



European dimension of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion

EAPN-Latvia Report 2025

Foreword

The association “EAPN-Latvia” is part of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), which unites non-governmental organisations whose mission, according to the Statute, is to work towards a socially secure Latvia, free from poverty and social exclusion. As of 1 October 2025, the EAPN-Latvia network comprises 21 active member organisations, as well as cooperates with 6 associate members.



Riga, National Library of Latvia, June 3th, 2025

In 2025, three experts from EAPN-Latvia participate in the work of Latvian ministerial structures: the Ministry of Welfare (Social Inclusion Policy Coordination Committee and FEAD Managing Authority) and the Ministry of the Interior (Advisory Board). EAPN-Latvia is a member of the Latvian Social Entrepreneurship Association, and is also represented on the board of the Latvian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations' Cooperation Network. EAPN-Latvia has been a member of the Memorandum of Cooperation between NGOs and the Cabinet of Ministers since 2015. From 2020, EAPN-Latvia has cooperated with the State Education Development Agency, from 2023 – with the Ministry of Culture, and from 2025 – with the Central Finance and Contracting Agency in Latvia and the NORDPLUS programme in Denmark in relation to the development and implementation of projects for mobilising financial resources.

In 2025, the EAPN-Latvia National Coordinator Olga Borisova represents the organisation in the EAPN People Experiencing Poverty (PeP) programme. On 27th March, Olga Borisova participated in the *People Summit* organised by EAPN in Porto, Portugal.

EAPN-Latvia National Coordinator has served on the EAPN Strategic Planning Working Group and regularly participates as the Latvian representative in PeP event planning meetings.

In 2025, EAPN-Latvia representatives participated in the discussion “Impact of tax changes on Latvia's economic growth in 2025”, organized by Meta advisory, the annual meeting of the FEAD Managing Authority in Latvia on reducing material deprivation, as well as in the *Eurocities Mobility Forum* with a presentation on transport poverty.

Regarding the results set out in the Agreement of 30th June 2025, the EAPN-Latvia Board made the following decisions:

- 1) Not to nominate a PeP delegate to the European Commission consultations on the planning of the Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- 2) Not to nominate a PeP delegate to participate in Anti-Poverty Week at the European Parliament;
- 3) Not to nominate representatives to the PeP European Year Conference 2025 in Brussels.

These decisions were communicated to the EAPN-Europe Secretariat in writing in a timely manner.

In turn, EAPN-Latvia has prepared informative material on the preparation process and results of planning participation in the PeP European Year Conference 2025, which can be viewed below.

ACTIVITIES

From 1 January to 25 October 2025, EAPN-Latvia was actively working on issues related to poverty eradication and prevention.

As a result of multiple meetings and discussions, PeP experts have approved three main topics, which were put forward as priorities for our work in Latvia in 2025:

- 1. Minimum income**
- 2. Rights of people with disabilities**
- 3. Risk of poverty among seniors.**

At the EAPN-Latvia general meeting, the members approved the basic tasks of the Latvian network for the PeP programme, respecting the EAPN-Europe's decision on priority areas. As part of the preparations for conference, a meeting of PeP programme specialists was held in Riga, at which a review of this year's activities and for a European conference was planned.

EAPN Latvia organised discussions within its member organisations, including in Riga, Dobele, Dagda, Sigulda, Rucava, Aluksne and Varaklani, among other regions. During these discussion meetings, the needs of target groups and existing problems were identified, and relevant measures were planned to strengthen participation and improve the quality of life of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

In 2025, regular administrative management and communication with the EAPN-Europe Secretariat and the Latvian network board was maintained through email exchanges, online meetings and regional consultations. This ensured a continuous flow of information and the coordination of partners.

Chronology of activities in 2025

- **January – July:** Discussions with EAPN-Latvia network members on selecting priority themes at both national and European level.
- **26 June** – At the members' meeting, three main themes for work in 2025 were approved, and the necessary measures for implementing these themes were assessed.
- **March – June** – Selection of delegates and preparation for participation in meetings, consultations with NGOs on the selection of representatives and logistics.
- **February – June** – Meetings with target groups (seniors, people with disabilities, former prisoners, large families, unemployed people).

From January to October, several important activities were implemented under the leadership of the PeP National Coordinator, such as:

- **April 20** – Consultations in Riga, at the St. Luke Support Society on the financial independence of rehabilitation clients and the minimum subsistence basket for people with GMI status.
- **June 3** – Meeting with EAPN network member organisations at the Riga office to identify current problems.

