



Association „EAPN-Latvia”

[www.eapn.lv](http://www.eapn.lv)

## **NATIONAL REPORT 2023**

### **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 2022 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 and the Operational Programme of FEAD), with the Ministry of Finance of Latvia, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, with the Riga City Council (at the Social welfare department and Advisory council on social integration issues). 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. Since 2021 EAPN-Latvia cooperates with the State Education Development Agency.

#### 2) Measures taken to implement EU policies in Latvia:

On January 13th EAPN-Latvia submitted a letter "The opinion of the association "EAPN-Latvia" on social policy issues" to the Representation of the European Commission in Latvia.

On February 13th EAPN-Latvia chairperson of the Board Laila Balga participated in the survey of the Ombudsman's Office of the Republic of Latvia on the supervision of EU funds in the context of human rights in Latvia.

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

From 2014 to 2023 Laila Balga worked as a member of the Monitoring Committee of the Planning period 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Cohesion Fund, the Subcommittee of Employment, Workforce Mobility and Social Inclusion. Another representative with voting rights from the board of EAPN-Latvia was not nominated to the Committee.

#### 4) Advocacy and lobbying:

On January 6th in Riga EAPN-Latvia representatives together with representatives of more than 80 other organizations participated in an online discussion with Minister for Welfare Evika Siliņa (currently - Prime Minister) about cooperation with NGOs.

On January 17th EAPN-Latvia signed the civil society's open letter "Against the initiation of criminal proceedings against the association "I want to help refugees" ("Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem")".

On January 20th EAPN-Latvia repeatedly submitted a letter "Regarding the funding necessary for the treatment of cardiovascular disease priorities" to the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia and the Ministry of Health.

In March EAPN-Latvia supported Latvian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations cooperation network's initiative "Free hygiene products for girls and women in educational institutions", collecting 11 000 signatures and submitting a proposal to the Latvian Parliament (Saeima).

On May 2nd in Riga Laila Balga, EAPN-Latvia chairperson of the Board, represented the interests of EAPN-Latvia at the meeting of the Welfare Department of the Riga City Council and Latvian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations cooperation network.

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

On March 30th Aigars Sveicers was confirmed as a national coordinator of EAPN PeP programme in year 2023.

On 4 April, 26 June, 3 August, 31 October and 9 November in Brussels EAPN-Latvia national coordinator Aigars Sveicers participated in EAPN PeP webinars.

On September 22th in Riga EAPN-Latvia Board approved representatives from Latvia for the PeP European Conference: Aigars Sveicers (PeP national coordinator); Santa Survila and Aleksandrs Nikolins from the Latvian Myopathy Association "Sartorius", as well as Kristaps Zarins from the Latvian Lawyers' Association.

On November 14-15th EAPN-Latvia representatives Aigars Sveicers, Santa Survila, Aleksandrs Nikolins and Kristaps Zarins participated in the EAPN PeP conference in Madrid, Spain.

### **Development and Growth of the Network**

EAPN-Latvia was founded on November 2013 by seven founding member organizations. In 2023, the number of member organizations in NN decreased; the Board excluded organizations that did not participate in activities for at least 3 years. At the end of 2023 EAPN-Latvia had 25 member organizations and 3 associated member organizations. EAPN-Latvia operates throughout the territory of Latvia and has over 50 partners abroad. Since June 2014 EAPN-Latvia is a full-fledged member organization of the EAPN-Europe.

In 2023, 6 experts worked at the working groups of the ministries of Latvia.

EAPN-Latvia is a member organization of the Latvian Social Entrepreneurship Association and the Latvian Child Welfare Network, and is also represented on the board of the Women's Non-Governmental Organizations Cooperation Network of Latvia.

#### **1) Activities**

From September 5th 2022 to September 4th 2023 in Dobele EAPN-Latvia implemented the State Employment Agency's "Measure for certain groups of people" (ESF project) with a contract for the involvement of an unemployed person with a disability in active employment at the centre of the Dobele Disabled Society.

On March 30th EAPN-Latvia joined the Regional cooperation network REVERTER, which is coordinated by the Riga Municipal Agency "Riga Energy Agency" (REA). In this cooperation network EAPN-Latvia is represented by Baiba Miltovica, President of the Specialized section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) of the European Economic and Social Committee.

On October 7th in Riga EAPN-Latvia Chairperson of the Board Laila Balga participated in the seminar "Gender equality - what is it?", which was organized by the Women's Non-Governmental Organizations Cooperation Network of Latvia.

EAPN-Latvia celebrated its 10-year anniversary at a celebratory event which took place in Riga on December 1<sup>st</sup> with participation of network's member organizations.

#### **2) International experience:**

On June 3rd and November 29th in Brussels the EAPN-Latvia representative Egils Rupeks participated in EUISG webinars.

On June 16th and September 29th in Brussels EAPN-Latvia Chairperson of the Board Laila Balga participated in EXCO webinars and meetings.

