



Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice on child participation in the European Union (EU)

Country Report: Latvia



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Part 1: Overall arrangements within the country

A. National Legislative/ Policy Framework (including definitions and budget/financing)	
a. Background context to child participation agenda within the country: • <u>Historical development</u> • <u>Cultural attitudes and their influence</u> (+ / -)	Child participation is defined in the Law on Children's Rights which was adopted in 1998. The Law consists of 12 chapters, transitional provisions and reference to the EU Directives. The objective of the Law is to determine the rights of a child, freedoms and his/her protection, by taking into consideration that the child, as a physically and intellectually immature person, needs special protection and care. Law regulates also basic provisions regarding whether the child's behaviour shall be controlled and his/her responsibility determined, the rights of parents and other physical and legal persons, obligations and responsibility for securing a child's rights. The law also determines the system for protection of the child's rights, and the legal principles for the implementation. Child participation is discussed in Chapter 2 on basic child rights. Article 13 determines that: (1) A child has the right to express his/her own thoughts freely, and for this purpose to receive and to provide any kind of information, the right to be heard, as well as the right to awareness and religious freedom. The religious persuasion of a child, through 14 years of age, shall be determined by the parents. (2) A child has the right to freedom of association, in so far as far it does not endanger his/her health and life.(3) A child has the right to participate in self-administration in education, culture and sports fields. In any other fields which affect the child's interests, proper attention shall be paid to the child's point of view, in accordance with his/her age and maturity. Article 17. On child's rights to participate in developing the children's rights protection program determines that a child has the right him/herself, or through his/her own legal representatives, to participate in the development and implementation of children's rights protection programs.

A. National Legislative/ Policy Framework (including definitions and budget/financing)

Since the adoption of this law in 1998, there have been several amendments, including the child's right to express his/her views on important issues, including child involvement in some types of activities Art.50.1, which are related with demonstration of appearance. For example, the Amendment: Art. 3.2.The state shall provide children's rights and freedoms to all children without any discrimination - regardless of a child's, his/her parent's, trustee's, or family member's race, nationality, sex, language, party membership, political and religious conviction, national, ethical or social origin, property or health status, birth, or other circumstances (amended in 2005), Art. 5. (2) emphasizes that children's organisations shall be protected (2005). The amendment to the article 6(5) defines that activity or inactivity, as a result of which a child's rights are not considered or which limit the child's personal rights and freedoms, shall be considered as immoral and unlawful (2005). One of the most important amendments concerns child's right to participate in self-administration in education, culture and sports fields. In any other fields which affect the child's interests, proper attention shall be paid to the child's point of view, in accordance with his/her age and maturity (Art.13(3), 2000.). The amendment on realisation of children's rights in cases of any restrictions determined by law for the protection of the national safety, public order, moral and health of residents, and protection of other persons' rights and freedoms, as well as the child's own security and protection, a child shall receive explanations on such restrictions as soon as an error in his/ her behaviour is noticed Art. 21(2), (2000). The amendment on the role of local governments define that local governments shall involve society, as well as co-ordinate the activity of public organisations, in guaranteeing children's rights (2009), which means that also children organisations participate in issues related with children's rights and their protection.

The amendment in 2003 defines that the state and local governments shall provide financial support to public organisations for the realisation of programs dedicated to the interests of the family and children. It means that also children organisations have a right to receive financial support for the improvement of their activities, including expression of their opinions (art. 69(3)). The last amendment (2014) concerns defines that a child him/herself and other persons have the right to apply for help from children's rights protection institutions and other state and local government institutions, which execute activities anticipated in the law, if the father, mother or legal representative, employee of a children's care and upbringing and educational institution violate child's rights, treat him/her cruelly, or in any other way fail to observe the child's rights (Art.70.(2)).

A. National Legislative/ Policy Framework (including definitions and budget/financing)

	The law fits to all paragraphs of the United Nations Convention on Child Rights (UNCRC) Soon after the adoption of the Law, in 1999, Children Forum (CF) was established, which aimed at preparing children/youth leaders and support staff to facilitate local, regional and nation-wide processes of consultation with children. Children starting from primary school were engaged in assessment of the situation of children at the local level, development of solutions and proposals to the local decision makers, negotiation, development and implementation of local projects. Almost a thousand schools took part in defending and promoting children's rights in social and educational field. Training and project development, cooperation with local governments and state institutions through the initiative was implemented to solve the issues in sports, culture, security and social field. The child-friendly text of the UNCRC was popularized in Latvia. The cooperation with the NGO's of the Baltic countries was continued and seminars were organized to train the children/youth leaders. Particular attention was paid to child's individual creativity. Co-operation with the Parliament, the state authorities, municipalities and other NGOs and international organizations. CF prepared and provided information materials on children rights. Suggestions were proposed for policy documents and projects for the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Welfare. According to the resolution CF, in co-operation with the Parliament of Latvia, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Local Governments, works to achieve the development of children consultative commission established in each ministry; opinion of children and youth is expressed by the Children's Forum Representatives in the inter-ministerial councils, as well as at the sessions of Sub-commission on the Rights of the Child of the Latvian Parliament.
b. How is Article 12 UNCRC reflected in legislation? <i>Note: please include details of:</i> • Relevant national legislative documents • Obligations imposed on authorities, bodies, and / or appropriate adults • Remedies for violations of these obligations	Article 12 (UNCRC) is reflected in the Law On Children's Rights, adopted on 12.06.1998. There is also a paragraph in the Law on Patients' Rights (2009), which states that children from age 14 have a right to make a decision before a professional who undertakes a medical intervention (Art 13.) (www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=203008). The Regulations on Adoption takes into account the child's view – that he/she agrees to be adopted. Art. 5.3. Regulates that child's view has to be taken into account if the child has reached the age of 12. The Regulations mention that a view of a younger child needs to be heard. (Art.10). However, that Article regulates that the opinion of older children (aged 12+) has to be taken into account. For example, Art.5.3 defines that the adoption of a child who is at least 12 years old is possible only in a case when a child agrees to be adopted.

