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ASSESSING THE INCLUSIVENESS OF THE NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS 2030 OF BELGIUM AND PORTUGAL THROUGH A HARD-TO-REACH ENERGY USERS LENS

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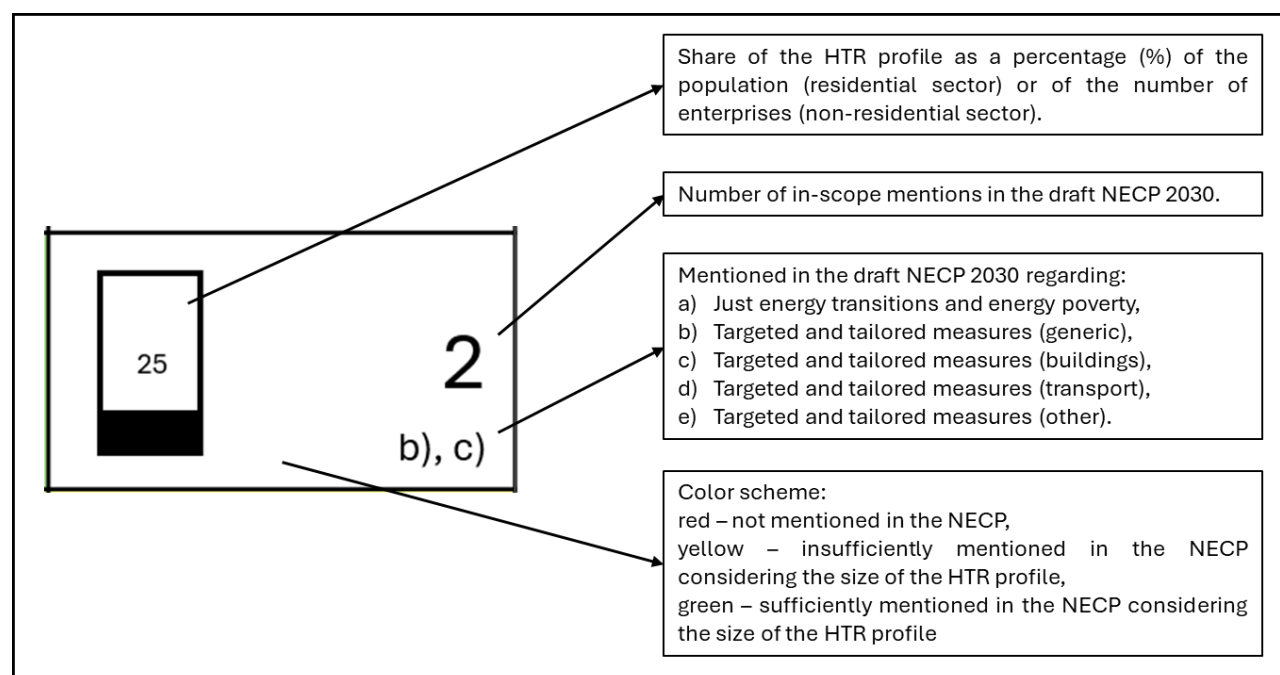
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Introduction

- The European Union's (EU) European Green Deal emphasizes the need for a just energy transition where no one is left behind.
- Hard-to-reach (HTR) energy users – those that have so far been neglected by energy policies – have been gaining attention, with five groups: vulnerable households, high-income households, tenants and landlords, small and medium enterprises, and commercial subsectors [1].
- In this work, we explore the draft updated National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP) for 2030 of EU Member States Belgium and Portugal for mentions of HTR groups regarding just transitions and targeted and tailored measures.

Methods

- We use a HTR energy users framework with precise profiles [2,3].
- NECPs were scanned for mentions of HTR profiles, and these sections were read to understand the context [4,5].
- The figure below explains the matrix used. Each cell represents the assessment of one HTR profile for a given country's NECP.



Results

Member State	Belgium	Portugal
Low income	24 (a, b, c)	2 (b, c)
Low education	1 (b)	1 (b)
Rural	4 (a, d)	1 (e)
Multi-family	25 (a, c)	3 (c, d)
Elderly	13 (a, c, d)	0
Young	14 (a, b, c, d)	4 (a, b, d)
Single-parents	9 (a, c)	0
Migrants	2 (b, c)	0
Unemployed	2 (b)	0
Ill-health	5 (a, c, d)	1 (c)
Other marginalized	?	?
High-income	2 (a, c)	0
Sumptuous spenders	?	?
Tenants	25 (a, c)	1
Small and medium enterprises	33 (a, b, c, d, e)	6 (b)
Micro-enterprises	2 (d, e)	1 (a)
Wholesale	5 (d, e)	3 (b, d)
Retail	10 (c, e)	6 (a, c)
Accommodation	1 (c)	7 (a, b, c, d)
Food services	1 (c)	0
Offices	8 (c, d)	3 (a, c)
Other services	25 (c)	5 (a, c)

Conclusions

- Vulnerable households are mentioned in the NECPs, but specific profiles are overlooked, including rural households, migrants, people with ill health, and other marginalized groups.
- High-income households are timidly mentioned in Belgium's NECP but overlooked in Portugal's one. This implies that more attention needs to be drawn to issues of excessive energy consumption.
- Due to split incentives, the rented building stock has been seen as harder-to-reach. A relevant share of Belgium's population lives in a rented home, and the NECP proposes targeted and tailored measures. The Portuguese NECP does not adequately mention this issue.
- Small and medium enterprises represent over 99% of enterprises. The NECPs provide targeted and tailored measures to protect businesses from energy prices and improve energy performance. However, microenterprises are scarcely mentioned.
- The commercial sector is heterogeneous. Both NECPs mention different subsectors within this group, establishing targeted measures.

While promising examples of recognition of HTR groups and targeted and tailored measures can be found, we argue that policymakers can do much more to ensure that energy policies really promote an ambitious, fast, and just energy transition that leaves no one behind.

References

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