

2010  
European Year  
for Combating  
Poverty and  
Social Exclusion

# ACTION PLAN of LATVIA

## European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010)



LATVIJAS REPUBLIKAS  
LABKLĀJĪBAS MINISTRIJA



EIROPAS KOMISIJAS  
PĀRSTĀVNICĪBA LATVIJĀ



JAUNATNES ORGANIZĀCIJU APVIENĪBA "IMKA LATVIJĀ"  
ASSOCIATION OF "YWCA/YMCA OF LATVIA"



BĒRNU FORUMS



Latvijas Darba devēju konfederācija



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Bērnu un jauniešu  
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## 1. Description of situation

### 1.1. Current problems and national strategy for reduction of poverty and social exclusion

In 2000 when European Council adopted the Lisbon strategy, the European Union (EU) social inclusion strategy was developed with an aim to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion in EU until 2010. Since accession also Latvia has undertaken to address these issues. Since 2004 there are developed three reports for reduction of poverty and social exclusion in country: “Latvian National Action Plan for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion (2004-2006)”, “National Report on Strategy for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008” and “The National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 – 2010”.

In 2008 there were 26% people subjected to at-risk-of-poverty rate that is the highest indicator among EU member states. Analyzing people subjected to at-risk-of-poverty rate by age, people at preretirement and at retirement age were subjected to the highest risk of poverty - 58% (75+), 51% (65 +), also 46% (60 +). 25% children (0 -17 years) were also among social groups mostly subjected to at-risk-of-poverty rate. Analyzing at-risk-of-poverty rate by gender, women are mostly subjected to the risk of poverty than men, especially women living alone - 67% (for men living alone - 49%). While according to at-risk-of-poverty rate by household type, the mostly subjected to to at-risk-of-poverty rate were:

- People at retirement age (65 +) in single person households - 83%;
- Single parent families (mainly women) with children - 42%;
- Large families (two adults and 3 or more children) - 38%.

Insufficient provision of accessible infrastructure, public stereotypes and prejudices on abilities of people with disabilities have created a situation that people with disabilities are one of the group mostly subjected to the risk of social exclusion.

Problems faced by people subjected to the risk of poverty and social exclusion become more complex. Standstill of rapid economic growth in 2008-2009 has resulted in increase of unemployment, and deteriorated other economic and social indicators. According to data by the State Employment Agency unemployment level in 2008 was 7,5% (8% for men, 6,9% for women). There are considerable differences in unemployment indicators in regions – at the end of 2008 the registered unemployment level in Riga region was 5,5%, but in Latgale region – 10,8%. At the end of November 2009 the unemployment level reached 15,1%. Notable differences in unemployment indicators still remain in all Latvian regions that continue increasing. Changing socioeconomic conditions have resulted in greater social exclusion and poverty of different people.

As of July 1, 2009, 109 amalgamated municipalities and 9 republican cities launched their work. Before there were 26 district governments and 522 local governments. After administrative reform people in municipalities lack sufficient information and knowledge about their social rights and availability of different services. In order to create equal opportunities for people to receive services and assistance appropriate to their needs, there must be implemented measures fully, duly and qualitatively for people living in municipalities to realize their rights for social services and social assistance, as well as information about other services.

Having regard of standstill of rapid economic growth that took place not only in Latvia but in EU and world in general that resulted in increase of unemployment and greater social exclusion and poverty of different people more focus should be put on social inclusion issues. In the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 – 2010 there are interposed three priority objectives based on active inclusion basic principles:

- 1) to facilitate more efficient participation and inclusion in the labour market;
- 2) to improve the income support systems;
- 3) to promote accessibility of qualitative services.

The year 2010 is designated as the Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (hereinafter – European Year (2010)), basing upon Decision No. 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010).

To participate in implementation of the European Year (2010), an Action Plan for the European Year (2010) has been elaborated. In the Action Plan there are included measures relating to information and awareness raising, inclusive and involving all age groups and both genders. Implementation of the European Year (2010) will have a relevant role in maintaining and facilitating social cohesion and solidarity.

## **1.2. Administrative structure for implementation of the European Year (2010)**

Administrative structure includes National Implementing Body, Management Committee, working group of Action Plan implementation and national coordinators.

