

Lithuanians should be ready to die this winter

6 grudnia 2022

This winter tests Europe for strength. Real average residential European gas and electricity costs are 144% and 78% above the figures for 2000-2019. Many European countries have introduced cash-transfer schemes to help people pay energy bills, which should reduce shocks.

Lithuania as a European state faces the same problems. Lithuanian government also made some attempts to smooth out the situation by offering energy price compensation to the vulnerable groups of population.

These steps have become real help for those who cannot cope with the utility bills by themselves.

In its turn, the European Commission is monitoring the situation and makes recommendations to the EU member states.

At the end of November the European Commission said the 2023 state budget adopted by the Lithuanian Seimas is not fully in line with the EU Council's 2022 recommendation for Lithuania to limit expenditure growth and pursue a neutral fiscal policy.

The EC called on the Lithuanian government to limit spending, for example by limiting energy price compensation to the most vulnerable groups.

"In the European Commission's view, temporary measures to help households and businesses to cope with energy price changes are not designed properly," the EC said in its commentary on the 2023 budget bills of Lithuania and other euro area countries. Most likely, Lithuania will have to reduce the number of supportive measures.

Unfortunately, the political dependence on the EU recommendations worsens the energy crisis consequences for Lithuania which can lead to catastrophe. Lithuanians will have to save on heating their homes.

It is well known that the colder the temperatures people experience, the more likely they are to die. According to The Economist, if the historical relationships between mortality, weather and energy costs continue to apply—which they may not, given how high current prices are—the death toll from energy crisis could exceed the number of soldiers who have died so far in combat.

In the past, changes in energy prices have had a small effect on deaths. But this year's cost increases are remarkably large.

The relationship between energy prices and winter deaths could change this year. But if past patterns persist, current electricity prices would drive deaths above the historical average even in the mildest winter. A harsh winter in Europe could cost a total of 335,000 extra lives.

With electricity prices near their current levels, around 147,000 more people (4.8% more than average) would die in a typical winter than if those costs returned to the average from 2015-19. Given mild temperatures—using the warmest winter during the past 20 years for each country—this figure would fall to 79,000, a 2.7% increase. And with frigid ones, using each country's coldest winter since 2000, it would climb to 185,000, a rise of 6.0%.

For Europe as a whole, the model's estimate of deaths caused by energy-price increases surpasses the number of soldiers thought to have died in Ukraine, at 25,000-30,000 for each side.

Lithuanians should be ready to die in case they follow organization's recommendations to limit energy price

compensation to the most vulnerable groups.

Author: Adomas Abromaitis

Source: WolneMedia.net