



## **Minutes of the 2016 Annual Review Meeting (ARM) of the FEAD OP Riga, 25 November 2016**

### **1. Part 1 of the Annual Review meeting: Technical pre-meeting between European Commission and national Authorities.**

The MA provided the EC with a brief overview of the historical development of the food assistance programmes. In June 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers appointed the FEAD programme to be under the full responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare, separately from the Ministry of Finances. Year 2014 is the year of regulatory framework – the Operational Programme was developed, fund management legislation and Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers were approved, partnership with the Society Integration Foundation (SIF), the Intermediate Body (IB), was established. In 2015 the authorities were designated, SIF started selection of partner organisations (PO) and launched public procurements for assistance packages providers; delivery of assistance packages to the final beneficiaries started (May 2015); first pilot survey was launched; first interim payment was submitted to the EC. Year 2016 is marked with improvement of the assistance packages' content, broadening the network of soup kitchens and development of accompanying measures. In 2017 the MA objective is to offer more individual solutions in addition to general ones. The MA sees a challenge in changing the mind-set of partner organisations – from focus on financial absorption and maximum goods distribution towards the focus on final beneficiaries and overall social inclusion objectives.

According to the MA, the basic principles of FEAD in Latvia are: a) to focus on the most deprived; b) to cover all Latvian territory; and c) to provide support, however not to cover 100% of the needs. For example, food aid provides approximately 25% of the required daily dietary energy value. Providing only partial support saves people's motivation to increase their income and not fully rely on external support. School supplies packages are provided in accordance with the list of supplies that educational institutions require parents to provide for pupils. The MA makes sure that the products comply with certain quality criteria and have sufficient expiration date, as well as that the packaging and transportation is environmentally friendly, etc.

The EC thanked the MA for organising the ARM, providing the written answers as well as for the brief introduction into FEAD development and philosophy. The EC asked the MA how the dialogue with POs is sustained and whether the POs see the benefit in empowering final beneficiaries. The MA admitted that it depends on organisation and even on particular volunteer who meets final beneficiaries in person. SIF closely cooperates with POs, conducts informational seminars, sends newsletters. The MA admits that it is challenging to affect the way of thinking, however points out some progress. This year NGOs also participated in FEAD Network meeting in Brussels, and the MA also encourages POs to use FEAD Network online tools for experience exchange with European counterparts.

The Advisory Working Group (AWG) meets at least twice a year – to approve the Annual Implementation Report and discuss results, and for the Annual Review meeting. However, there

are separate meetings with some stakeholders when new content and ideas are being developed. For example, during development of the baby packages MA consulted AWG members responsible for municipal social services, as well as dieticians, pediatricians and other relevant experts.

## 2. Part 2 of the Annual Review meeting: Commission, National Authorities and stakeholders

The agenda<sup>1</sup> was pre-agreed with the national authorities. The Latvian authorities provided the written answers to the EC questions on 9 November<sup>2</sup>. The answers and the presentations delivered during the meeting (Annex 1 – 5) are attached to the minutes.

### 2.1 Introduction

L.Grafa on behalf of MA welcomed all the participants. M.Guin on behalf of the EC stressed the importance and the added value of the FEAD as a very concrete tool in the fight against poverty, however, taking into account the importance to deal with broader causes of vicious circle of poverty and deprivation and the need to contribute to the social inclusion of the most deprived persons. M.Guin also pointed out the EC increasing emphasis on social aspects within the EU policies.

### 2.2. State of play with programme implementation in 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2016, information about the difficulties encountered in programme implementation and solutions found, potential risks for the future, overview of communication activities. *(Presentation by E.Kleina, Intermediate Body, Society Integration Foundation)*

The Society Integration Foundation (SIF) as the Intermediate Body (IB) and the MA presented the state of play with the programme implementation on 30.09.2016 (see Annex 1). IB informed that SIF as Beneficiary, in order to start the distribution of new packages in time and avoid gaps, has published in total **five public procurements** since last ARM in November 2015 (see Table 1): a) at the end of 2015 for food packages, b) two procurements for packages of hygiene/household goods and school supplies, c) and two procurements for newly developed baby food and baby hygiene packages to be distributed in 2017. The public procurement for baby hygiene products ended with no results and had to be relaunched. In reply to the EC question about the reasons of unsuccessful first public procurement, SIF explained that technical specifications (age/kg range classification of diapers) were not fully corresponding with the available options on the market.