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	Art.181 defines that a child who is under guardianship, has a right to have personal relationships and close contacts with his/her brothers, sisters, grandparents and other persons (if that is not against child's interests). Art.185 defines that a child has a right to approach the Custody Court in cases, when he/she meets unjustified restrictions or other dispute has developed. Art.189 of the Civil Law defines Children may conclude all manner of lawful transactions with their parents. During minority, such transactions may be concluded only with the participation of the Orphan's court, which shall appoint guardians in this case. Those laws impose obligations on authorities to respect children's views in several contexts.
c. How are responsibilities for implementation organised? Is there one entity or body with oversight on implementation of UNCRC Article 12 at national level?	In Latvia, there is the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights (BTI) which oversees the protection and respecting all children's rights. The Inspectorate is an institution of direct administration supervised by the Ministry of Welfare that provides the supervision and control of the observance of regulatory enactments in the field of protection of the rights of the child. In accordance with the By-law of the State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights (2005) (Law On Local governments), the functions of the Inspectorate includes supervision and observance whether and how the normative regulations are implemented, including child's right to be heard. Inspectorate has organised the operation of a hotline telephone service in the field of protection of the rights of the child, where child's opinion is heard.
d. How is children's participation defined in national legislation? - <i>Please include a full definition, as set out in legalisation.</i>	The Law on Children's Rights paragraph 13, defines: (1) The child has a right to freely express his/her opinion, and for this purpose to receive any type of information; the child has the right to be listened to, as well as rights on freedom of religion and conscience. (2) The child has a right to participate in an organisation as far it corresponds to his/her health and life. (3) The child has a right to participate in self-government in education, culture and sports. In all other areas that concern a child's interests, the child's opinion has to be taken into account according to his/her age and maturity (with amendments to a law, enforced on 11.04.2000.) According to the Art. 17, a child has a right to participate in the development and implementation of child right protection programmes either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body. (The Law on Children's Rights, http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=49096)

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e. Which children are covered by the provisions for Article 12 UNCRC in national legislation? <i>Please identify how / whether it addresses</i> <i>the individual child,</i> <i>children as a group or</i> <i>specific groups/ages of children</i> <i>Please note any exemptions.</i>	In general, all children are covered by the legislation. However, various aspects of child participation differ depending on factors, which are officially specified as the age of a child and their maturity. In practice these conditions mean that there is particular support to children from vulnerable groups. Art.3 of the Law on Children's Rights defines the principle of equality of all children and child rights (amendment enforced since 2005). That paragraph means that all children have to be heard regardless of a child parent's, trustee's, or family member's race, nationality, sex, language, party membership, political and religious conviction, national, ethical or social origin, property or health status, birth, or other circumstances As concerning adoption, all children's views have to be respected. At the same time, consent to be adopted is necessary for children who are aged 12 and older (Adoption rules, Art.9,http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=72987). Another example, where the age of a child is specified, is the Patient Law (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=203008). If a child is under 14, his/her representative should agree about the treatment, and child's consent is necessary, if a child is older than 14. (Art.13.) The Custody law, Civil Law, addresses both children as individual child, children as a group and specific groups of children – children left without parental protection, orphan children and “vulnerable” groups of children. All the other legislation addresses children both as a group, and as an individual child.
f. What other drivers of participation exist in the country beyond obligations to implement article 12 of the UNCRC to promote the participation of children?	There are several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which follow the children’s rights agenda or child active participation. There are more than 60 children and youth organizations, the BTI mentions 13 Umbrella organizations that work on various aspects of children and youth rights (www.bti.lv). Some of them focus on children in general; others work on specific groups of children, such as orphans, foster children, children in SOS villages or children with special needs. Herewith a few organisations are mentioned. Children's Forum of Latvia is a politically and ideologically independent, democratic, voluntary organization with the support of national and international experts of child protection and childhood.

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National Parliament, governmental institutions and municipalities, other non-governmental organisations and entrepreneurs work with the Children's Forum to involve children and young people in decision-making and to promote respect for the child rights and child participation in the European Union. Children's organisations have participated in the National Programme "[Latvia Fit for Children 2010 – 2012](#)".

Children Forum mentions that children have always begin by listening to them and Latvian consultation with children on the EC Communication "[Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#)".

[SOS Children's Villages](#) (initially started by SOS-Kinderdorf International, Austria (Latvia since 1997), which aims to meet the needs and protect the interests and rights of children), working in Latvia in 1997. [SOS Children's Villages in Latvia](#) provides a long-term family based care for children who have lost their parents. One of main principles of the organisation – every child has to be heard. SOS villages have organised the first study on opinion of children living in residential care.

Latvian [Save the Children \(SC\)](#) is a children's rights protection organization. The basic principles of SC are: to strive to secure child rights where the country or regional governments have failed. SC had worked on the first hotline for children. SC has involved children in the National children's [Report to the United Nations on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of the child in Latvia](#) (2006).

NGO [Youth for Smile](#) is a non-profit non-political youth organization established in 2005. Their main aims are unite children's and youth to promote their participation in non-formal education, in order to develop skills and abilities to take active part in social processes on local, national and international level.

"[Latvian Scout and Guide](#) organisation is a member of world scout and guide organisations (WOSM un WAGGGS). The mission of the organisation is "to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and [Scout Law](#), to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society" ([Patvēruma meklētāju likums, 1998](#)).