**National Implementing Body** responsible for implementation of the European Year (2010) at national level is the Ministry of Welfare. Its main tasks are to implement, monitor and evaluate implementation of the Action Plan for the European Year (2010), ensuring cooperation with stakeholders involved in social inclusion policy making and realization.

In order to organize the European Year (2010), a **Management Committee** is established whose tasks are to monitor the European Year (2010) in general, follow the process of activities included in Action Plan and ensure effective interaction of the European Year (2010) activities. In the Management Committee there are involved representatives from Ministry of Welfare and other line ministries, State Chancellery, Representation of the European Commission in Latvia, Riga City Council, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia, the European Movement in Latvia, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO, Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia, Latvian Rural Forum, Latvian Red Cross, Civic Alliance-Latvia, national correspondents as well as social partners. Management Committee shall be organized not less than once a quarter.

To coordinate mutually the activities of the Action Plan, ensuring timely planning, organization, implementation and evaluation, there will be established **the working group responsible for implementation of the Action Plan** where will participate representatives from Ministry of Welfare, Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia, the European Movement in Latvia, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO, Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia, Latvian Rural Forum, Latvian Red Cross and other representatives from organizations that represent interests of persons subjected to the social exclusion etc. There may be established subgroups for implementation of particular activities.

Within framework of the European Year (2010) a **national correspondent** is a PR agency whose main task is to consult and support communication activities for the National Implementing Body, i.e., the Ministry of Welfare, during implementation of the European Year (2010). Once a month national correspondents organize meetings with the National Implementing Body, Representation of the European Commission in Latvia and Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia.

## 2. Action Plan

Goal of the Action Plan is to mobilize citizens, organizations, local municipalities and state institutions for active action to ensure needs of Latvian people in crises situation, share experience and knowledge, provide information on the rights and opportunities for everyone, especially – to recognize the rights to dignified living of persons who live in needs and are socially excluded.

Facilitation of civil activities and development of opportunities to provide support to people have a relevant role within framework of Action Plan, in order to create a society for all. Cooperation with various institutions – state, local, NGO, religious, cultural and other organizations is a guarantee of success of the progress.

### 2.1 Objectives and results

To reach the goal of the European Year (2010) at national, regional and local levels, there is defined a set of three initiatives with specific aims and attainable results. All initiatives comply with guiding principles of the European Year (2010)<sup>1</sup>, are adapted to situation of Latvia and priorities defined in the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 – 2010, and are as follows:

#### **Initiative 1 – Human vision as a social value**

Aim of the initiative is to substantially improve and steady public awareness on opportunities available for people in need and who are less protected in social risk situations and can not fully realize their basic rights, as well as ensure public involvement in addressing these problems. Within this initiative there will be distributed regular information by implementing visual and thoughtful public related social and creative measures and will be facilitated more active involvement of mass media. There will be provided psychological and other proper assistance to people in crises situation. As a result the delivery of information and knowledge will be the main added value that will ensure public involvement in addressing problems and facilitate exchange of public opinion, reduce or change stereotypes and recognize opportunities and rights of people subjected to social exclusion risk.

#### **Initiative 2 – Cooperation and co-participation platform**

Aim of the initiative is to incite discussions and improve information circulation on social inclusion issues, discrimination and possibility for its prevention at state, regional and local level by involving representatives from civil society. Cooperation of NGO and development of cooperation networks, including Latvian Antipoverty Network, will be facilitated. There will be organized round table conferences, thematic days in social service offices, NGOs, libraries and other places, as well as other activities emphasizing exchange of views and examples of good practices including initiating new ideas for involvement of unemployed in works that provide social good for society within framework of measure “Work practice with stipend” implemented by the State Employment Agency. Within this initiative there will be developed a resource card which aim is to provide information on services available for

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<sup>1</sup> Guiding principles defined in Article 2 of Decision No. 1098/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion (2010):

**Recognition of rights** — *recognising the fundamental right of people in a situation of poverty and social exclusion to live in dignity and to play a full part in society.*