	Launched	Contract/ status	Supplier
<b>Food</b>	23.12.2015.	29.04.2016.	AS "Dobeles Dzirnavnieks"
<b>Hygiene &amp; household</b>	19.02.2016.	21.06.2016.	SIA "Sanitex"
<b>School</b>	29.07.2016.	Decision – 09.11.2016. Contract – November	
<b>Baby food</b>	26.08.2016.	Evaluation Decision – November Contract – November	
<b>Baby hygiene</b>	12.08.2016. 07.11.2016.	Ended without result Relaunched Deadline 05.01.2017.	

Table 1. Public procurements launched in 2016 (and end of 2015).

<sup>1</sup> Ares(2016)6398052 - 14/11/2016

<sup>2</sup> Ares(2016)6331914 - 09/11/2016

In March 2016 a **second partner organisations (POs) selection process** was launched. As a result 10 contracts were signed and 2 will be signed once the renovation works in the soup kitchens will be finished and approved by the Food and Veterinary Service. Contracts with two POs have expired. **In total currently there are 29 POs, 480 distribution points and 18 soup kitchens**, covering all 110 counties and 9 large towns. The contracts have been signed for 2 years – till 16 April 2018. New call for proposals will be launched in 2018, since all PO contracts will expire in April 2018.

In 2016 the content of the packages was upgraded based on the results of the 2015 structured survey (314 participants). **Changes in the content of the packages in 2016** were the following:

- a) three new products were added to the **food package** (canned meat(beef) – 0.25kg, egg powder – 0.1 kg, potato flakes – 0.2kg) and the volume of some products has increased (sugar – 0.25+0.25kg, canned meat(pork) – 0.25+0.25kg); the value of the package is 10.98 EUR;
- b) **hygiene/household goods** provider has changed and the volume of some products has increased (liquid soap – 300+10ml; shampoo – 300+200ml; toothpaste – 50+50ml; washing powder – 400+600g); the value of the package is 7.32 EUR;
- c) **soup kitchen packages were introduced** (1 package equals 60 meals; the value of the package is 43.92 EUR and contains four times more products than a regular food package) + POs can now offer only soup kitchen services (without distribution of FEAD packages).

Moreover, as a result of **amendments to the national regulation on FEAD implementation**, the end recipients do not have to make a choice between the food package and hot meals, and are now able to receive both in contrast with 2015.

	2015	2016*
Food	285 362	276 253
Hygiene and household items	49 920	40 935
School items	-	21 891
Meals	2 205	110 790

Table 2. Packages and meals distributed (status on September 30, 2016).

	2015	2016*
Food	68 876	66 387
Hygiene and household items	25 675	20 332
School items	-	11 522
Meals	32	1 631

Table 3. Number of final beneficiaries (status on September 30, 2016).

The change in the national regulations explains the increasing number of hot meals recipients in 2016, in comparison with 2015 data (see Table 1 and 2). Since the distribution of the school items in 2015 was delayed due to constrain with the public procurement procedure, the amendments have also extended the deadline for the recipients to receive school supplies packages – distribution has started only in January 2016.

The **number of accompanying measures has increased** (see Table 4), **however the number of participants has decreased** in comparison with 2015. Nevertheless, SIF emphasised the importance of such measures and stressed that the measures have become more targeted, for example specific target groups were identified, such as persons with disabilities, children from deprived families, persons with addictions, etc. Therefore, SIF explains that the quality of measures has improved. As example of good practices in 2016 SIF has mentioned a) an information measure "Fruits, vegetables, mushrooms and berries in the diet" on collecting, processing and storage of available seasonal nature gifts (mushroom and berry picking is very popular in rural areas); b) seminars "The Housekeeping School", in particular about storage and purpose of vulnerary plants, c) a summer camps for children from the most deprived families.