A. National Legislative/ Policy Framework (including definitions and budget/financing)	
	There are three main directions in the work of Scouts: participate in out-door activities (camping, touristic walks, participate in strategic games), acquire new skills (leadership, support, collaboration), participate in doing "good jobs" (every day, during charity activities).
g. What are the budgetary resources and relevant financial programmes aimed at the promotion and implementation of child participation in each Member State? <i>How visible are they?</i>	The budgetary resources for child participation would be held within the budget of the State Inspectorate on Protection of Children's Rights (BTI). The work of BTI is rather visible, but as child participation is a small part of its remit, the exact budget allocated to the promotion and implementation of child participation within the total budget is not specified. Therefore it cannot be defined as being visible.

B. Tools, Measures, Processes and Scope by Sector				
Sector	Examples	Covered by legislation relating to Article 12 (Yes / No?)	Sector overview Please include brief details for the following: Main legislation / policy directives Which children (e.g. any age distinctions / measures for vulnerable groups) If possible, also outline the main forms of participation . Some examples might include: - Consultation via surveys, workshops - Collaboration in decision making - Child led projects /research - Training and recruitment of professionals - Producing child friendly information (e.g. children's leaflets, quizzes, websites)	Strengths and weaknesses Please give a brief overall indication of: Strengths / areas of good practice Weaknesses / gaps or insufficiencies
1. National Government & overall policy-making	Parliament, Government Departments – Youth Issues Unit, Ministry of Education and Sciences, BTI	Yes	Law on Protection of Children's Rights, Law on Youth, Regulations on Training of Specialists on Youth Issues. - There are surveys and workshops where children are consulted on such issues as youth and family (for example, the URBACT project run by Riga City Council as well as local and regional studies). But the research is not conducted on a regular basis. - There is no evidence of child-led projects, except in small projects run by school 'Pupil councils' and a project run by SOS villages - Since 2010 training and recruitment of youth workers has been based on Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers - There is child-friendly information published by The State Inspectorate for Protection of Children's Rights (BTI) on the following topics – safe internet, safe "stopping the care" (droša stopošana), friendly school, friendly family, "know your rights", and other issues.	Strengths - Child participation issues are based in the legislation. In addition children are invited to shadow politicians, Ministers and other State and regional officials. Children have the opportunity to publicly express their views during this process. - Training for youth workers is compulsory. - BTI has developed a home page covering various issues relating to children.

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			Another form of participation is Youth Parliament (Jauniešu Saeima) The activity started in 2011, when the Youth Parliament was elected (77 young persons, the number differs each year). Youth Parliament has developed 4 Declarations – on Child and youth participation in the development of the educational and cultural environment; On Children and youth participation in the solution of European Union issues; on Child and Youth contribution to the development of the Latvian economy; On Children and Youth participation in the development of modern Latvian society. So far, there have been four Youth Parliaments. Each Parliament adopts four resolutions. For example, the topics of Declarations of the Youth Parliament have been as follows: On immediate activities to fight the drugs; On promotion of youth employment; On basic knowledge in economics and development of self-initiatives; On individualised approach towards pupils' needs in education.	<i>Weaknesses</i> - Research has a small role in policy planning, and is not integrated into policy development. There is little funding available for the evidence-base. - Child opinion rarely informs policy development.
2. Local and regional government & services	<i>Planning, housing, the environment and sustainable development</i>	Planning – yes: housing for orphans, No – other children	The activities of local governments are regulated under the Law on Local Governments defines the autonomous functions of local governments Art 22): inventory of children, ensure child rights protection; - On a local level housing planning only takes place for orphans after they leave a residential care institution. Housing planning does not cover any other group, such as children in care whose parents have had their parental rights removed. - Each town municipality has a youth policy strategy, which includes participation. Youth policy is also an integrated part of the sustainable development plan for municipal development strategic planning. - Municipal councils should support all children and youth organisations.	<i>Strengths:</i> - Municipal development plans have to take into account children/youth views. - Accommodation (housing) for orphans has to be planned. - Some municipalities (Riga, Cesis) monitor child/youth participation, organise surveys, and include these results in their strategies.

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				<i>Weaknesses</i> - Only orphans' views are taken into account on housing issues, not other children. - Planning and environmental issues in relation to child/youth participation depend, not only on individual municipalities and their understanding of the importance of child participation, but also on the activity of youth specialists and cooperation with children and youth organisations.
3. Care	<i>Child protection, alternative care, adoption</i>	Mainly yes	Child Protection is regulated by the Law on Children's Rights. A legal basis for adoption is regulated by: Civil Law (Civillikums, Art. 162-176); Law on Custody Courts and Parish Courts (Par bāriņtiesām un pagasttiesām), and the Law on Children's Rights (Bērnu tiesību aizsardzības likums); the adoption procedure is regulated by the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No 111 On the procedure of adoption, 2003). However there is: - No consultation via surveys (except a qualitative study within the EU PROGRESS programme - No collaboration in decision making. - No child-led projects /research.	<i>Strengths</i> - BTI organises information campaigns for custody courts where new aspects in legislation on child protection and children's rights are introduced. - BTI/Ministry of Welfare organises training for foster parents.