**Shared responsibility and participation** — *increasing public ownership of social inclusion policies and actions, emphasising both collective and individual responsibility in the fight against poverty and social exclusion, as well as the importance of promoting and supporting voluntary activities.*

**Cohesion** — *promoting a more cohesive society by raising public awareness of the benefits for all of a society where poverty is eradicated, fair distribution is enabled and no one is marginalised.*

**Commitment and concrete action** — *reiterating the strong political commitment of the EU and the Member States to make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion and promoting this commitment and actions at all levels of governance.*

municipal residents, including possibilities to ensure basic needs (accommodation, food, clothes etc.); opportunity to receive psychological and crises support; involvement in public-useful works; on training opportunities etc. Information included in recourse card will be updated and distributed to people living in municipal territories. Drawing attention to specific problems related to poverty and social exclusion and focusing on specific target audiences will result in deeper understanding on cooperation and co-participation opportunities in fight against poverty and social exclusion and possibility for each individual to inclusion in society.

### **Initiative 3 – Adaptation to changing socioeconomic conditions**

Aim of the initiative is to encourage experts from different fields to find innovative approaches in fight against poverty and social exclusion in changing socioeconomic circumstances. There will be organized European Year (2010) opening and closing press conferences and student researches of higher educational institutions that offer social work and social science programs. As a result of this initiative research related and creative inquired innovative solutions will be applied designing action policies in social field in Latvia, including improvement of measures for the next strategy on social protection and social inclusion.

#### **2.2. Activities**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Responsible institution</b>
	<b>Planned measures</b>	<b>Responsible and co-responsible institution</b>
<b>Initiative 1 „Human vision as a social value”</b>		
<b>1.1.</b>	<b>Information at web home pages</b>	<b>MoW<sup>2</sup></b>
1.1.1.	Make a special section on the home page of the Ministry of Welfare <a href="http://www.lm.gov.lv">www.lm.gov.lv</a> devoted to European Year (2010) activities and measures	MoW
1.1.2.	Organize regular information for public in relevant sections of home pages	MoW, NGO WCNL <sup>3</sup> , Consortium <sup>4</sup> a.o. stakeholders
1.1.3.	Provide availability of information on European Year (2010) in other home pages	MoW, NGO WCNL, Consortium a.o. stakeholders
1.1.4.	Provide information on Latvian activities in the home page and intranetwork of the European Commission <a href="http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu">www.2010againstopoverty.eu</a>	MoW
<b>1.2.</b>	<b>Information campaign on European Year (2010)</b>	<b>NGO WCNL</b>
1.2.1.	Ensure topic on European Year (2010) to be included in TV broadcast programs	NGO WCNL, Consortium, Nords Porter Novelli <sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> MoW – Ministry of Welfare

<sup>3</sup> NGO WCNL - Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia

<sup>4</sup> Consortium - consortium of non-governmental organisations which unites the following organisations: Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia, the European Movement in Latvia, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO, , Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia, Latvian Red Cross, Latvian Rural Forum

<sup>5</sup> Nords Porter Novelli – public relations agency „Nords Porter Novelli”