In response to the EC question whether the 2015 survey on end recipients gathered any information about the accompanying measures and potential areas for improvement, SIF explained that at the time of conducting the survey the measures were just starting and were not very many, therefore the respondents did not provide any feedback. The **structured survey** in 2017, however, will provide more information on the subject. The Deputy Head of Methodological Management and Control Department of the Ministry of Welfare (Ilze Skrodele-Dubrovskā) added that during meetings with municipalities has received positive feedback both – on the contents of the packages and on the accompanying measures.

	2015	2016*
Complementary measures	950	1508
Consultations	169	596
Cooking	162	215
Practical skills	124	200
Health promotion	185	198
Other	310	299
Participants	9604	7675

Table 4. Accompanying measures (status on September 30, 2016).

In a follow-up correspondence the MA explained to the EC that the **decrease in the number of participants** can be explained with the higher share of consultations (in 2015 - 169, and in 2016 - 596). The demand for individual consultations has increased, and one individual consultation equals one accompanying measure with one participant only.

SIF informed about **difficulties encountered in the programme implementation in 2016 and solutions found**:

- a) the issue with **accessibility of the aid packages** [*raised at 2015 ARM*] was solved by adding additional PO selection criteria – giving preference to POs that provide more distribution places within the one administrative territory of Latvia, also if necessary, POs deliver the packages to the site of personal residence with a help of a social worker or using PO transport, as well as recipients can request an individual attendance time, if necessary.
- b) **management of changes of aid packages content** involved additional administrative burden and logistical difficulties for the stakeholders. The distribution of the packages with improved content was set for 1 June 2016. The remaining food packages with previous content were transferred to the soup kitchens, however due to delay in the start of soup kitchen operations, lower attendance (summer season) and significant number of packages, the majority of the packages was transferred only by the end of September.
- c) **optimal delivery of packages to POs** [*raised at 2015 ARM*] has improved. SIF has developed close cooperation with POs and is actively involved in deliveries management in order to prevent surplus.

As regards to **communication** activities, SIF reported no significant changes. However, the **media** interest has decreased comparing to 2015. In 2016 regional media were most active, reminding to the public about FEAD support distribution, informing about accompanying measures and the novelties in the content of the aid packages.

In response to the EAPN representative question on reasons for **significant increase of hot meals recipients**, SIF explained that, first of all, POs can now only provide soup kitchen services and their number has increased. Second of all, soup kitchens have received additional provision because 2015 food packages were transferred to them from the distribution points as the

distribution of new upgraded packages has started. Third of all, new special food packages for soup kitchens have been developed, which allows preparing more meals. The MA complemented the reply stressing out that thanks to the amendments to the national regulations, the end recipients may receive hot meals without directing their food package to the soup kitchen, as well as the soup kitchens do not require social service statements before providing support.

In response to the EC question regarding the **overlap delivery period** of the packages with old and new content, SIF explained that the food packages with new content were delivered as of 1 June 2016 and there was no overlap. As regards to the hygiene/household good packages, there was two months transition period (August, September 2016).

The EC congratulated LV authorities and stakeholders with overall smooth progress of the FEAD implementation, as well as with responding to recipients' needs and improvements made/to be made regarding the content of the aid packages (in particular, with amending the national regulations and contributing to increasing number of soup kitchens and thus number of hot meals recipients, providing additional support aimed at families with babies, and for making support more targeted at different age groups).

### **2.3. Update on the monitoring information system (developed by SIF) to collect and store FEAD data, problematic issues encountered. State of play with the collection of FEAD data, incl. any problematic issues encountered. (Presentation by G.Landsmane, Intermediate Body, Society Integration Foundation)**

IB presented the improvements of the Information system (PEVS) specially developed (since October 2014) for monitoring of the FEAD programme (see Annex 2). SIF performs trainings for new PEVS users (one training session in 2016) and individual consultations.

