

## **Provider Forum, Riga, Latvia, Hotel “Avalon” 26.11.2014**

The Provider Forum Latvia took place in Riga on November 26 2014 and was attended by more than 50 persons coming from the whole country: DPOs, service providers, organisations of families of persons with disabilities and public authorities met with EASPD representatives to discuss about de-institutionalisation and the development of community based services in Latvia.

Danute Jasko, from the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia presented its strategy for the development of community based social services for persons with disability, including the European Commission-Latvia Partnership Agreement for the use of European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds for 2014-2020: measures for the de-institutionalisation of adults with psycho-intellectual disabilities and children in care, transfer to community-based care as well as reducing the need for long-term care institutions are measures included under one of the thematic objectives.

John Dolan, Chief Executive Officer of Disability Federation of Ireland – EASPD member – brought the experience of Ireland in supporting a successful transition from institutions to community based care. Inga Skestere, chairperson of LATMIL gave participants an insight of their contribution in the transition process in Latvia, as they have developed a Quality of Life assessment framework in social services for persons with disabilities.

EU Social Policy processes - as the European Semester or the Social Investment Package- and EU funding opportunities were also presented by EASPD President, Franz Wolfmayr, and EASPD Project & Liaison Officer, Carmen Arroyo de Sande.

A fruitful discussion on the benefits of networking and cooperation took place at the end of the day, were participants took the opportunity to reinforce the links between the different organisations and find synergies for future joint activities on the development of community based services for persons with disabilities.

In addition, EASPD representatives met with officials from the Social Inclusion and Social Work Policy Department of the Ministry of Welfare of Latvia to know more about the priorities and activities of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first semester of 2015.