1.2.2.	Ensure topic on European Year (2010) to be included in radio programs	NGO WCNL, Consortium, Nords Porter Novelli
1.2.3.	Locate European Year (2010) billboard advertisements	Nords Porter Novelli
1.2.4.	Involve ambassadors of the European Year (2010) in the European Year (2010) activities	Nords Porter Novelli, NGO WCNL
1.2.5.	Provide regular distribution of informative materials by the European Commission	Nords Porter Novelli, MoW, NGO WCNL, Consortium, EC Representation <sup>6</sup>
<b>1.3.</b>	<b>Thematic monthly articles for regional newspapers</b>	<b>MoW</b>
1.3.1.	Organize regular (once a month) thematic articles for regional newspapers on social inclusion topics and European Year (2010) activities	MoW, NGO WCNL, Consortium
1.3.2.	Ensure distribution of thematic articles to regional media	MoW
<b>1.4.</b>	<b>Psychological assistance for people in crises situations</b>	<b>Association „Skalbes”</b>
1.4.1.	Provide 24 hours psychological assistance to people in crises situations – access for free	Association „Skalbes”, WD RCC <sup>7</sup>
1.4.2.	Provide crises assistance for children and youth	Association „Children and Youth Trust Phone”
<b>1.5.</b>	<b>European Year (2010) participation in European Union Gardens Festival</b>	<b>MoW</b>
	Prepare European Year (2010) tent concept for European Union Gardens Festival	MoW, NGO WCNL, Consortium, Nords Porter Novelli, MFA <sup>8</sup>
<b>1.6.</b>	<b>European Commission event in Baltic countries “Baltic Solidarity Day”</b>	<b>MoW</b>
	Coordinate implementation of the event “Baltic Solidarity Day” initiated by EC	MoW
<b>Initiative 2 „Cooperation and co-participation platform”</b>		
<b>2.1.</b>	<b>Regional round table discussions on fields and actions of social inclusion policy</b>	<b>LRF<sup>9</sup></b>
2.1.1.	Elaborate common tools and procedures for organization of round table discussions	MoW, NGO WCNL, LAPSCW <sup>10</sup>
2.1.2.	Elaborate work programme for round table discussions on fields and actions of social inclusion policy	MoW, LRF, NGO WCNL, LAPSCW

<sup>6</sup> EC Representation - Representation of the European Commission in Latvia

<sup>7</sup> WD RCC – Welfare Department of the Riga City Council

<sup>8</sup> MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<sup>9</sup> LRF - Association „Latvian Rural Forum”

<sup>10</sup> LAPSCW - Latvian Association of Professional Social and Care Workers

2.1.3.	Organize 5 regional round table discussions	LRF , NGO WCNL, LAPSCW, WD RCC
<b>2.2.</b>	<b>Development of resource card</b>	<b>CGEL<sup>11</sup></b>
2.2.1.	Develop a resource card identifying needs of various beneficiaries and target groups and adapt it to needs of specific geographic territories	CGEL, EC Representation
2.2.2.	Establish a network of contact persons which are responsible for updating data in resource cards and publishing in municipal home pages	CGEL, LALRG <sup>12</sup>
2.2.3.	Provide training of contact persons	MoW
2.2.4.	Organize informative events on availability of developed resource card	CGEL EC Representation
2.2.5.	Joint card as google map publish on <a href="http://www.lm.gov.lv">www.lm.gov.lv</a>	MoW
<b>2.3.</b>	<b>Thematic days</b>	<b>EML<sup>13</sup></b>
2.3.1.	Elaborate common tools and procedures for organization of thematic days	EML
2.3.2.	Organize thematic day for women (March 8)	WRI <sup>14</sup> , The European Parliament Information Office
2.3.3.	Organize European thematic day (May 9)	EML
2.3.4.	Organize thematic day for children (June 1)	IMKA Latvia <sup>15</sup>
2.3.5.	Organize thematic day for fathers (September 12)	CFL <sup>16</sup> Association „Avantis”
2.3.6.	Organize thematic day for elderly people (October 1)	LPF <sup>17</sup>
2.3.7.	Organize thematic day on dignified work/ dignified remuneration (October 7)	FTUCF <sup>18</sup>
2.3.8.	Organize thematic day for people with disabilities (December 3)	SUSTENTO <sup>19</sup>
2.3.9.	Coordinate measures and provide consultative support	EML
<b>2.4.</b>	<b>Informative regional seminars on labour market inclusion opportunities</b>	<b>SEA<sup>20</sup></b>
2.4.1.	Elaborate common tools and procedures for organization of informative regional seminars	SEA, LALRG, ECL <sup>21</sup> , FTUCF, SLI <sup>22</sup> , LRF

<sup>11</sup> CGEL - Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia

<sup>12</sup> LALRG - the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

<sup>13</sup> EML – Association „European Movement in Latvia”

<sup>14</sup> WRI – Association „Women Rights Institute”

<sup>15</sup> IMKA Latvia – Association of Youth NGOs “IMKA Latvia”

<sup>16</sup> CFL – Association “Children`s Forum of Latvia”