The fields and functions that were available already in 2015 are: basic data of involved institutions and bodies, information about the distribution places (data on working hours automatically migrates to webpage [www.atbalstapakas.lv](http://www.atbalstapakas.lv)), SIF can submit and check requests for the payments (however, POs cannot yet submit the payments orders), information about the eligible costs (entered manually by SIF), information about the output and result indicators, as well as all PEVS users are able to subtract the data for tailor-made reports, as well as see the information on discrepancies and FEAD inspections. SIF acknowledged that in future small POs would be more interested in using PEVS, however for big NGOs with over 50 distribution points (Red Cross, for example) would prefer to collect data in Excel format first.

SIF performed PEVS improvements that were envisioned at the ARM 2015 meeting, i.e. new functionalities for the IB were added (preparation of PO contracts), POs can provide expenditure forecasts per quarter online, and the Audit authority can store the data on performed audits and deadlines for corrections.

Necessary improvements that still remain on agenda since 2015 ARM are the following: a) improving the section of information storage and matching process for the Certification authority, e.g. on account closure and management declaration (FEAD Art. 48); b) submitting reports through the PEVS system – for the POs; c) improvements of processes for the IB.

The CA and MA confirmed that the documents related to the accounts (management declaration annual summary, audit opinion and control report) will be provided to the EC by mid-February 2017.

### **3. Experience of programme implementation in 2016 of partner organization Samaritan Association (SA) of Latvia. (Presentation by A.Kraukle)**

Samaritan Association (SA) of Latvia, one of the biggest and oldest NGOs in Latvia, has presented their organization and its contribution to the FEAD implementation on the ground (see Annex 3).

From 01.01.2016 to 30.09.2016 SA has delivered 7742 food packages, 1196 hygiene/household goods packages, 180 school bags and 348 school supplies. SA mentioned that school bags are not in high demand, because the size is appropriate for elementary school pupils. Packages are distributed at least twice a week, by site managers and volunteers in 9 distribution sites across Latvia. In response to the EAPN representative question about the exact days of distribution, SA explained that usually it is done during working days and the opening hours are adjusted to the transport schedule. However, upon request it is possible to receive packages at the weekends.

In the same timeframe SA has also conducted 27 accompanying measures (781 participants) – cooking classes, IT and online banking training, training on CV preparation and job search, consultations on children hygiene and upbringing, and disease prevention, as well as group meetings on various topics. SA cooperates with local doctors, who inform about ongoing flu or tuberculosis epidemics, so that SA can assist with educational measures. SA also demonstrated a Vidzemes TV story about the SA organized accompanying measure for deprived families about how to prepare honey from dandelions.

SA informed about the synergy with the food bank "Paēdušai Latvijai" run by SA and supported by the Latvian State Forests in the framework of their social responsibility activities. The food bank provides food aid to poor families with children, seniors and disabled people with low income (below the subsistence minimum of EUR 252) for whom the status of a needy person or a person with low income was rejected (for bureaucratic reasons) or it takes too long to obtain the status because of the social services' heavy workload.

SA noted that 5% flat rate for administrative costs, transport and storage of material assistance is insufficient to ensure the distribution of packages; therefore SA uses the food bank donations to cover some of the expenses.

EC asked to elaborate on the way the food banks work in Latvia. SA explained that the food bank "Paēdušai Latvijai" collects food donations during one-day-campaign in cooperation with the supermarket chain "Rimi" – people who wish to participate can buy and donate products from the list provided. As a result SA is able to provide a food package to persons in need, in its content similar to FEAD package. SA also cooperated with farmers and shops. The distribution is organised once a month. Sometimes SA receives unexpected donations of products with short expiration dates, for example, tangerines. In this case the food gets distributed with the help of fellow NGOs to people with low income, but with no needy person status, as well as in addition to FEAD packages.

