



Association „EAPN-Latvia”

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NATIONAL REPORT 2016

Influencing National Governments for Better Policies: Advocacy, Lobbying and Policy-Making Linked to European Level Developments

1) Cooperation with government authorities and municipalities in Latvia:

In 2016 EAPN-Latvia continued to cooperate with the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia (the Association had its representatives at the Committee of Social Inclusion Policy Coordination, Committee of Gender Equality, and the Operational Programme of FEAD), with the Ministry of Interior of Latvia, with the Riga City Council. Since 2015 EAPN-Latvia has been a member of the Cooperation Memorandum of Latvian NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia.

2) Measures taken to implement EU policies in Latvia:

On 8th June in Riga the representatives of the member organizations of EAPN-Latvia participated in the conference “Cooperation of Government and nongovernmental organizations – a necessity or an extra?”, which was organized by a council comprising of cooperating members of Latvian nongovernmental organizations and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia.

On 10th June in Riga the representatives of the member organizations of EAPN-Latvia and partners participated in the forum “10 years since the parliament declaration regarding civil society development and cooperation with nongovernmental organizations in Latvia”, organized by Latvian Parliament (Saeima) and nongovernmental organizations.

On 27th August in Riga EAPN-Latvia in collaboration with Women's Rights Institute, IWO – International Women's Organization, Latvian Red Cross, Large Family Center "Family Support" and Social support society “Success” participated in NGO presentation, which took place in Vērmanes garden as part of the project “Information Centre for Immigrants” led by Shelter “Safe House”.

On 9th September in Riga EAPN-Latvia Representatives Laila Balga (the Board member) and Norberts Snarskis (PINS) took part in NGO Dialogue platform meeting, which was held as part of the project “Information Centre for Immigrants” organized by Shelter “Safe House”.

On 19th September in Riga EAPN-Latvia experts Laila Balga (the Board member), Norberts Snarskis (PINS), Aivars Lasmanis (Health Institute), Jānis Felsbergs (LPF) and Bruno Barons (RASA) participated in the discussion “The pillar of European social rights: debates with Latvian organized civil society”, the initiative of The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

On 10th November EAPN-Latvia submitted to EAPN and EAPN-Spain information about the current situation in Latvia, as well as the proposals on European Social Fund's use of funds to eliminate poverty.

On 24-25th November in Riga took place an international conference “Strengthening the social protection in the Baltic states – the perspective of Diaconia”, organized by EAPN (Europe) partner organization Eurodiaconia (represented in Latvia by Ramona Petrika) and Diaconia in Latvia. It was attended by Laila Balga (the Board member),

Norberts Snarskis (PINS), and Juris Dzelme (AIKNC), Vija Ahunzjanova (Large Family Center "Family Support", Valija Eize (Latvian Future Institute) and others.

On 7th December in Riga Laila Balga participated in the Latvian Parliament European Affairs` Commission meeting, whose topic was "Latvian national position in European Union employment, social policy, health and consumers` rights` protection Council of Ministers".

3) Participation in monitoring the use of the funding of the European Union:

Since 2014 Laila Balga has been working as a member of the Monitoring Committee of the Planning period 2014-2020 of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Cohesion Fund, the Subcommittee of Employment, Workforce Mobility and Social Inclusion.

4) Advocacy and lobbying:

1) On 24th and 25th February in Brussels, Belgium, the EAPN-Latvia representative Norberts Snarskis participated in European Commission Economics and Finance General Directorate meeting about the new European Strategies and operating framework. On 25th February Norberts Snarskis discussed with the Vice president of European Commission Valdis Dombrovskis` office specialists about the EAPN-Latvia requirements included in 12.11.2015 Resolution.

On 8th March in Riga took place the EAPN-Latvia organized discussions "Conversation with women about women in Europe in the era of change: law protection, a place in society, personal freedom". During those discussions participants from 16 nongovernmental organizations and municipalities approved of and submitted a resolution to Latvian and European institutions.

On 11th April EAPN-Latvia in cooperation with „Civic Alliance - Latvia" and Latvian Green Movement sent an application "For direct and instant support of Latvian civil society, implementing a partnership between the State and society in the framework of structural funds" to the Prime Minister of Latvia.

On 1st May in Riga the member organizations of EAPN-Latvia participated in the campaign - people's meeting "For worthy work, health and education in Latvia" by Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia.

On 15th June the member organization of EAPN-Latvia – "Women's Rights Institute" submitted proposals to The Ministry of Welfare on securing equal opportunities and rights for men and women – the 2016-2020 Project.

On 15th August EAPN-Latvia experts Laila Balga (the Board member), Juris Dzelme (AIKNC), Leons Mežeckis (Victory Foundation) and Māra Anteniške (IWO) submitted proposals to the Latvian Association of Social Entrepreneurship regarding the development of the Social Entrepreneurship Law.

On 17th September in Riga EAPN-Latvia representatives took part in Latvian seniors` meeting organized by Latvian Pensioners` Federation.