<sup>17</sup> LPF – Latvian Pensioners` Federation

<sup>18</sup> FTUCF – Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia

<sup>19</sup> SUSTENTO – Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO

<sup>20</sup> SEA – State Employment Agency

<sup>21</sup> ECL – Employers` Confederation of Latvia

2.4.2.	Organize and coordinate 28 informative regional seminars on labour market inclusion opportunities (services offered for unemployed, job-seekers, employed, skills necessary in future, working opportunities in regions) as one of the most relevant tools for reduction of risks of social exclusion and poverty	SEA, LALRG, ECL, FTUCF, SLI, LRF, MoES <sup>23</sup>
<b>2.5.</b>	<b>Summary of best practice examples and practical advices</b>	<b>SUSTENTO</b>
2.5.1.	Elaboration of best practice inquiry form and its publication	MoW, NGO WCNL
2.5.2.	Gathering, assessment and distribution of best practice examples	SUSTENTO, NGO WCNL, EML, LRC <sup>24</sup> , LRF, CGEL
2.5.3.	Summarize, record and distribute summary of practical advices, incl. life histories	NGO WCNL, LRF, Nords Porter Novelli
2.5.3.	Publish summary of best practice examples and practical advices: <a href="http://www.lm.gov.lv">www.lm.gov.lv</a>	MoW
2.5.4.	Ensure award and delivery of gratitude writing for the best “best practice examples”	NGO WCNL, Members of the European Parliament, MoW
<b>2.6.</b>	<b>Cooperation of non-governmental organisations in implementation of Plan and for strengthening the non-governmental sector</b>	<b>NGO WCNL</b>
2.6.1.	Activate women and children organisations by providing training and support for organization of local events of European Year (2010)	NGO WCNL
2.6.2.	Provide support to organisations of people with disabilities to inform disabled people on poverty prevention measures and coordinate their co-participation	SUSTENTO
2.6.3.	Provide circulation of information, cooperation with mass media, extension of scope of partners, updating of European Union best practice	EML
2.6.4.	Provide support to NGO cooperation with government and Parliament, progress of proposals, consultations	CGEL
2.6.5.	Provide information on securing of basic needs for NGOs and local governments, NGO opportunities	LRC
2.6.6.	Provide cooperation with LEADER groups by involving entrepreneurs and rural NGOs	LRF
2.6.7.	Organize and promote involvement of professionals in development of Latvian Antipoverty Network	Association „Skalbes”, NGO WCNL, LAPSCW, EML, a.o. stakeholders

<sup>22</sup> SLI – The State Labour Inspectorate

<sup>23</sup> MoES – The Ministry of Education and Science

<sup>24</sup> LRC – Association „Latvian Red Cross”

2.6.8.	Facilitate cooperation with thematic networks and other organisations which represent interests of people subjected to the risks of social exclusion	Association „Skalbes”, NGO WCNL
<b>Initiative 3 „Adaptation to changing socioeconomic conditions”</b>		
<b>3.1.</b>	<b>European Year (2010) press conferences</b>	<b>MoW</b>
3.1.1.	Organize European Year (2010) opening press conference	MoW, NGO WCNL
3.1.2.	Organize European Year (2010) closing press conference	MoW, NGO WCNL
<b>3.2.</b>	<b>Social work specialist conference</b>	<b>WD RCC</b>
	Organize social work specialist conference on possibilities for reduction of poverty and social exclusion	WD RCC
<b>3.3.</b>	<b>Research works on social inclusion policy development in Latvia</b>	<b>MoW</b>
3.2.1.	Organize summary of research works on social inclusion policy development in Latvia and provide distribution of related topics to higher education institutions which offer social work and social science programs	MoW
3.2.2.	Organize summary of results of developed researches	MoW
3.2.3.	Ensure award and delivery of gratitude writing for the best researches	NGO WCNL, Members of the European Parliament, MoW
<b>3.4.</b>	<b>Voluntary actions, fairs of exchange of goods</b>	<b>LRC</b>
3.3.1.	Elaborate common procedures for organization of voluntary actions, fairs of exchange of goods	LRC
3.3.2.	Provide consultative support to voluntary initiatives	LRC
3.3.3.	Organize separate events on October 17, 2010, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	NGO WCNL, Members of the European Parliament
3.3.4.	Provide awarding of organizers of the best events	NGO WCNL, Members of the European Parliament

### 2.3. Target groups

- *Public in general*

Initially all public in general shall be addressed providing information on European Year (2010) aims, basic principles and intended activities, accordingly a European Year (2010) opening press conference will be organized. Closing the European Year (2010) a closing press conference will be organized. Via television, radio, thematic monthly articles and informative material on social support in municipalities all public in general will be addressed. By means of billboard advertising residents of Latvian cities will be addressed, also various materials prepared by the European Commission will be distributed in places available for society, for example, municipal social service offices, libraries, information offices of European Union, premises and events of non-governmental organisations.

