverty should be included in the Clean Air programme	87%	6%	4%	3%	4,6 pkt.
N	25a. Public campaigns to promote energy renovation and its various types addressed to housing communities and cooperatives as well as single-family house owners should be launched	95%	3%	3%	0%	4,6 pkt.
E	26. The development of advisory services related to energy efficiency should be fostered	92%	4%	4%	0%	4,6 pkt.
E	31i. The rules of the Clean Air programme should be updated: the minimum income threshold for eligibility for support should be increased and the support should cover up to 90% of investment costs	91%	5%	4%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	29d. A state-owned loan fund should be established to support energy efficiency renovations at an interest rate clearly below the market rate	90%	1%	5%	4%	4,5 pkt.
N	25f. The subject of energy efficiency should be introduced into the school curriculum (children learn themselves and teach their parents)	90%	5%	4%	1%	4,5 pkt.
E	31g. The service for beneficiaries under the Clean Air programme should be streamlined - applications should be handled within a week and payments should be sped up	94%	1%	4%	1%	4,5 pkt.
N	25e. Options showing energy efficient solutions should be added to the resources on the government website www.dombzeformalnosci.gov.pl	91%	5%	1%	3%	4,5 pkt.
E	31f. The principle of upfront financing for low-income households should be introduced into the Clean Air programme	91%	5%	3%	1%	4,5 pkt.
E	31b. Households that have previously replaced their heat source should be enabled to participate in the Warm House programme, as well	86%	8%	1%	5%	4,5 pkt.
E	27c. A mobile eco-advisor should be established in each commune	90%	5%	5%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	31o. Mechanisms should be created to support the energy renovation of historic buildings under both the Clean Air programme and the Energy Renovation and Refurbishment Fund	91%	4%	3%	3%	4,5 pkt.
E	27a. The state should provide funding for an "energy audit voucher" to enable citizens to obtain free energy advice for pre-2009 buildings	91%	5%	4%	0%	4,4 pkt.
E	31l. The principle of deducting 35% of the costs of an investment financed under the Clean Air programme from the amount of tax due, and not from the tax base as is currently the case, should be introduced	78%	9%	4%	9%	4,4 pkt.
E	29c. A support programme for housing communities preparing to carry out energy renovation of their building (e.g. moderation of owners' meetings, counselling) should be launched	90%	5%	3%	3%	4,4 pkt.
E	31i. The maximum cost of energy renovation of a building subject to subsidy should be increased from PLN 53,000 to a minimum of PLN 120,000	86%	6%	3%	5%	4,4 pkt.
E	25f. An online portal with good practices on historic building modernization linked to the national database on energy efficiency in public buildings should be launched	89%	5%	3%	4%	4,4 pkt.
E	27f. Eco-advisors should visit low-income households with energy advice and technical support	89%	4%	5%	3%	4,4 pkt.
N	31d. A new standard for public buildings should be introduced, specifying the maximum level of energy consumption, its source and the level of blue-green infrastructure	83%	8%	6%	3%	4,4 pkt.
E	29e. A new nationwide programme to fund deep and comprehensive renovation of public housing stock should be launched	82%	9%	5%	4%	4,4 pkt.
E	31h. The forms and levels of support under the Clean Air programme should be diversified by dividing recipients into two groups: those at risk of energy poverty and those who can cover part of the costs themselves	85%	8%	5%	3%	4,4 pkt.
E	31a. An energy performance rating system for buildings should be introduced	81%	6%	8%	5%	4,4 pkt.

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	27b. A system of one-stop-shops for energy advice should be implemented throughout Poland	82%	10%	5%	3%	4,3 pkt.
N	27g. An e-counselling service providing basic information on available support programmes for low-income people should be launched	83%	5%	6%	5%	4,3 pkt.
E	29f. An operational plan for a Long-term Housing Renovation Strategy should be developed, including a mechanism for monitoring and adjusting the strategy every 25 years	85%	8%	3%	5%	4,3 pkt.
N	27d. Funding should be provided from state budget for the activities of a mobile energy environmental consultant in every commune	82%	12%	6%	0%	4,3 pkt.
E	25g. Training courses on measures to reduce heating bills in the buildings and electricity bills for property managers should be organized	83%	9%	6%	1%	4,3 pkt.
E	29g. Regulations facilitating investments in buildings with unclear ownership status should be introduced in the Clean Air, Stop Smog and Warm House programmes	81%	10%	5%	4%	4,3 pkt.
N	31n. The rules in the support programmes should change from giving money directly to beneficiaries to paying it to the contractors of energy renovation works	76%	12%	5%	8%	4,3 pkt.
E	29i. The achievement of energy efficiency under national programmes should be rewarded – improvement of the energy efficiency of a building confirmed by an audit should entitle the beneficiaries to additional funds	77%	9%	9%	5%	4,2 pkt.
N	31e. Minimum thresholds for the reimbursement of costs of investments in energy renovation should be abolished, provided that these investments are made in the right order	77%	9%	8%	6%	4,2 pkt.
E	29h. Better conditions for the use of ESCOs and public-private partnerships should be created	74%	14%	3%	9%	4,2 pkt.
N	25h. Property managers should be obliged to have an energy efficiency qualification, and the cost of obtaining it should not be high	74%	15%	8%	3%	4,1 pkt.
E	31c. An amendment to the Stop Smog programme obliging beneficiaries to periodically consult an auditor should be introduced so that they feel co-responsible for the good implementation of the investment	73%	18%	5%	4%	4,1 pkt.
N	27e. A special institution to manage the network of eco-advisers should be established	55%	19%	18%	8%	3,7 pkt.