On 21st September EAPN-Latvia made proposals for the pillar of European Social rights, those were submitted to The European Economic and Social Committee, Latvian Parliament Social and Work relations committee, State Chancellery and to the Ministry of Welfare.

On 2nd November Laila Balga took part in the meeting organized by the nongovernmental organizations and Latvian Ministry of Finance, the topic of which was legislation regarding nongovernmental organizations` economic activity.

On 22nd November EAPN-Latvia submitted proposals to the Ministry of Finance about the unlawful decisions made by State Revenue Service regarding the nongovernmental organizations` economic activity.

Participation in the People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion programme as part of the Internal and External Workings of EAPN-Latvia

On 2nd March Gundega Berge was confirmed as a national coordinator of EAPN PeP programme in year 2016.

On 7th-8th April in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, EAPN-Latvia representative Gundega Berģe and expert Aivars Lasmanis participated in PeP (People experiencing Poverty) national coordinators' meeting.

From 1st May different activities are taking place in Latvia within the framework of the EAPN PeP programme "Increasing opportunities by participating" on the topic of "Healthy People - Wealthy People". Those events are run by EAPN-Latvia in cooperation with the Health Institute. During the period from 1st June to 20th August in the regions of Latvia was conducted a survey of people who have experienced poverty and of specialists, and the compilation of its results.

On 22nd-23rd August in Jēkabpils district Mārtiņa Foundation psychological rehabilitation center "Dūjas" was held a discussion on public health issues, in which participated 20 representatives from EAPN-Latvia, Health Institute, Mārtiņa Foundation, Latvian Pensioners' Federation, Large Family Center "Family Support", Latvian Association of Large Families, Jēkabpils Association of Pensioners "Bonding", Jēkabpils branches of Daugavas Vanagi, Dialogs Plus, Jēkabpils NGO Resource Center, Holista, Dobeles association of people with disabilities, as well as Daugavpils and Bauska district residents. The discussion was led and participants' proposals were summarized by Health Institute specialists Krista Krūmiņa and Zane Reinfeldē.

On 23rd August within the framework of the PeP programme the composition of the EAPN-Latvia delegation was approved for the discussion with policy makers in LR Saeima Social and Labour Affairs Committee and in Public Health Subcommittee. Delegation includes Elīna Ālere-Fogele from the Network Board, Krista Krūmiņa, Zane Reinfeldē and Rolands Kalniņš from the Health Institute, Agita Pleiko from Jēkabpils NGO Resource Center, Imants Keiģšs from Latvian Association of Large Families, Vija Ahunzjanova from Large Family Center "Family Support", Ligita Upīte from Salas district association "Holista", Jānis Stjadja from Dobeles association of people with disabilities and an unemployed person Aleksejs Buhtojarovs from Daugavpils.

On 2nd November EAPN-Latvia Chairperson of the Board Laila Balga spoke at the meeting of LR Saeima Social and Labour Affairs Committee regarding the application by the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia Juris Jansons about poverty issue in Latvia.

On 3rd November The Board of EAPN-Latvia authorized the President of the Latvian Traders Association Henriks Danusēvičs to fulfill the duties of PeP national coordinator at the EAPN PeP conference in Brussels on 14th – 16th November 2016.

On 3rd November the board of EAPN-Latvia made changes in the composition of the delegation for PeP 15th European Conference "Empowerment through Participation" which took place on 14th-15th November in Brussels, Belgium. The conference was to be attended by national coordinator Henriks Danusēvičs, member of the Board of Dobeles association of people with disabilities Jānis Stjadja, Jēkabpils NGO Resource Center PR specialist Aleksandrs Kalniņš and Latvian Association of Large Families Chairman of the Board Imants Keiģšs.

On 4th November in Riga took place the meeting of people who have experienced poverty and specialists. The purpose of this meeting was to prepare for the discussion in the committees of LR Saeima. The meeting was attended by PeP national coordinator Gundega Lasmane, Imants Keiģšs, Vija Ahunzjanova and Jānis Stjadja.

On 8th November representatives of EAPN-Latvia Gundega Lasmane, Aivars Lasmanis, Imants Keiģšs and Jānis Stjadja represented PeP interests in LR Saeima Social and Labour Affairs Committee, headed by Deputy Aija Barča.

During EAPN PeP 15th European Conference "Empowerment through Participation" which took place on 14th-15th November 2016 in Brussels, Belgium, Latvia was represented by Henriks Danusēvičs (EAPN-Latvia national coordinator), Imants Keiģšs (Latvian Association of Large Families), Jānis Stjadja (Dobeles association of people with disabilities) and Aleksandrs Kalniņš (Jēkabpils NGO Resource Center). The EAPN-Latvia delegation met with Guna Žaķe-Balta – the office specialist of Roberts Zīle (Member of the European Parliament).

Development and Growth of the Network

EAPN-Latvia was founded on November 2013 by seven founding member organizations. At the end of 2016 EAPN-Latvia had 36 member organizations and two associated member organizations. EAPN-Latvia operates