On February 16th in Brussels EAPN-Latvia representative Egils Rupeks participated in the webinar "The social impact of the energy crisis in the 2023 European Semester - Exchange of views with civil society organizations", organized by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and inclusion of the EC.

On March 15-18th in Porto, Portugal the EAPN-Latvia representative at the EUISG Egils Rupeks participated in EAPN-Europe meetings and a political conference.

On July 19th in Brussels the EAPN-Latvia representative Baiba Miltovica (EC TEN, Member of the board of the Latvian National Association for Consumer Protection) remotely participated in the third conference on energy poverty "Tackling energy poverty for a just transition", which took place within the framework of the Spanish presidency at the European Parliament.

On September 30th in Brussels EAPN-Latvia Board members Laila Balga and Aigars Sveicars remotely participated in the EAPN General Assembly.

On October 27th in Brussels EAPN-Latvia board member Aigars Sveicars remotely participated in the additional session of the EAPN General Assembly.

### 3) Projects:

I – From January 1st to December 31st 2023 EAPN-Latvia continued the implementation of the first adult mobility project of the Erasmus+ accreditation program (2021-2027), as well as started the implementation of the second project on June 1st 2023: job shadowing at NGOs from other European countries and transferring the experience of NGO experts from other European countries to Latvia. 15 NGOs from the regions of Latvia have been involved in the consortium established by EAPN-Latvia. In 2023 project activities took place in cooperation with project partners from Spain, Greece, the Czech Republic, Norway and the Netherlands.

II – From January 1st to December 31st 2023 EAPN-Latvia continued its partnership in the SMES-Europa (Belgium) project "PERSON FIRST: EMERGENCY SERVICES and REHABILITATION SUPPORTS promoting accessibility – improving e-quality – reinforcing net-working", which is co-financed by Erasmus+ and involved project partners from Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia, Denmark, Italy, Finland, Greece and Poland.

III – From January 1st 2023 to August 31st 2023 EAPN-Latvia implemented the Erasmus+ Small Partnership project "Improving the competencies of NGO educators for social inclusion" in cooperation with project partners from Estonia, Sweden, Italy and Greece.

IV – From January 1st 2023 to June 30th 2023 EAPN-Latvia, in cooperation with project partners from Cyprus, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Greece, France, Poland, Romania and Estonia, implemented the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project "Building a Network to Boost Social Secure Europe".

### 4) Resources:

Since February 2023, EAPN-Latvia set up an office and rented a meeting room in the poorest area of the Riga city, without modern technical equipment and Internet.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic (from 2020) EAPN-Latvia has also used the private apartment, modern technical equipment and the Internet of the chairperson of the board Laila Balga for its administrative work.

Since 2018 in Riga EAPN-Latvia has cooperated with the Humanities and Social Sciences Reading Room of the Latvian National Library in the use of the meeting room.

Since 2014 in Riga EAPN-Latvia has access to the premises of the Riga NGO House and the meeting rooms in the European Union House, as well as the premises and resources of its member organizations.

In year 2023 the EAPN-Latvia website [www.eapn.lv](http://www.eapn.lv) was properly maintained, as well as the social network pages on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/laila.balga/> and <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554147155317> were used for sharing information.

In the year 2023 monthly newsletters (12) were prepared and spread within the non-governmental sector and to the state institutions.

#### 5) Impediments to the activities:

In 2023 a limited number of news items from EAPN-Latvia was disseminated via the press, TV and radio, which are usually paid services.

In 2023, due to the lack of employees, EAPN-Latvia did not develop working groups regularly and did not get involved sufficiently in anti-poverty policy activities and the dissemination of its policies in Latvia.

### **Governance and Internal Democracy**

Since 2018 EAPN-Latvia (the general meeting) has been managed by a Board that consists of five members (volunteers): Laila Balga, Marite Rozentale, Aigars Sveicers, Andris Burtnieks and Janis Stjadja, as well as Natalija Kurnosova who was approved as an auditor. Laila Balga and Aigars Sveicers also coordinate the transnational projects of EAPN-Latvia.

The general meeting of NN members takes place once a year in March; once every five years the general meeting votes for the Board, Chairperson of the Board, and Auditor of the NN. Chairperson of the Board submits the annual report to the State Revenue Service of Latvia each March.

The association's finances are managed by an accountant-consultant Inguna Lapsina. EAPN-Latvia website and Facebook pages are administered by Maris Kalejs (Sanne, Ltd.) and Laila Balga (a volunteer). Two project managers: Ilga Liepina and Elina Alere-Fogele are also involved.

In 2023, according to the decisions made by EAPN general meeting and the Board, the following staff members worked voluntary at EAPN-Europe structures and participated in events: a representative to EXCO Laila Balga; a representative to EUISG Egils Rupeks; PeP national coordinator Aigars Sveicers and a representative to FEAD Network Baiba Svetlana Rozenberga.

Report drawn up in Riga, Latvia on April 22nd 2024.

Laila Balga, Chairperson of the Board