

# Response to the public consultation of the European Commission on the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy

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Vienna, 23 September 2025

## **About the Association of Public Services and Enterprises Austria**

*We are committed to ensuring that essential public services remain accessible, affordable, and of high quality for everyone in Austria – today and in the future. Representing more than 120 companies, institutions, and organisations in the field of public services, VÖWG fosters cross-sector collaboration and knowledge exchange – especially in areas such as energy supply, public transport, water and wastewater management, waste disposal, economic and financial governance, housing, as well as health and social care. VÖWG supports its members with a wide range of services and advocates for the values and interests of the public sector at national and European levels.*

**Legal form:**

Association

**Registered office:**

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**Registry Number (ZVR):**

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**Responsible Authority:**

LPD Wien, Abteilung für Vereins-  
Versammlungs- und Medien-  
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## Overview of VÖWG Policy Positions

The VÖWG supports an EU Anti-Poverty Strategy that recognises poverty as being rooted in issues related to housing, income, the burden of unpaid care and social exclusion, and that treats public services of general interest as a key lever for overcoming these issues. Municipal and social economy enterprises provide the infrastructure for a good quality of life, social participation and employment by offering affordable housing, reliable child-care and long-term care services, public healthcare, and affordable energy and mobility services.

At its core, the strategy should aim to raise incomes above the poverty threshold, expand access to affordable housing, energy and mobility, and increase the availability of early childhood education and formal care services, all-day schools, and eldercare. Social benefits must be reliably indexed and set above the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. At the same time, labour rights must be effectively enforced to ensure good working conditions and curb precarious employment. Further priorities include ensuring barrier-free access to social and care services, affordable housing tailored for the needs of single parents, and facilitating access to work and labour-market inclusion for third-country nationals, particularly refugees, as well as long-term unemployed individuals. To make these professions more attractive and reduce critical labour shortages, social and care services need upskilling and reskilling programmes, clear career pathways and good working conditions. The strategy should also suggest measures to reduce energy poverty through targeted support and affordable tariffs, coupled with investment in efficient, renewable heat and electricity that avoids displacement effects from modernisation costs.

To be effective, the strategy requires EU funds to be deployed coherently and made directly accessible to cities and municipal enterprises. The available programmes should enable blended financing with simple and predictable reporting models. EU funds can support local anti-poverty initiatives that coordinate housing, care and employment support at the point of need.

Finally, all anti-poverty measures should be underpinned by high-quality data. This involves developing granular, city-level indicators of housing cost burden, child poverty, energy poverty and labour-market participation, in order to enable evidence-based policymaking and impact assessments. In parallel, authorities should carry out gender-specific evaluations of social benefit usage, systematically monitor the non-take-up of available services and benefits in order to identify and remove access barriers, and apply clear quantitative metrics (e.g. quotas, percentages and targets) to track and improve service delivery. Furthermore, programme design must incorporate measures to promote gender equality in employment and pay, enforce non-discrimination regardless of gender, migration status, or socioeconomic background, and guarantee accessibility by removing structural barriers for persons with disabilities.

### Content Responsibility

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