- **June 11** – Discussion in Riga with the leadership of the Latvian Society of Large Families regarding the poverty situation and the situation of large families.
- **June 13** – Discussion at the St. Luke Support Society about the quality of life of people with group 2 and 3 disabilities.
- **June 17** – Discussion in Dobeles, at the Dobeles Disabled Persons Association, analysing the problem of poverty among seniors.
- **June 19** – Remote discussion with the leadership of the Krāslava regional association “In-Tan-San” about the living conditions of people with disabilities.



Discussion held in Riga to approve Poverty Watch 2025

April – October – Survey and collection of experience stories from target groups, particularly those at risk of poverty.

June – October – Practical workshops and consultations for PeP participants on discrimination and social rights issues (250 participants).

July – September – Meetings with Latvian institutions (the Cabinet of Ministers, the Saeima and local decision-makers) to present the findings of the Poverty Watch report.

January – October – Participation in EAPN Europe meetings, PeP Porto Summit, webinars and informational calls.

January – October – Compilation of photos and Zoom screenshots from relevant events, regular publication of information on the EAPN-Latvia Facebook page and in the monthly newsletter “News”.

Active communication with the public was maintained throughout the year by regularly publishing informative materials and analyses of social inclusion and current PeP programme events on social networks.

Please see: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61577712827342> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1434357497693637>

Work on priority topics

1. Minimum income

Since 2014, EAPN-Latvia has actively supported the European Minimum Income Network (EMIN) project, which was coordinated by EAPN-Europe until 2018. In 2019, in cooperation with the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia, a ruling by the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Latvia was achieved on revising the guaranteed minimum income (GMI) threshold.

In 2025, EAPN-Latvia continued to support the Directive on an adequate minimum wage, which was adopted by the European Parliament on 14 September 2022, and is an essential instrument for reducing poverty in Latvia.

In 2025, member organisations of EAPN-Latvia, such as the St. Luke's Support Society, organised PeP training activities on labour market opportunities. The Latvian Lawyers' Association also provided people experiencing poverty with free consultations on labour and social rights.



Survey of representatives from groups at risk of poverty regarding minimum income, held at the St. Luke's Support Society

- Income inequality remains high in Latvia. In 2025, **7.8% of the population experience severe material and social deprivation**, while **22.5% of the population are at risk of poverty**. The Gini coefficient is 34.
- Minimum wage in 2025 amounts to **740 euros**, guaranteed minimum income (GMI) amounts to **166 euros**, which is insufficient to cover the costs of rent, food and healthcare.
- The people experiencing poverty (PeP) group is characterised by irregular, casual or seasonal employment and/or unemployment status, despite being motivated to undertake regular, paid employment. Many people in this group fear being rejected by the society because of their past or low social status, and also lack a stable home.
- PeP often have just a primary education or some professional qualifications, but they do not pursue further education. It is important to support and motivate them to continue their studies.
- Some PeP, especially former prisoners, have debts to third parties or the state, which means their income is seized and they are left with only enough money to buy food. Even people working for an average salary have income above the subsistence minimum (averaging 350 euros per month) confiscated, which prevents them from renting an apartment.
- Official data shows that in 2023 around 21.6% of the Latvian population were at risk of poverty. The 22.5% mentioned in our report for 2025 suggests that the situation remains significantly challenging.
- With a Gini coefficient of around 34%, income inequality is clearly a significant long-term challenge in Latvia. This is consistent with our priority of ensuring an adequate minimum income for everyone.



To ensure an adequate minimum income, EAPN-Latvia CALLS FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) The European Parliament should ensure the transparent and effective monitoring of the implementation of the Directive. If no concrete progress is made, this directive should be revised;
- 2) In order to develop more effective policies, European decision-makers must have a better understanding of the situation of people experiencing poverty. We are calling for politicians to receive more training on poverty and what it really means to live on a very small budget. This training should be delivered in partnership with people experiencing poverty;
- 3) Eradicating poverty, especially through a minimum income, must be a priority for the new European Union (EU) budget;
- 4) As a result of meeting their EU budget obligations, countries including Latvia will have made consistent budget cuts. A reduction in the minimum income must be avoided though. Therefore, we are calling for exceptions to be made to the EU budget rules regarding minimum income;
- 5) More information on minimum incomes should be shared between Member States so they can learn from each other's successes and failures. People experiencing poverty should be involved in this exchange of experiences, offering their own relevant insights;
- 6) A decent life quality depends not only on receiving at least a minimum income, but also on factors such as available housing, education, quality employment and healthcare. We need a comprehensive European strategy to eradicate poverty that takes all these aspects into account and is adopted by the Member States, including Latvia, in their legislative processes.