Information on European Year (2010) activities will be regularly provided at the home page of the Ministry of Welfare [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv) where different discussions will be initiated. Also other stakeholders will provide availability of information on web regarding European Year (2010) processes.

- *People subjected to social exclusion risk*

It is of utmost importance to provide information in regions for unemployed, job-seekers, persons subjected to risk of unemployment a.o. people on their rights and opportunities in labour market. In cooperation with the State Employment Agency and its branch offices there will be organized 28 seminars to inform on existing opportunities for labour market inclusion (services for unemployed, job seekers, employers, employed) and on possibilities to participate in active employment and preventive unemployment reduction measures in order to reduce risks of social exclusion and poverty by means of tools that increase people competitiveness in labour market.

Cooperation and co-participation opportunities in reduction of poverty and social exclusion will be especially facilitated of retirees, children and youth, people with disabilities, families with children a.o. It will be achieved by promoting cooperation of state, municipal and non-governmental organisations, circulation of information and implementation of new initiatives also by involving people subjected to the risks of social exclusion in decision taking.

- *Students*

Students of higher education institutions that offer social work and social science programs will be invited to involve more actively in process of social inclusion policy development by preparing their research works according to European Year (2010) topic.

- *Representatives of civil society*

Representatives of civil society (for example, associations, foundations, trade unions, employers' organisations, religious organisations) that represent interests of people subjected to social exclusion, facilitate protection of their interests or represent professional service providers and develop dialogue with state. Within European Year (2010) initiative on establishing cooperation networks, including Latvian Antipoverty Network, is being proceeded where would unite non-governmental organisations which deal in addressing poverty issues. Strengthening of Latvian Antipoverty Network will promote more effective action in fight against poverty and social exclusion; and also will facilitate understanding on these issues. Focus week of European Antipoverty Network will be organized in Latvia. Within European Year (2010) in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and local governments there will be developed resource cards where information on services available in each municipality will be summarized, regularly updated and distributed in public places. In order to identify and publish best practice examples and practical advices prepared and successfully implemented by institutions or organisations a competition of best practice will be organized. There will be summarized possible solutions of various social problems, actions implemented de facto that will be useful and informative for other organisations in addressing certain social exclusion and poverty problems. Thereby successful best practice examples in social inclusion field will be supported.

- *Decision-makers at different levels*

It is important to address decision makers at different levels including social partners and other civil society representatives since due to effective mutual cooperation and communication as well as awareness on existing measures in social inclusion field depends on how successfully are addressed issues on social exclusion and poverty and reduction thereof. There will be organized five regional round table discussions on current social inclusion issues, on existing and in future required action in reduction of poverty and social exclusion. Intermedium among local politicians and practitioners, and policy makers at national level,

especially promoting cooperation with non-governmental organisations and other involved institutions will be strengthened.

#### **2.4. Gender equality**

Relevant precondition for common processes of the European Year (2010) is gender perspective that foresees to take into account different needs, abilities and interests of women and men.

Analyzing situation in Latvia lets us conclude that poverty and social exclusion often is a problem of women not men and women are more subjected to the risk of poverty than men. This is especially related to people aged 65+. This may be explained by lower wage of women (on average less than 15% in comparison to men) and consequently lower pension influenced by lasting breaks in employment related to child care and other factors, as well as pre-retirement.

Preparing Action Plan, interposing initiatives and activities gender aspect is taken into account and will be integral part during implementation of whole Action Plan so that both women and men would become active participants and beneficiaries of the results of the European Year (2010). Gender aspect will be considered when planning specific measures for implementation of activities.

