

THE IMPACT OF ENERGY CRISIS

MAIN FINDINGS FROM SURVEY CONDUCTED FROM 1 TILL 15 SEPTEMBER AMONG PEARLE MEMBERS

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The invasion of Russia into Ukraine impacts the gas supply in several European countries and results in continuous climbing prices, including on electricity. In addition the heat waves in Europe (and other parts of world) and other natural disasters (such as storms and excessive rainfalls) impact on various economic supply chains, shortages of water, ...and again climbing prices.

The three essential services of general interest (water, electricity, gas) dominate the political debate in many countries as it has major effects on households and industries, as well at European, where the Commission has already undertaken several contingency measures, and at global level.

Between 1 and 15 September, members of Pearle were invited to respond to a survey on the impact of energy crisis. Nearly 120 responses were received from across Europe, including UK, which provide a good picture of the situation and the needs.

The main findings and conclusions are:

1. The impact on the energy bill varies between countries and within countries itself

93% of respondents said they expected an increase on their energy bill, but the percentage varies substantially, from as low as 3% up to 600% for the next months and year. The highest increases were reported in Czech Republic and Germany and the lowest in Finland, although some Finnish respondents also reported to expect an increase up to 300%.

2. Initiatives for sustainable energy management plans and investments are accelerated to make buildings more energy-efficient and climate neutral

Several respondents referred to sustainability plans they had put in place, the reference to energy labels they achieved or were in the process of obtaining it. Investments on energy efficiency are focused on installation of solar panels, heating pumps, led lamps, timers on water tap and lighting, insulation, smart heating applications based on people present in a room, etcetera. However, some cultural organisations depend of the local or regional authorities, when the building is owned by public bodies. It was mentioned that some buildings were in a poor state and need urgent renovation, including insulation, double or triple glass windows.

3. A minority (1 out of 3) of cultural organisations increase ticket prices. But they indicate to do it with great reluctance and as little as possible, because access to culture, especially in these times of hardship, must be preserved.

Instead of increasing prices on tickets, the large majority (77,6%) call for extra support from the government or renegotiate their subsidy agreement with local authorities. Other ways to get more income to compensate for the higher energy bills are renegotiation of sponsor contracts, looking for new sponsors or partners and increase of rental costs to third parties

4. A mix of measures (such as savings on heating, electricity and use of (hot) water, and adjustments to programming and planning) should ensure that culture can remain open to the public

Cultural organisations undertake a large number of initiatives to reduce energy costs and make savings on the bill, with 8 out 10 saying to lower the temperature in the building, and 50% indicating to change planning so that the period of heating over the day is shortened, whilst more than 40% close parts that are not used or concentrate activities (if possible) in less rooms. As described above specific energy saving programmes are put in place and better management of the parts and time of heating. A reduction of use of elevators and refrigerators, switch of standby of computers and automatic closure of doors to avoid heat loss, reduction or no more lighting of the building outside, are also measures that contribute to a reduction of the energy consumption. Finally it was mentioned that everyone is involved and that therefore awareness raising and information sessions take place to involve everyone, artists and staff alike.

5. Additional public support (such as investments on energy efficiency), and measures to keep the energy bill under control (such as price caps) are crucial to continue cultural activities as culture contributes to the well-being of people

The transition towards greening and the strong expression of desire towards sustainable organisations is a strong component in the energy crisis. Funding to accompany the cultural sector needs to be urgently secured and put in place. At the same time support to overcome the next months (/years) is essential as many are still recovering from the Covid-crisis when they were closed for a long period of time.

Cultural organisations welcome to work together especially towards raising awareness of the wider public, and funders (public & private). The support of specialised organisations on sustainability and energy experts is much welcomed to help in the process of green transition.