

Evaluation of EMIN-2 Project and Lessons learned that can be taken forward for future work

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Name of Network: **EAPN-Latvia**

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- 1) What progress was made during the EMIN2 project in terms of building your National EMIN Network – mobilising more organisations and stakeholders to be active in the promotion of adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income Schemes?

Before launching the EMIN-2 project on January 1st 2017, EAPN-Latvia started cooperation with the Ministry of Welfare and several non-governmental organizations. Significant progress was made during the implementation of EMIN-2 project, since the number of supportive NGOs has increased to facilitate the implementation of Minimum Income Schemes (MIS), including starting regular cooperation with the Freedom and Solidarity Foundation (which is being supported by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation). The researchers from the Faculty of Social Sciences of Latvian University are also involved in project activities; NGO experts started cooperation with Latvian Saeima deputies' commissions (Commission for Social and Labour Affairs, Commission for Human Rights and Public Affairs, Commission for European Affairs, Commission for Education and Science and Commission for Sustainable Development). EAPN-Latvia representatives also operate in the working groups of the Ministry of Welfare and have established good communication with the Ministry of Finance and the Central Statistical Bureau, as well as developed cooperation with Riga City Municipal Institutions (Social Affairs Committee, Education, Culture and Sports Committee, Welfare Department, Education, Culture and Sports Department, Eastern Executive Directorate, Social Services) and regional municipalities (Rezekne and Liepaja city, Varaklani, Dobele, Rucava, Salacgriva and Bauska county municipalities). EAPN-Latvia also cooperates with social-democratic political parties and with several members of the European Parliament from Latvia.

- 2) What progress was made in terms of building awareness about the importance of adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income Schemes?

The EAPN-Latvia website <http://www.eapn.lv/emin2/> and publicity on the Internet portal "My voice" (manabalss.lv), which is aimed at legislative changes, as well as social networks on the Internet (Facebook, Twitter), in national and regional press, incl. local government press, plays an important role in raising awareness about EMIN-2 network and Minimum Income Schemes. To raise awareness about EMIN-2 network the EAPN-Latvia

communicates with organizations and stakeholders mentioned in p.1 by working together in the working groups; with the general public - through the media and the support from local governments and NGOs. EAPN-Latvia also regularly organizes conferences, meetings and discussions, focusing more on rural areas and people experiencing poverty.

- 3) What steps were made in terms of (advocacy) progressing your road map for adequate, accessible and enabling Minimum Income Schemes?

The proposal on the "My Voice" Internet portal on increasing the guaranteed minimum subsistence income (GMI) and the involvement of EMIN Ambassador Elina Pinto from the European Latvian Association played an important role in the implementation of the Road map. In 2017 the EAPN-Latvia implemented the project "Supporting the contribution of NGOs to protecting the interests of people experiencing poverty" by creating a working group consisting of 10 NGO experts. EAPN-Latvia submitted to the Saeima, ministries and Riga city municipality at least 50 proposals related to the ensuring a decent income for everyone. Adequate proposals in the field of education and social issues were prepared in 2018 for submission to the European and Latvian state institutions and discussed in the regions of Latvia (Riga, Dobeles and Sigulda counties). From June 2018 the EAPN-Latvia has implemented the Baltic Sea region project "Strengthening NGOs for effective protection of social rights". At the meetings and during the international conference in October, the basic principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) were discussed and proposals were prepared for the European and Latvian state institutions. As a result of the EAPN-Latvia activities, Latvian politicians and government officials, as well as the media started to express their views with the words and numbers mentioned at our EMIN events; EMIN's position has been widely accepted and reflected in political documents and information.

- 4) Given that the Bus Tour was a very innovative element of the project it would be good to know what the impact of the Bus Tour in your country was?

The innovative Bus Tour in Latvia has given EAPN-Latvia an additional opportunity to speak louder and more effectively to the general public, including the organizations and political parties, about EMIN and the guaranteed minimum subsistence income (GMI). The Bus Tour has gotten media attention (press, TV, radio); after the Bus Tour the news on GMI started to appear more regularly in media information. The Bus Tour in Riga has strengthened EAPN-Latvia's cooperation with the European Commission's representation office specialists and informed the general public that EAPN-Latvia's activities are developed at the European level. The Bus Tour has contributed to the development of cooperation with Riga city and regional municipalities. The Bus Tour in Riga was attended by a considerable number of well-known personalities (MEP Andrejs Mamikins, European Commission's representation office in Latvia advisor Agnese Dagile, leaders of the political party "The Progressives" and the leaders of the European Latvian Association). The large number of people who supported the cause and believed that their names also matter left their signatures on EMIN Bus and signed the Petition during the Bus Tour in Latvia. For the Bus Tour EAPN-Latvia created a strong and active team (wearing yellow T-shirts with EAPN logo, distributing EMIN informative materials and leaflets), thus promoting the organization's internal cohesion.

5) What were the lessons learned that could be taken forward for future work?

In its further activities EAPN-Latvia sees the opportunities: for more active engagement of the society and non-governmental organizations and for attracting the new member organizations; for finding out people's opinions and needs with research; for organizing anti-poverty campaigns in Latvia as the basis for the protection of interests and activation of the population; for becoming closer and having more influence on the legislators by empowering EAPN-Latvia experts in working groups and by regularly submitting EAPN-Latvia proposals on GMI and other issues related to poverty reduction to the legislators; for developing new fundraising projects to increase the capacity of EAPN-Latvia and EMIN, for concluding cooperation agreements with stakeholders and ensuring the rational use of project funds; for developing programs related to the implementation of the basic principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), the increasing of the guaranteed minimum subsistence income (GMI) and to the development of reference budgets; for developing regular cooperation with the European Commission's representation office in Latvia and for participating in its campaign in 2019.