SECTION: LOW INCOME

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	34. New actions and public programmes to increase the availability of housing with an adequate standard of energy efficiency should be launched	92%	4%	1%	3%	4,6 pkt.
E	35c. The stock of rental housing should be increased – public entities, including State Treasury companies, should be encouraged to use their housing properties for social rental purposes	91%	6%	1%	1%	4,6 pkt.
N	33g. A special allowance to subsidize energy and energy renovation expenses should be introduced for people with disabilities and their families	90%	9%	1%	0%	4,6 pkt.
N	33i. Supervision over the spending of public funds on benefits related to energy costs should be increased; financial benefits (e.g. vouchers, allowances) should be abandoned in favour of cost reimbursement	90%	9%	0%	1%	4,6 pkt.
E	33d. Access to energy poverty social assistance benefits should be simplified: eligibility for different forms of assistance should be ascertained based on one application, income and need	91%	4%	4%	1%	4,5 pkt.
E	33b. The government and the local authorities should become more involved in providing information on already available benefits for energy poor households (e.g. such as inflation allowance)	94%	4%	3%	0%	4,5 pkt.
N	36a. The financial situation of low-income households should be improved through labour market support, e.g. job activation programmes, vocational training, counselling and assistance in finding a job	88%	8%	4%	0%	4,5 pkt.
E	35a. Communes should become involved in the creation of Social Rent Agencies and the state budget should provide communes with financial support for the creation of such agencies	87%	9%	1%	3%	4,5 pkt.
N	36b. Systemic incentives for neighbourhood measures for the benefit of energy poor households should be introduced, e.g. 0% tax, deductibility of donations for the purchase of a boiler for another household, etc.	91%	6%	0%	3%	4,5 pkt.
E	35d. Vacant properties should be used for housing purposes – existing dwellings should be renovated and non-residential premises should be adapted for housing purposes (including the use of resources of public entities)	88%	5%	5%	1%	4,5 pkt.
N	35g. A programme for the development of small, independent housing for the elderly, enabling them to move out of large and energy-inefficient dwellings should be developed	87%	8%	4%	1%	4,5 pkt.
E	35n. Effective incentives for the use of the "flat-for-land" model or similar mechanisms for cooperation between developers and local authorities around investment in council housing should be created	83%	10%	3%	4%	4,5 pkt.
N	33h. The way in which the material situation of households is assessed, including the burden of energy expenditure on households in this assessment, should be changed	83%	10%	1%	5%	4,4 pkt.
N	35e. Statutory requirements concerning the minimum number of council flats in communes should be introduced, and local governments should be encouraged to expand the base of council, Social Housing Association and subsidized social flats	87%	4%	5%	4%	4,4 pkt.
E	35b. The stock of rental housing should be increased – the private, unused housing stock should be activated by introducing incentives for the use of empty premises	87%	6%	4%	3%	4,4 pkt.