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			4. Training for adults as well as a pilot study to produce information for children from residential care institutions does exist.	<i>Weaknesses</i> Adoption and foster families are not widespread phenomenon. Training does not develop participation skills; children are passive recipients.
4. Asylum and immigration	<i>All asylum and immigration procedures</i>	Yes	Regulated by the Law on Asylum (Patvēruma likums, 1998): all children have the same rights. Children asylum seekers have to be represented by the Custody Court or guardian or Head of the Institution of Child care (Art. 6), Discussion with juvenile asylum seekers have to be done by official who has necessary knowledge on needs of juvenile (Art.6). Decision about the accommodation of juvenile asylum seeker is based on the opinion and interests of a child in accordance of his/her age and maturity (Art.8). According to the Law, the local government has to provide access to education. Ministry of Education and science makes a list of schools that provide general education to juvenile asylum seekers (Art.27)in accordance with the Education law Latvia has very few children asylum seekers. During the period 2008.-2012 there have been 11 juvenile persons (Patvēruma meklētāju izmitināšana Latvijā, EMT, Rīga, 2013, p.21).	• Due to very small number of child asylum seekers no information on child participation is available. Potential problems could arise in relation to use of children's native language. • Due to small number of juvenile asylum seekers (11 during 5 years) there is a small experience in work with the specific groups of children.

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5. Education	<i>Schools and education services; complementary education and youth work settings</i>	Yes	Both the Law on Education (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=50759) and the Law on Vocational Education (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=20244) covers all children. Art. 31 regulates the School Councils, where pupils (children) representatives participate and submit proposals related to school issues. Pupils have the right to express their views and opinions, to participate in the development of study process and the school board (Art.55.) The law defines the public participation in the organisation and development of education, promotes the quality of education, protects rights and interests of pupils/students (Art.21). The Law on Vocational education defines that the rights and duties of students have to be discussed at the School Rules (Art. 17).	<i>Strengths</i> New methods of education (group work, discussions) develop children's skills to debate and express their views.
6. Health	<i>Health services and institutions; universal and child/service specific</i>	Yes	Both the Law on Patient's rights and the Law on Social Security cover all children. Art.13 defines the rights of juvenile patients: treatment of a child (up to 14 years) is permissible if his/her legal representative is informed and has given an informed consent. A child has a right to be heard and to participate in the decision about the treatment in accordance with his/her age and maturity.	<i>Strengths</i> - Children have the right to know about the health implications of treatments. - Health care is free.

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7. Justice	<i>Criminal justice, civil justice and administrative justice</i>	Yes	The Civil Law, the Criminal Code, and the Law on Administrative process cover all children. For example, the Civil law (Art.162) defines that child has a right to express view in case of adoption, child has a right to have personal relations and direct contacts with each of the parents (Art.181), about child's right to his/her own property if he/she is sixteen years old (Art.195). In case when a child has a dispute with parents about his/her property, child has a right to defend his/her rights at court. Child's rights are discussed also in the chapter on Testimony, inheritance. The Criminal Law defines the penalty in cases when child's rights are infringed, for example, in cases, when a child is involved in pornography (creating, demonstration of pornographic materials – Art. 166), penalties in cases of not fulfilling the decisions of custody court (Art.168), parental responsibilities to provide a child (Art.170); Criminal law defines that child is not responsible for refusal to give testimony (Art.303) The Law on Administrative Process (2001) mentions child in two Articles: Art. 163 defines that a child under 7 may not be a witness; Art. 230 defines that a juvenile person may be interrogated in the presence of child's legal representative, child's rights specialist, psychologist or pedagogue.	<i>Strengths</i> - Children have the right to express view in case of adoption. - Children have a right to express their views in administrative/criminal cases. In case of hearing, a child may be interrogated in the presence of child's legal representative, child's rights specialist, psychologist or pedagogue.

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8. Recreation	<i>Play, sport, cultural activities, the media</i>	Yes	The Youth Law covers age group 13-25. The Law on Education covers all children. Youth Law defines the youth work, which is a package of practical activities to ensure the youth policy, development of youth value orientations. The main tasks of youth work include support and promotion to children/youth initiatives, to provide access to information in accordance to the needs (development) (Art. 2.). The main principles of youth policy are as follows: : 1) principle of participation – to ensure possibilities to participate in the discussion of the draft decision within youth policy; 2) principle of information accessibility; 3) principle of equal opportunities – to ensure possibility to actively participate in social, political, cultural and economical activities without any discrimination; (Art. 2). There are three main directions in the work of Scouts: participating in out-door activities (camping, touristic walks, participate in strategic games), acquiring new skills (leadership, support, collaboration), and participating in doing “good jobs” (every day, during charity activities).	<i>Strengths</i> • Youth have the right to actively participate in the development and improvement of leisure activities, incl. arts, sports, environmental issues, culture, etc. They have a right and wide opportunities to express their ideas, views, how to improve the leisure time activities on local, municipal and state level <i>Weaknesses</i> • Youth law concerns age group 13-25. No legislation regulating participation of age group under 13.
9. Child employment	<i>Child employment and VET</i>	Yes	Youth Law includes the principle of favourable economic preconditions – to promote development of conditions when youth could be economically independent (Art. 2.1) In accordance to the Labour Law a child is a person younger age 15 or a person who acquires basic education	<i>Strengths</i> • Preconditions to ensure economic independence. • Children may not be employed permanently.

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			until age 18. The Labour Law defines that child may be employed starting from age 13. Children aged 13-15 may work 4 hours per day. The Art.37 defines that child may not be employed permanently. Children after 13 may be employed in simple jobs. If a child is 15 years old, and has graduated from basic education, he/she may be employed 7 hours per day (35hrs per week). Medical examinations are compulsory preconditions of employment.	<i>Weaknesses</i> Youth Law covers age group 13-25, which means that favourable economic preconditions should be ensured for that age group.
10. Others (specify)	Children with special needs	No	UNESCO Inclusive Guidelines suggest that inclusive education should increase participation possibilities within the learning process. This includes participation in learning activities but also opportunities to make decision and influence the everyday experience of learning. Latvia participated in a Young View – Young Voices project which was one element of an overall project (Inclusive Education in Action) which responds to the UNESCO guidelines. Despite this participation, in Latvia, however, there is no single definition of special needs, and there are no specific regulations concerning participation of children with special needs.	<i>Strengths</i> - Guidelines on Support system to decrease the risk of social exclusion were developed in 2009. - The state provide children's rights and freedoms to all children without any discrimination - regardless of a child's, <i>health status, birth, or other circumstances</i>. <i>Weaknesses</i> - No single definition of "special needs". - Children with special needs have limited access to quality education and support system. (Need to