### **4. Experience of programme implementation in 2016 of partner organisation Latvian Red Cross. (Presentation by A.Zarkova)**

Latvian Red Cross (RC) operations cover the whole territory of Latvia with 26 regional branches, 320 local divisions, 10 000 members and 3000 volunteers. RC representative presented the NGO's experience with FEAD implementation (see Annex 4).

Since 5 May 2015 RC provides FEAD support to the most deprived through 364 distribution points [*the number increased since 2015*]. From 01.01.2016 to 30.09.2016 RC has delivered 215

265 food packages, 32 459 hygiene/household goods packages, 1 872 school bags and 14 780 school supplies. RC has also provided 588 accompanying measures with 4 442 participants. As some of examples of the accompanying measures RC mentioned Valentine's Day celebration for families with children in Riga branch (creative workshops for baking, greeting cards preparation, etc.); and Valka branch thematic DIY workshops and discussions on the topics of relationships, healthy leisure time ideas for children, overcoming personal economic issues, etc.

Other RC activities linked to FEAD include a) provision of health related consultations in 40 Health Centres across Latvia, as well as gives opportunity to check the blood pressure, to detect body weight and height, to calculate the body mass index and also to receive information about possible support to the most vulnerable groups; b) provision of the humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable groups of population, including clothing, footwear, etc.; c) RC in Riga provides night shelter services to persons without their own living space and people in crisis (currently approx. 190 persons).

Amongst challenges encountered RC has indicated the following:

- It is not possible to submit exact supply forecast for one year ahead, because the number of recipients is changing;
- Deprived persons cannot receive packages every month [*for example, if the social service issues a statement for three months, person can receive two packages within three months period – only one package in one calendar month*] – RC encourages to amend the national regulations to adjust the frequency;
- People with low-income cannot receive packages anymore (unlike in 2007-2013 period);
- It is not possible to receive packages for the previous period [*social service issues statements for the period of one, three or six months*];
- There are many reports about each type of package, currently nine (because of the change of packages' structure), and from next year there will be seven more reports. The form of the report is very difficult and extensive. Moreover, reporting on recipients triggers sensitive issues, for example, RC finds it unethical to ask questions on disability and ethnicity.

Regarding the supply forecast submission, SIF explained that the forecasts for one year upfront are necessary to plan the financial flow, as well as to help the suppliers to plan production and procurement processes. It is understandable that the data will not be precise, and it can be adjusted at any moment.

SIF acknowledged RC concerns about additional workload in regards to reporting on the number of packages received/delivered, especially because in 2017 there will be seven additional types of packages to report about (baby food and hygiene packages per age groups), and mentioned that due to extensive amount of data to be gathered RC is given a later deadline for reporting.

MA commented on data collection sensitivity from the recipients, mentioning that there is no obligation to ask sensitive questions. EC also acknowledged the difficulty to find the balance and stressed that stigmatization should be avoided.

EC expressed empathy with the administrative burden of reporting and compliance with the rules on record-keeping, budget planning, etc, however, it stressed the need of these exercises. The data is also used to track and demonstrate to EU legislative bodies and MS governments whether the fund meets the intended objectives.

## 5. Information on budget absorption in 2016, changes in the programme implementation in 2016. (Presentation by A.Stratane, Managing Authority)

MA presented information on budget absorption in 2016 (see Annex 5). EC approved FEAD interim payment claims for EUR 1 195 707 (EU contribution) in 2015 and for EUR 3 566 223 (EU contribution) in 2016, which in total constitutes 11,6% of total OP financial plan. One more payment claim is expected in December 2016 (EUR 949 243 – EU contribution). [The payment claim was submitted on December 9<sup>th</sup> for EUR 857 341,33 of EU contribution]. In 2017 LV expects to declare EUR 5 821 069 (EU contribution).

