

Households' energy burden during the 2022 crisis: a policy impact assessment in a Southern European country

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Abstract-

The global energy price crisis that started in 2021—then exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in March 2022—has caused unprecedented increases in electricity and gas bills. To contrast this rise, EU Member States implemented several ‘emergency measures’ protecting energy consumers. This paper theoretically estimates the 2022 burden of energy bills on Spanish households, with a particular focus on vulnerable ones. This assessment is carried out by simulating alternative scenarios to evaluate the consequences of the energy prices rise and the effect of the national emergency measures implemented to counteract the energy crisis impact. A disproportionate expenditure indicator is also applied to the vulnerable consumer group that benefitted from the social tariffs to provide a first proxy of the 2022 energy poverty situation in Spain. The results show that these policies significantly reduced regulated market consumers’ bills, the vulnerable ones being the most protected by them. However, the high energy burden estimated for the latter category of customers reflects the insufficient ‘energy efficiency preparation’ of these households to react to energy price shocks. The insights of this assessment might eventually advise policymakers on future decisions during emergency scenarios.

Index Terms- Energy crisis, Vulnerable consumers, Electricity bills, Short-term emergency measures, Energy Poverty, Spain

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