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				develop the support system in all municipalities.) • There is a limited opportunity to express their views. Children from special schools can participate in activities; however parents express their views rather than the children themselves.
11. Media		No	The Law on Press and other Media (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=64879), Art. 1 (Art. 1:Liberty of the Press) defines that every person (including children), any group of persons, organisations in Latvia have a right to freely express their opinions and views, to disseminate their opinions and to receive information regarding any issue or society (enforced in 1991). The Law on Electronic Media (2010) (Elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu likums) does not include any Article on child participation	<i>Weakness:</i> • No relevant legislation pertinent to UNCRC within the media sector.

C. EU and Wider Influences

a. What influence do policy and recommendations at EU level have in developing legislation policy and practice for implementing Article 12 in your country?	The amendments to the Law on Children's Rights have been introduced. Support to youth participation projects have been introduced at both national and local levels. The 'Youth in Action' Programme is an EU programme to increase child and youth participation (age group 13-30). Youth organisations and youth groups apply for projects to increase their participation through training, mobility and various activities. The objective is to promote youth activities and mobility, to work with voluntary services for youth, non-formal learning and youth information programs and projects as well as support the link between non-formal learning and lifelong education. The programme helps to get new knowledge, skills and experience, to develop own projects, to actively participate in the social processes, to learn new cultures.
b. What has been done in the Member State pursuant to the Council of Europe Recommendation on child participation? <i>How has the Recommendation been:</i> - Translated into the national language(s)? - Disseminated within the Member State / implemented in part?	The Council of Europe Recommendation on Child participation has not been translated into Latvian. The Ministry of Education and Science has planned a workshop for school leaders in 2014, with an objective to train school leaders for "collaborative work on issues of common concerns to find fit solutions for diverse contexts" The workshop might help dissemination on national level, although it is not the direct task of the workshop. The workshop takes place in October 2014. The State Inspectorate For Protection Of Children's Rights has organized seminars in 2013 for the regional child rights inspectors, school representatives, where the Recommendation of Child participation has been discussed. There has been a national level workshop on the Recommendation with the participation of the EU representative (Interview).
c. What tools and measures have been set in place to implement the Council of Europe Recommendation? - How widely have they been publicised / used? - How useful are they considered to have been?	The national level workshop and workshops for district child rights inspectors and school representatives provides basic information on the Recommendation. Then the district and school representatives can plan their work for the implementation. The seminars for the Pupils' Councils and municipal youth Councils take part in various regions (for example, Riga, Cesis, Talsi, etc.) (Noticis Latvijas skolēnu pašpārvalžu salidojums „Mūsu iniciatīvas Eiropas pilsoņu gadā”) International workshop for school leaders will help to inform and train school heads about the Recommendation, disseminate the information among district school heads and teachers; could help as exchange of good practice examples. According to the workshop description (see previous point), it is considered as useful for the publicity of the Recommendation.

D. Implementing Legislation and Policy

a. How effective is legislation in supporting the implementation of participation overall? • <i>Clarify which laws have been most /least effective; evidence of this</i> • <i>Examples of good / poor practice</i>	The Law on Protection of Children's Rights is the most prominent legislation on child participation. The respondents – expert have emphasized the importance of the Law in the implementation of children rights in practice. Experts did not explicitly mention any other laws on child participation. One expert has emphasized the Youth law and supporting ministerial (Child and family Ministry until 2008, and Ministry of Education and Science since then) policy documents on increasing youth participation – further development of Pupils' school councils, and Pupils Councils on municipal level (for example, Riga Pupils' Council). According to governmental experts, legislation is adequate for the implementation of the Recommendation. The Recommendation on Child participation has mainly implemented through school councils and Youth Councils at the municipal level. Other examples of practice were not highlighted in expert interviews with governmental representatives. The parental organisations have mentioned the need for single definition of children with special needs, and normative acts that might favour participation of children with special needs.
b. What have been the main challenges and barriers to implementing this legislation and policy /developing participation in practice? <i>How have they been addressed?</i>	Stakeholders (both governmental and non-governmental) have mentioned the main obstacles for increasing child participation: • There is a lack of funding for the implementation of effective policy, which is a barrier to effective participation; • there is a clear need to raise awareness on the requirements for child participation among state, regional, and municipal policy makers; • Awareness needs to be raised among children about their role in participating in the decision-making process. • BTI is the main organisation involved with issues of child participation; however their duties are wide-ranging and are restricted by their capacity and funding resources. • Two desk officers on youth policy within the Department of Policy Initiatives and Development at the Ministry of Education and Science are the main persons involved in coordination of youth participation; however their duties are wide-ranging and are restricted by their capacity and funding resources.