Type	Recommendation	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Level of support
E	33c. Local institutions and social organizations should become involved in promoting available benefits for energy poor households	83%	10%	3%	4%	4,4 pkt.
N	33f. In the case of unemployed people who are capable of working, benefits should depend on active job search	85%	9%	5%	1%	4,4 pkt.
N	35l. The rules for spending public funds allocated to local authorities for the support of energy poor people should be tightened	78%	14%	3%	5%	4,4 pkt.
E	35i. Housing benefits should be reformed or another instrument to support tenants should be introduced so that more people can afford to rent a flat on the private market	78%	13%	5%	4%	4,3 pkt.
N	35k. Requirements for an energy efficiency standard for council and subsidized social housing (minimum energy efficiency) should be developed	78%	17%	1%	4%	4,3 pkt.
N	35h. Solutions for elderly or single people living in energy inefficient housing and facing energy poverty should be implemented, such as relocation to alternative accommodation	81%	12%	6%	1%	4,3 pkt.
N	35o. Requirements or incentives for developers to transfer several dwellings from each new development to the council housing stock should be introduced	87%	9%	4%	0%	4,3 pkt.
E	33e. The existing support for the purchase of energy (carbon allowance, reduced excise duty and VAT) should be replaced with a higher amount of support targeted only at low-income households	83%	6%	9%	1%	4,3 pkt.
E	35m. The government in cooperation with the private sector should create a legal framework and system incentives for a model of community developers (non-profit or reduced profit)	77%	14%	4%	5%	4,2 pkt.
N	35f. Regulations or solutions should be introduced to facilitate the renting of a part of premises occupied by the elderly in exchange for the care of these persons provided by the tenants ("rent for care")	76%	14%	9%	1%	4,2 pkt.
E	32. Low-income households should receive public financial support (e.g. in the form of benefits, allowances or concessions) to help them cover or reduce their energy costs	81%	6%	13%	0%	4,1 pkt.
N	35j. A State Mortgage Fund should be launched – a public programme for the purchase of property by the state from people who have no heirs but need to renovate their home	74%	13%	9%	4%	4,1 pkt.
N	33j. In exceptional situations, the state should cover the difference in interest on loans for investments that consist in changing the source of energy in the case of people who are unable to repay these loans	72%	15%	9%	4%	4,1 pkt.
N	35i. An institution or a central government unit that will provide legal assistance to local authorities in carrying out new housing investments (a "mobile legal team") should be established	64%	21%	6%	9%	4,0 pkt.
E	33a. A "universal energy benefit" should be introduced for low-income households	69%	18%	10%	3%	4,0 pkt.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Type	Recommendation	% of votes*
E	Poland's electricity grids should be modernized and expanded as soon as possible to accommodate a higher share of renewable energy	55%
N	A long-term national energy strategy for the next 15 years should be developed	50%
E	An Energy Transition Fund should be established to redirect at least 70% of EU ETS revenues to climate and environmental objectives	30%
E	Fossil fuels should be consistently eliminated from Poland's energy mix	24%
E	It is necessary to introduce transparency and legal regulation of the energy market, in particular greater supervision of the companies' market activities in terms of energy and raw material pricing	21%
E	Actions should be taken to accelerate the development of various forms of energy communities that invest in renewable energy sources	17%
N	The activities of public institutions at central and regional level to tackle energy poverty should be coordinated, e.g. by establishing a single institution	15%
E	Education and information activities related to energy efficiency and changing habits in energy use should be intensified	13%
E	Low-income households should receive public financial support (e.g. in the form of benefits, allowances or concessions) to help them cover or reduce their energy costs	13%
N	A central institution with branches at district level should be established to provide a comprehensive energy cost service on the basis of a single application	12%
E	A Scientific Council should be established at the Parliament that will participate for example in the meetings of committees dealing with energy issues	10%
E	Faster development of prosumer installations should be promoted	10%
E	The development of advisory services related to energy efficiency should be fostered	6%
E	Measures to enable households to replace worn-out household appliances or to use shared facilities (e.g. laundry facilities) should be launched	5%
E	New actions and public programmes to increase the availability of housing with an adequate standard of energy efficiency should be launched	5%
E	New energy efficiency solutions and support programmes should be introduced	3%
E	Existing energy efficiency support programmes should be modified	3%

* These are indications of what the assembly participants consider to be the most important main recommendations (each person could vote for a maximum of three most important recommendations).

We wish to thank all persons involved in preparing and holding the Civic council on energy costs

- the Shipyard Foundation team



Organizer:



Main partner:



Knowledge partner:



Partner:



Council of experts:



Fala Renowacji



Federacja Konsumentów



FOSa



Forum Energii



Fundacja Pole Dialogu



Habitat for Humanity Poland



Instrat



Instytut Badań Strukturalnych



Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju



Instytut Zielonej Gospodarki



KAPE



Energie Cités



Polski Alarm Smogowy



Polska Zielona Siec



Szlachetna Paczka



WRZOS

ABOUT THE ORGANIZER OF THE PROJECT

The organizer of the Civic council on energy costs, which featured the Nationwide citizens' assembly on energy costs, was the Shipyard Foundation.

At the Foundation, we have been creating and supporting effective solutions to social challenges, involving citizens in deciding on public matters and helping organizations and local governments to plan and implement social activities for over 13 years. We develop and disseminate good practices, create tools to simplify facilitation of social activities, conduct social research, train and develop educational materials. The effects of our activities are used by e.g. senior citizens, students and teachers, local communities, activists and local government officials from all over Poland. We believe that the best decisions result from open dialogue. That is why we strive to create opportunities for everyone to participate in discussions on issues that are important to them and to influence decisions. The activities we have carried out include public hearings on the National Recovery Plan, civic councils on education and citizens' assemblies in Warsaw and Lublin.

The main project partner was the Copernicus Science Centre. The knowledge partner was the Polish Academy of Sciences. Orange Polska was a partner.

The project featured a council of experts: Client Earth – Prawnicy dla Ziemi, Fala Renowacji, Federacja FOSa, Federacja Konsumentów, Forum Energii, Fundacja Pole Dialogu, Habitat for Humanity Poland, Instrat, Instytut Badań Strukturalnych, Fundacja Instytut na rzecz Ekorozwoju, Instytut Zielonej Gospodarki, Polska Zielona Sieć, Polski Alarm Smogowy, Stowarzyszenie Gmin Polska Sieć “Energie Cités”, Stowarzyszenie WIOSNA (Szlachetna Paczka), Wspólnota Robocza Związków Organizacji Socjalnych – WRZOS (Sekretariat EAPN Polska – Europejska Sieć Przeciwdziałania Ubóstwu (EAPN Polska), Krajowa Agencja Poszanowania Energii (KAPE).



The project was supported by the European Climate Foundation.