MA also presented output and results indicators up to 30.09.2016 (see Table 5). EC asked to clarify whether the number of the end recipients and the amounts of support packages distributed are expected to reach the same figures as in 2015 by the end of 2016, or the MA expects a decrease. The MA explained that the number of persons with the needy person status has decreased, because of the changes in social benefits and assistance. Representative of the Ministry of Welfare added that currently the **amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance** are being discussed in the Parliament. The amendments foresee: a) disregarding family state benefits in income means test; b) disregarding income from work in means test for needy person status (currently at 128 EUR per month) during first three months of work when taking up job (=in-work benefit). If the amendments will be adopted the number of persons with the needy status will increase. [The amendments are scheduled to be passed by the Parliament in January 2017].

Indicator	Unit of measurement	Quantity in 2015	Quantity 01.01.2016-30.09.2016
<b>Output and result indicators on food support distributed</b>			
Meat, eggs, fish, seafood	tons	71,341	134,564
Flour, bread, potatoes, rice and other starchy product	tons	941,695	932,160
Sugar	tons	71,341	95,279
Milk products	tons	114,145	107,547
Fats, oil	tons	142,681	134,434
<b>Total quantity of food support distributed</b>	<b>tons</b>	<b>1341,203</b>	<b>1403,984</b>
Total number of meals distributed	pieces	2 205	110 790
Total number of food packages distributed	pieces	285 362	276 253
Total number of persons receiving food support	persons	68 876	66 387
<b>Output and result indicators on basic material assistance distributed</b>			
Total number of hygiene item packages distributed	pieces	49 920	40 935
Total number of persons receiving hygiene item packages	persons	25 675	20 332
Total number of school item packages distributed	pieces	–	21 891
Total number of persons receiving school item packages	persons	–	11 522

Table 5. Output and Result Indicators (status on September 30, 2016).

MA informed that the Ministry of Welfare searches for additional ways to support persons in need. Next year the government will make a decision whether to increase the threshold for the needy person status. [The threshold of 128 EUR of income per person per month has not changed since 2009]. If the threshold will stay unchanged, MA will look into possibility to increase it only in the FEAD framework.

MA informed about the evaluation of the effectiveness of FEAD OP – a **structured survey** of 314 recipients conducted in 2015. [Preliminary results were presented at 2015 ARM]. The main findings of the survey show that: a) the aid has reached the target group, i.e. 89% of the recipients (95% found out about FEAD from the social service centers); b) budgetary burden was relieved – 90% of recipients acknowledged money savings thanks to FEAD support; majority of respondents used saves resources for children extra-curricular activities; c) 78% distribution places are approachable by public transport or on foot; 9% of respondents live more than 10km away from the closest distribution point. MA noted that POs distribute packages in cooperation with social



workers who follow up families in need, as well as provide special distribution times; d) 75% of respondents are satisfied with the quantity of the content.

Moreover, the content of the packages was improved and adjusted in 2016, according to the survey results (see Point 2), after consultation with the stakeholders (nutritionists, pediatricians, teachers, representatives of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education and Science).

MA informed that on 14 June 2016 MA contracted the external contractor for the provision of evaluation (including structured survey) of the OP implementation in 2016, 2017 and 2018. In the beginning of 2017 there are to be expected results of evaluation of 2016. A report of evaluation of 2016 is expected till 15 March 2017.

MA also informed about communication activities of MA, changes in the programme implementation in 2017 and informative measures to inform the POs about the upcoming changes (see Annex 5).

**Planned changes of the aid packages' content/target groups in 2017** are the following:

a) **school items packages will be provided by two age groups:** 1) primary school pupils (5-10 years-old) will receive a school bag and school items (drawing utensils, exercise-books, ruler, colours, pens, pencils etc.); 2) elementary school pupils (11-16 years-old) will receive only school items, adjusted to more advanced school programme's subjects.

b) **additional aid packages for 0-2 years-old children** will be provided: 1) food packages per age groups (7 – 12 months; 13 – 18 months; 19 – 24 months) will be distributed two times per quarter; and 2) hygiene packages per age groups (0 – 6 months; 7 – 12 months; 13 – 18 months; 19 – 24 months) will be distributed ones per quarter.

In response to the EAPN question about the marking on the baby packages for different ages, MA assured that the packages will be marked with BP1, BP2, etc., in accordance with the age groups.