2. The rights of people with disabilities

- The minimum disability pension base in 2025 is **171 euros**; for people with disabilities who have had them since childhood, the pension amounts **to 206 euros**. This is still not enough to live independently or to rent an apartment in Latvia.
- People with disabilities often have an irregular income from casual or seasonal work, municipal benefits and other forms of support. Some of them live in shelters.
- The social security system in Latvia does not adequately ensure equal opportunities, accessible healthcare or employment support for people with disabilities.



Meeting at the Dobeles Disabled Persons' Association and consultations on social and labour rights

3. Risk of poverty among seniors

EAPN-Latvia has found in its research that seniors and people before retirement age are the most discriminated against in Latvia, especially those living in rural regions of Latvia, and mostly women. Surveys show that the majority of respondents work in discriminatory conditions and cannot afford the minimum subsistence level.

Both our report and external sources indicate that people with disabilities and seniors are particularly at risk of poverty. Their income levels and opportunities for social inclusion are below average. The main problems that seniors face are insufficient pensions, limited access to healthcare, loneliness and social isolation.

In 2025, more than 437,000 people received old-age pensions, the average pension amount was **563 euros**, the minimum pension was **171 euros**.

In August 2025, the average salary in Latvia was 1808 euros before taxes. According to European Commission forecasts, a person who received an average salary and did not save additional funds, in 2070 would receive a pension worth only 13,5% of their previous income. It is practically impossible for Latvian pensioners to create savings.

With the poverty risk rate for seniors (aged 65+) reaching 41% in 2023, it is clear that anti-poverty policies and support measures for this group of population need to be strengthened.

Project “The power of legal awareness in combating discrimination”

From January 1st, 2025 to June 20th, 2026, EAPN-Latvia is implementing the project “The power of legal awareness in combating discrimination”, co-financed by the European Social Fund+ and the State of Latvia. In cooperation with nine other non-governmental organizations, a study is being conducted in five regions of Latvia on the needs of over 300 people at risk of discrimination (including those aged 50+, people with disabilities, people from different ethnic groups, people with different levels of education, people with different sexual orientations and people from rural areas). Specialist consultations and trainings are also being provided to these people. EAPN-Latvia is investing 24000 euros in this project.



Training seminar in Bernati, by the Baltic Sea, in July 2025

Within the framework of the aforementioned project, in 2025 EAPN-Latvia will provide:

- Trainings and consultations on the European Pillar of Social Rights and gender equality;
- Psychological methods for preventing burnout;
- Discrimination prevention trainings for various social groups;
- Involvement in advocacy activities;
- Consultations on the right to influence legislation to reduce discrimination.

We expect that these activities will improve the knowledge, social skills and increase participation in public processes of the target group, a significant part of PeP. EAPN-Latvia periodically informs the relevant managing institutions — the Central Finance and Contracting Agency and the Ministry of Welfare — about any problems identified during project implementation.

More information about this project can be found on the EAPN-Latvia Facebook pages and in our monthly newsletter “News”.

Please see: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61567445191023> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1124191802395173>

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- ⇒ Income inequality and the risk of poverty in Latvia remain high, as confirmed by the Gini coefficient and poverty risk indicators.
- ⇒ The priorities set out in this report (minimum income, people with disabilities, seniors) correspond to objective data indicators, as these groups are particularly at risk.
- ⇒ While some indicators, such as the overall risk of poverty, may show improvement, this does not mean that the existing challenges have been resolved. Targeted policy action is still needed to address these issues.
- ⇒ Significant improvements can be achieved for target groups if governance and support systems target improvements in social protection, education, employment opportunities and housing.



Discussion participants at the Jelgava disabled women's association "Zvaigzne"

Conclusion

In 2025, EAPN-Latvia has strengthened its role as one of the main advocates for issues related to poverty and social exclusion in Latvia. Our work on three key priorities – minimum income, rights of people with disabilities and the poverty risks faced by seniors – demonstrates that strengthening social justice requires both political will and public participation.

However, in 2025 the socio-economic situation has been significantly affected by external factors: the ongoing war in Ukraine, which continues to create economic and social instability in Europe, as well as the high level of inflation, which is particularly hard on seniors, people with disabilities and those living on minimal income. Rising prices for food, utilities and medicines have increased the risk of poverty and reduced the population's quality of life, thus making the role of the social assistance and support systems even more crucial.

EAPN-Latvia intends to continue monitoring this situation and cooperating with state institutions and international partners to ensure that every Latvian resident has enough to live in dignity, especially people experiencing poverty, social exclusion, or those having limited opportunities in the labour market. The EAPN-Latvia network aims to promote solidarity and the prevention of discrimination, as well as social justice and political responsibility, in order to strengthen our society's resilience to economic and social shocks.

This report was prepared by

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Riga, 30/10/2025