#### **2.5. Accessibility and involvement**

Initiatives included in the Action Plan are based on social relations and mutual co-participation of society members, as well as development of cooperation opportunities and equality of opportunities thereby to facilitate improvement of living quality of each society member in nearest future and in longer-term.

As society ageing issues become more topical related to reduction of persons at giving-age and increase of elderly people, in Action Plan there are planned also activities regarding promotion of co-participation and cooperation of elderly people.

Low income, non-accessibility of environment and information and stereotypes still existing in our society are the reasons of poverty and social exclusion for people with disabilities. Taking it into account, emphasis in measures of the Action Plan are laid also on recognition of the equal opportunities for people with disabilities, thus promoting recognition of equal opportunities and rights as well as providing equal access to resources and possibilities of use of it.

### **3. Consultations with civil society and other stakeholders**

Interinstitutional cooperation as essential precondition for successful implementation of the Action Plan has been interposed by National Implementing Body.

By active co-participation of non-governmental organisations – Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia, the European Movement in Latvia, Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO, Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia, Latvian Red Cross, Latvian Rural Forum, Latvian Association of Professional Social and Care Workers a.o. – designing of Action Plan activities within European Year (2010) was organized. In III and IV quarter of 2009 Ministry of Welfare and Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia have organized regular meetings on planning of activities and distribution of responsibilities as well as in generating ideas for European Commission event in Baltic countries. There participated also Representation of the European Commission in Latvia and national correspondents.

For support of the Action Plan there were organized presentations in meeting of Latvian social service office heads, meetings of Latvian gender equality organisations, in seminar of Latvian Anti-Poverty Network and other events.

Important consultative tool during European Year (2010) preparation and implementation process was Social Inclusion Policy Coordination Committee (hereinafter – SIPCC) that has been established under Ministry of Welfare in 2007 in order to develop, monitor and evaluate social inclusion policy in the state. SIPCC involves different fields which deal with addressing of poverty and social exclusion issues from state institutions including regional level and social partners, non-governmental organisations, that represent interests of socially excluded people etc. SIPCC co-participated in providing suggestions on activities to be implemented within European Year (2010) and also further there will be provided consultations with members of SIPCC on progress of implementation of the Action Plan.

In order to take active part in implementation of European Year (2010) and express readiness to address issues related to poverty and social exclusion and reduction of these problems any organisation (for example, association, foundation, trade unions, employers` organisatins, religious organisations a.o.) are invited to participate. Activities to be supported are as follows:

- By supporting aims of the European Year (2010) organisations on their web home pages may publish a link to home page of the European Commssion devoted to the European Year (2010): <http://2010againstopoverty.eu> and/or home page of the Ministry of Welfare: [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv) as well as to place banners and publish thematic articles;
- Co-participate in implementation process of the European Year (2010) activities;
- Organize activities that facilitate achievement of goals and basic principles of the European Year (2010).

If organisations wish to organize separate activities that promote achievement of goals and basic principles of the European Year (2010), for example, seminars, round tables, trainings, conferences, social and creative events, and want to use logo of the European Year (2010), it is necessary to contact with the Ministry of Welfare by filling application form that is published at [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv). Ministry of Welfare will review offer and will provide further instructions, as well as will include the supported activity in timetable of implementation of measures of the European Year (2010). By using title and logo of the European Year (2010), organisations undertake to organize measaures and activities that comply with basic principles and aims of the European Year (2010) and will ensure copyrights.

About organisation of thematic days consultative support will be provided by the European Movement in Latvia; Coalition for Gender Equality in Latvia will support development, updating and promotion of cooperation with state and municipal institutions on resource card; Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability organisations SUSTENTO will consult on work with people with disabilities and their involvement in activities; Latvian Red Cross will support preparation of charity events and campaigns; Latvian Rural Forum wil consult on work in rural territories; Women NGO Cooperation Network of Latvia will provide support regarding capacity development of non-governmental organisations, coordination of European Year (2010) events and cooperation among non-governmental organisations. Information on implementation of European Year (2010) in general will be provided by experts of the Ministry of Welfare.