D. Implementing Legislation and Policy

c. What is the situation of child participation in sectors that are covered by relevant legislation?	The legislation on child participation covers all children. However children with special needs are not listened to and their interests are expressed from a parental perspective (Interview with representatives of parental organisation). Children's right are implemented and they have the opportunity to express their views. According to the Law On Local governments, the Government elaborates the development programme, where they included a chapter on youth. Basically the strategy and annual budget plans includes funding, tools and activities, which focus on leisure activities, organisation of afterschool activities, and hobbies, and some funding for youth projects. Some municipalities provide a local budget for child participation activities within project funding. For example, Cesis municipality has developed a project "Youth House" (2006), and funds projects increasing youth participation. The city/district Youth Council (Cēsu novada Jauniešu dome), where all the youth can spend leisure time, discuss various issues. Within a project "Towards the goal" („Pretī mērķim!"), funded from the state budget within the State youth policy, 2012), the Youth house is developed as youth information point, where youth can have access to internet, new computers, booklet on youth possibilities in Cesis and Latvia as a whole. Cesis has funded the project on Summer camp for participation of children from residential care and children linked to probation services. Project has been a part of EU funding.
d. What is the situation of child participation in sectors that are not covered by relevant legislation? – <i>What are the non-legislative measures and tools available for those sectors?</i> – <i>What participatory processes are in place?</i>	Non-legislative measures and tools can be characterised in terms of local municipal activities organised by pupils' and youth councils There is another activity cofounded by the Foundation of social integration, named "tuesi.lv" (you are.lv), which promotes the good practice results of active young people and their participation in the creation of their own projects (www.tuesi.lv). The blog is developed, which covers a great number of "stories" on active youth in different regions of Latvia, for example, "Art for defence of the idea", "let's go to countryside", activities related with development of business ideas, collaboration between youth and entrepreneurs.
e. Which groups of children, or types of settings, are experiencing low levels of participation / no participation	In general, it is "mainstream middle class children", or those in the "centre" who participate (Jauniešu identitātes veidošanās un līdzdalība. Pētījuma pārskats 2005). They are more active to participate in the youth organisations, school Councils, voluntary work, cultural activities, etc. Children from poor and socially disadvantaged backgrounds show much lower participation. According to qualitative studies (Barbaroto, 2009, Trapenciene, 2011), children from residential homes show extremely low participation in any social activity, do not participate in school councils. There is no indication regarding their participation in the Councils of institutions.

D. Implementing Legislation and Policy

There are common characteristics of those children who are passive, feel isolated and do not participate:

- low academic achievement;
- at risk of social exclusion due to poverty, or domestic issues;
- behavioural problems (["Jauniešu sociālā atstumtība: problēmas un risinājumi", ESF project, 2010](#))

The qualitative studies on children ([Sociālās atstumtības riskam pakļauto jauniešu un iekļaujošas izglītības atbalsta sistēmas izveides nostādnes](#)); institutional care ([Latvijas Republikas Tiesībsarga 2011.gada ziņojums bērnu tiesību jomā](#) and [Pārskats par bērnu stāvokli Latvijā 2012.gadā](#)) identifies two other bigger groups on isolated children who do not participate in democratic citizenship activities:

- in residential care, orphanages or crises centres
- Having been left behind – "Euro-orphans";
- having special needs;
- children in institutional care such as "Strautiņi" – children within criminal justice system ([Latvijas Republikas Tiesībsarga 2011.gada ziņojums bērnu tiesību jomā](#), [Pārskats par bērnu stāvokli Latvijā 2012.gadā](#) and [Sociālās atstumtības riskam pakļauto jauniešu un iekļaujošas izglītības atbalsta sistēmas izveides nostādnes](#)).

f. What **additional legislation or policy** might be needed to address the gaps or weaknesses identified at e. above?

According to governmental experts, there was no need for additional legislation. Instead there was a challenge to develop effective policy measures of implementation, which had a particular emphasis on child participation. Governmental experts emphasize that the experts from the European Commission have positively assessed the Latvian legislation on child participation. At the same time, it is mentioned by governmental experts that both government and the municipalities try to do their best to implement the policies. The main obstacles for more effective implementation of the legislation is related to:

1. very small, insufficient state funding,
2. no regular research to monitor levels of child participation.

Majority of the activities on increasing the child participation (for example, trainings for Pupils' Councils) are scarcely or not funded from the state budget or municipal funding, and realised by volunteers.

D. Implementing Legislation and Policy

	The nongovernmental experts have noted that legislation needs to be improved in the field of children with special needs, starting with a single definition on special needs. The legislation does not cover any specific groups of children and their participation.
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	There is a hypothesis about the lack of participation possibilities within the institutional care institution "Strautiņi" for juvenile offenders.
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E. Structures and Children's Networks

a. What official bodies and institutions are involved in promoting and implementing child participation? - <i>What are their roles?</i>	• The State Inspectorate For Protection Of Children's Rights (www.bti.gov.lv) – their role is to guarantee the implementation and protection of children's rights; monitoring of children rights; • Department of Children and Families, Ministry of Welfare (www.lm.gov.lv) is responsible for policy development in the field of child and family; • Department on policy initiatives and development, Ministry of Education and Science (www.izm.gov.lv) employ two desk officers, who work on youth policy. • Desk officers at the State Curriculum Agency, Ministry of Education and Science (www.visc.gov.lv) responsible for policy implementation, as well as coordination of training for Pupils' Councils, school and youth centres' specialists on child upbringing.
b. Which children's networks exist nationally to support participation and relationships with policy and legislation? Provide details: • <i>How these networks are managed / funded and by whom</i> • <i>At what scale they exist (e.g. national, regional)</i>	Pupils' Councils – are established at school level in accordance with Art.30 and 31 of the Education Law, which defines the responsibility of school headmaster to establish a self-government at school level. The tasks of the Self-government are to develop recommendations on the school developments, work organisation, the self government ensures cooperation with parents. The Pupils' self-governments (Councils) demonstrate pupils' contribution for the development of the school climate, development of positive attitudes, personal development and social skills; pupils have possibility to discuss topical issues with the school staff; participate in the organisation of various school activities; pupils have possibilities to organise and take responsibility for various activities; school promotes the pride of their school; school management cooperates with school staff and pupils (http://visc.gov.lv/audzinasana/metmat/pasparvaldes_normativi.pdf). Some municipalities (for example, Riga, Cesis, Talsi) have organised the municipal level Youth or Pupils' Councils (for example Riga Pupils' Council, Cesis District Youth Council). They are organised in accordance with the Youth Law and Law on Local governments. Riga Pupils' Council coordinates Riga City Pupils' Councils. The objectives of the Cesis Youth Council are to "promote active and creative youth life in Cesis. The main tasks of the Council are to express, accept and analyse suggestions and recommendations in the field of youth interests and needs. In accordance with the work plan they develop and realise appropriate projects. Pupils' Councils and Youth Councils develop network, which organise regular networking workshops in all regions of Latvia.