EC acknowledged the progress made and the efforts put into satisfying the needs of the end recipients by differentiation of the target groups and providing them with more targeted solutions, as well as expressed support and satisfaction for putting more accompanying measures in place. EC also expressed hope that the amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance will be adopted and the best solution will be found in order to provide necessary support to those in need.

EC encouraged the dialogue between Managing authorities of FEAD and ESF, as well as with POs and other relevant stakeholder, to find synergies and possible areas of interconnectivity between the funds, for example, discussing possible effects of health care related measures on FEAD target groups. Taking into account that some of the beneficiaries are young adults, cooperation in the area of NEET outreach activities is welcomed, to maximize the effect of FEAD in tackling poverty.

EC also reminded that in 2017 the annual implementation report shall set out information on and assessment of the contribution to achieving the specific and global objectives of the FEAD, specified in Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 223/2014. EC is also looking forward to the results of structured survey in the beginning of 2017.

**After the meeting a site visits took place at the NGO "St. Johanniter Assistance" (Melanija Grundšteina – General Manager), providing hot meals and aid packages.**

## Conclusions & Follow up

- The FEAD programme implementation in Latvia is rather smooth. The distribution of all packages is ongoing; the content of the food and hygiene/household goods packages was improved in 2016 and adjusted to the needs of the end recipients; the continuity of services was ensured.
- The new concept of food packages for soup kitchens was introduced. As result of amendments to the national regulation on FEAD implementation, the end recipients are able to receive both – the food package and hot meals. The PO selection criteria was improved and second PO selection process was concluded, extending the soup kitchen network from 2 to 18 soup kitchens.
- In 2017 the improvements foresee the introduction of new baby food and hygiene packages; as well as further focus on different age groups for school supplies.
- The results of the 2015 structured survey show overall satisfaction of the end recipients with the support provided.
- Important issues to be followed up:
  - The amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance and its effect of the number of the end recipients.
  - Further developments on amending the threshold for needy person status at the national or FEAD level.
  - Introduction of baby packages and PO capacity to administrate.
  - The results of the structured survey 2017 (more feedback on the accompanying measures expected).

**Participants:**

<b>For Latvia</b>		<b>Part 1</b>	<b>Part 2</b>
Lauma Grafa	Head of FEAD Managing Authority, Ministry of Welfare (MA)	✓	✓
Aurika Stratane	Senior Expert, FEAD Managing Authority, Ministry of Welfare (MA)	✓	✓
Ilze Latviete	Senior Expert, FEAD Managing Authority, Ministry of Welfare (MA)		
Ilze Skrodele - Dubrovskā	Deputy Head of Methodological Management and Control Department, Ministry of Welfare (MA)		✓
Ligita Seisuma	Senior Expert, FEAD Certifying Authority, Ministry of Welfare (CA)		✓
Indra Kārklīņa	Head of FEAD Certifying Authority, Ministry of Welfare (CA)		
Evija Kleina	Head of Structural Funds Monitoring Department, Society Integration Foundation (IB)		✓
Gunta Landsmane	Deputy Head of Structural Funds Monitoring Department, Society Integration Foundation (IB)		✓
Bruno Barons	Representative of NGO "EAPN-Latvia" (European Anti-Poverty Network)		✓
Ingūna Prauliņa	Representative of NGO "The Union of managers of social service centres of local governments of Latvia"		✓
Inga Kleinšmite-Zunda	Representative of NGO "The Union of associations of large families of Latvia"		✓
Agita Kraukle	Representative of NGO "Samaritan Union of Latvia"		✓
Alla Žarkova	Representative of NGO "Latvian Red Cross"		✓
<i>Agnese Smiltiņa</i>	<i>SIA Baltic Translations</i>		✓
<b>For European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs &amp; Inclusion / (EC)</b>			
Muriel Guin	Head of Unit, DG EMPL, Unit C5 Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia	✓	✓
Jeļena Stupaka	Programme Manager, DG EMPL, Unit C5 Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia	✓	✓