At the web home page [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv) there will be provided dialogue with public and updated information on process of European Year (2010), as well as there will be an opportunity for any person interested in this issue to receive necessary information any time easy and timely.

#### **4. Timetable for implementation of activities**

It is planned to implement Action Plan from January 2010 to December 2010.

*At initial period* of Action Plan implementation it is planned to organize opening press conference of the European Year (2010) thereby taking notice to theme of the European Year (2010) and topicality of problems related to poverty and social exclusion. In cooperation with national correspondent – public relations agency „Nords Porter Novelli” – a dialogue with mass media will be strengthened as well as regular distribution of information on European Year (2010) will be ensured. Higher education institutions which offer social work and social science programs will be invited to propose students to elaborate their research works on social inclusion topics. With state administration institutions, regions and municipalities, social partners and other representatives from civil society there will be organized regional one day round table discussions. Exchange of information, panel discussions, exchange of views on current and further required action for reduction of poverty and social exclusion, as well as identification of required actions related to provision of access to goods, services, income, rights a.o. for vulnerable groups will be provided to successfully develop a resource card. Coordination of Baltic countries` event “Baltic Solidarity Day” initiated by European Commission will be provided.

*At mid period* of Action Plan implementation it is planned to emphasize activities of non-governmental organisations which relate to increase of general public understanding focusing on specific target audience – people with disabilities, retirees, families with children and youth etc. In municipal social service offices, European Union Information libraries, Europe Direct information centers and in other places of Latvia there will be organized thematic days, for example, for women – March 8, thematic day on Europe – May 9, open door day for children – June 1, for fathers – September 12. There will be prepared informative materials on social support available for people in municipalities. During this period it is planned to organize development of resource card and provide its publicity and availability at the same time organizing informative events on development of resource card. In regions there will be organized informative seminars on current opportunities in labour market as tools for reducing risks of social exclusion and poverty, as well as competition on best “best practice” examples and practical advices. In the framework of European Union Gardens Festival (9<sup>th</sup> of May) the European Year (2010) topic will be highlighted. Conference of social work specialists will be organized on possibilities for reduction of poverty and social exclusion. Active work will be carried out by promotion of cooperation of non-governmental organisations including establishment of Latvian Anti-Poverty Network and promotion of cooperation with networks and other organisations in EU countries which represent interests of people subjected to the risks of social exclusion.



## 5. Monitoring and evaluation

Ministry of Welfare is responsible for implementation of the European Year (2010) in general. Monitoring of the Action Plan will be carried out by Management Committee. Working group for implementation of the Action Plan is responsible for coordination, planning, organisation and evaluation of activities included in the Action Plan.

For monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan there will be used:

### ✓ **Reports**

Following each activity (or not less than once every three months) each implementator will prepare report on process, participants, results etc. of activity and submit to Ministry of Welfare. At the end of the European Year (2010) Ministry of Welfare in cooperation with involved non-governmental organisations will prepare a final report by using before mentioned reports on activities, information summarized during implementation including discussion materials, minutes of the meetings a.o. Final Report after adoption at the Management Committee will be published at the web home page of the Ministry of Welfare [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv). Organisations who will implement European Year (2010) activities and who will attract funding will have to prepare final financial reviews or other relevant information according to defined in contract on funding.

### ✓ **Evaluation of content**

There will be organized regular meetings of working groups responsible for implementation of Action Plan in order to ensure coordination and progress of implementation of activities as well as for taking decisions necessary for making changes, discuss problematic issues and ways how to deal with it.

### ✓ **Management Committee**

Members of working groups responsible for implementation of Action Plan will participate and report on performance of implementation of Action Plan activities in Management Committee established under Ministry of Welfare whose tasks will be to monitor European Year (2010) in general, to follow-up the process of activities included in the Action Plan and ensure effective interaction of measures of the European Year (2010). Meetings of the Management Committee will be organized not less than once a quarter.

### ✓ **Public feedback**

National Implementing Body will organize interactive discussions at the web home page [www.lm.gov.lv](http://www.lm.gov.lv) so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views and evaluation on activities implemented within framework of European Year (2010). Public relations agency „Nords Porter Novelli” will summarize feedback from media a.o. information.