E. Structures and Children's Networks

Latvian Youth Council (Latvijas jaunatnes padome) – organises and coordinates the activities of youth NGOs on youth policy issues. The Latvian Youth Council – consists of representatives of the main youth organisations.

Latvian Orphan Society 'Sun children' – coordinate the work for orphan children, but mainly helps orphan children in care centres, organises charity and leisure activities. Potentially a good start for child participation of orphan children and children without parental care.

Children Forum (Bērnu forums) of Latvia is a politically and ideologically independent, democratic, voluntary organization fulfilling its objectives through members and volunteers, and with the support of national and international experts of child protection and childhood. The organisation encompasses work at the local, national and international arena. The membership of the Children's Forum of Latvia comprises 29 local branches. The objectives of the Children Forum is (1) to establish the programmes of health, cultural, educational and mental development of children as an integral part of national social and economic development policies; (2) to involve children and young people in decision-making and to promote respect for child rights and child participation in the European Union; (3) to educate professionals who work with children and parents; (4) to promote cooperation between institutions, working in different fields and the interested persons for the benefit of children.

Networks receive small funding from the municipality, almost no funding from the state budget. According to the interviews with governmental experts, majority of all the activities in Pupils' Councils, Youth Councils are based on voluntary participation of youth into activities.

Organisations, networks may apply to the [Agency of International Programs for Youth](#) or other organisations or grant schemes (for example, European Economic Area EEA) for project-based funding.

F. Implementation in practice/on the ground

a. What tools or mechanisms are in place/have been used most frequently to support implementation and monitoring of children's participation in practice?	A policy coordinating institution offers methodological support – in the case of Latvian Youth Council, which represents youth in the in the working groups of ministries, agencies and other institutions. Ministry of Education and science has developed a there is a Coordination Committee on youth issues. The Department on hobby Education and Upbringing at the National Centre for Education, Ministry of Education and Science provides workshops and training for Pupils' Councils, youth organisations and youth workers how to organise the work of councils, workshops on experience exchange in between regions.
b. What support or training exists for organisations in developing appropriate child friendly participation? - <i>types of training and what this covers</i>	Training of youth specialists (youth workers): according to the Regulations of Cabinet of Ministers (No 1047), every youth worker (specialist on youth issues) has to be trained. The Department on hobby Education and Upbringing at the National Centre for Education, Ministry of Education and Science provides workshops and training for Pupils' Councils, youth organisations and youth workers - how to organise the work of Councils, leadership issues, project writing, work with youth. The members of the Pupils' Councils receive training on the following topics: "The image of the Pupils' Councils", "Inspiration for personal development", "Iedvesma personīgai izaugsmei", "Know yourself and the team", "Non formal education and leadership", common projects, cultural and sports activities. The Youth in Action programme invites youth organisations to apply for funding for training youth activists, including on civil participation issues.
c. What are the prevailing modes of children's participation that can be found within your country, e.g. - <i>national youth participation organisations</i> - <i>youth councils, parliaments, forums,</i> - <i>youth conferences</i> - <i>surveys or research</i>	The prevailing modes of children's participation in Latvia are: • Local child and youth participation organisations (for example Pupils' Councils); • National youth participation organisations (Guide and Scout organisation, Youth Red Cross, etc.); • Youth councils (Latvian Youth Council – coordinates the main youth organisations); • Youth parliaments and forums; • Youth conferences: a conference was organised in April in 2013; • Regular studies on youth participation have been initiated by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia (I.Trapenciēre, I.Koroļeva, R.Rungule, S.Sņikere, et als). The results have been discussed with local, regional, and national level policy makers in conferences. Riga City Council Department on Education, Culture and Sports has coordinated a pilot study on Youth employment (part of UrbAct project, 2012, Trapenciēre); • An international youth research conference was organised in 2012 (http://sociologija.ait.lv/?p=197),

F. Implementation in practice/on the ground

	where participants from Parliament, youth organisations, the Youth Council, youth workers, local governments, and the speakers from the European Council; • An exhibition of children's photographs ("My opportunities, my risks" http://www.saeima.lv/lv/galleries/view/1930/8687) on child participation in organising and evaluation was displayed at the research conference (2012), and was later exhibited at the Latvian Parliament; and • Unit of Youth Issues, Ministry of Education and Science has coordinated a study on youth voluntary activities in 2012. (The unit has been reorganised in 2013).
d. What are the most common forms that participation takes? E.g. - <i>consultation on decisions affecting children</i> - <i>collaboration in shared decision making with adults</i> - <i>child-led projects</i>	The most common forms of participation are around collaboration in shared decision making with adults on child participation in Pupils' Councils, Youth Councils, organising summer camps, workshops on development of leadership skills, "spiral dynamics", debating skills, improvement of spending leisure time and healthy life-styles. There are children-led projects related to leisure, active participation, healthy life-styles, funded on a project basis (either through Youth in Action Programme, municipal or donor funding). There are two recent, new forms of child participation – participation as shadows, which is a part of career education (http://www.enudiena.lv/). Before the career project week, pupils can find the list of "shadow vacancies" (http://www.enudiena.lv/vakancu-saraksts) and have to decide, whether and whom they want "to shadow" – a professional, a politician. For example, in 2014, there were more than 5703 shadow vacancies available, and the number of shadow applicants – more than 15 000. The shadows follow the shadowing person during the whole working day and discuss various issues related to shadowing and the contents of the work.

G. Cultural attitudes towards children's participation

a. Please provide an overview of the following:

- **Predominant attitudes towards children's participation**
- **Drivers of positive/negative attitudes**
- **Challenges in changing attitudes and additional legislation needed at national and EU level**

The predominant attitudes towards child participation have improved during the last 15-20 years. Before that, the child participation was understood as subordinated to the adult guidelines, programmes and work plans developed by adults. Children were viewed as passive recipients of activities initiated by adults. The child active participation was not easily understood by adults – parents, teachers, and children themselves.

Governmental experts have expressed the view that attitudes towards child participation cannot change greatly during the short period. Education, training, and participation in various international projects on youth leadership have helped children and young people to develop debating skills and to get their voice heard.

National policy makers have understood the need to listen to children's voices, and good political will is demonstrated by the introduction of the "Shadow day" to Parliamentary deputies in 2009 (<http://www.saeima.lv/lv/sabiedribas-lidzdaliba/enu-diena-1>). Since then every year children can apply to be a shadow to a parliamentary deputy. The number of "shadows" has increased from about 120 (in 2009) to 250 in 2014. Those children and youth willing to participate as shadows to the politicians, had to write an application and motivation letter, and had to answer the quiz. The youngest child – shadow to a politician has been a 9 year old girl, but the majority of "shadows" are between 14 and 18 years old.

However, according to experts, though children's views are listened to they are not acted upon. Experts have not suggested any additional legislative act at a national or EU level: instead they expressed the need to implement the existing legislation on regular basis.

H. Impact	
a. To what extent has children's participation been effective in influencing /affecting change (e.g. in policy and practice)? <i>What evidence is there for that?</i>	Riga Pupils' Council organizes various activities, for example, monthly activity "Think globally, act locally" http://bit.ly/1mcgdki, which is defined as an interactive journey. The length of the activity – half of a day. Riga Pupils' Council has initiated a project "Be brave, be friendly!" This can be defined as a national project, which insists on positive, friendly, tolerant and respectful school environment, free from violence. The idea is that each child can do something to decrease the mutual intolerance and violence. In Riga, Pupils' Councils have expressed their views on healthy life-styles and leisure activities, which have improved the youth opportunities how to spend the leisure time in Riga, about the access to health services in Riga. There has been an ESF project "Defence of interests in the field of youth policy in the regions of Latvia". The main objective of the project was the strengthening of the capacity of the society "Coalition of youth leaders". Local Pupils' Councils (school level) and, for example, Talsu district have their say at school level concerning conditions at school. In a village of Valgale, children have initiated the changes in the schedule of the public transportation within the district, because children were not able to participate in afterschool activities due to inconvenient bus schedule. This is an evidence of the role of children in affecting changes. There was no evidence of policy changes due to child participation.
b. What are the most commonly accepted measures of 'effective' and/or 'meaningful' children's participation within the country?	Participation in Youth and Pupils' councils at local level are most widespread in Latvia. According to the interviews with governmental representatives, there is no discussion on "most commonly accepted measures of effective child participation."
c. How is the effectiveness of participation monitored and evaluated, and by whom?	1. The most widespread example of child participation are participation in school Councils. There are regular seminars and workshops for the local school Councils on regional level. At those workshops and seminars the Council members discuss and evaluate the activities that have been performed, and discuss how to plan the future activities. The activities are discussed and evaluation performed together with the representatives from the State Education Agency, Ministry of Education and Science. Therefore it can be

H. Impact

- <i>What are the most commonly accepted measures of effective and/ or meaningful participation?</i> - <i>What processes are in place to provide feedback and / or inform children of the results / impact of their participation if they have not been directly involved</i>	concluded that evaluation is done by the State Education agency. 2. Evaluation of the child participation in school councils is performed during the school conferences (for example, in Aluksne town. The annual conference was opened by the president of the Gymnazium Council, where she discussed and evaluated the work of the school council during the work of two years, project of collaboration between pupils, parents and grandparents "We work together". The president has evaluated what has been reached by the Council and in cooperation with the municipality. The main activities discussed at the conference have been – Code of ethics, quality of education, transport issues, school catering, leisure time, as well as discussed the future projects – improvement of the skiing route, development of skating-rink, healthy food and active lifestyle. The example shows the most common measures of effective and meaningful participation. 3. The evaluation of the work done at the national conferences of the School Councils.
d. What nationally recognised examples of children's participation are considered to be good practice? And why?	1. State Agency for Child protection BTI highlights the "child-friendly school"¹ as an example of child participation activity. The mission of the Child friendly school is to improve the socio-psychological climate at school and relations between pupils, teachers, parents and school administration. BTI have offered financial help to organise a conference on the subject (April 2013). The aim is to give opportunities to pupils to influence their school life. 2. Talsu district have their say at school level concerning conditions at school. In a village of Valgale, children have initiated the changes in the schedule of the public transportation within the district, because children were not able to participate in afterschool activities due to inconvenient bus schedule². This is an evidence of the role of children in affecting changes. 3. Riga "Pupils' Councils" is a well organised school children/youth network with well organised structure (5 committees) and regular activities and regular child participation on local level. The work of the Pupils' Council is organised in accordance with a work plan. 4. Riga Pupils' Council together with youth clubs (for example, "Knagis" (Peg)) and City Youth Councils organised a conference "Youth work reality and perspective". The objective was to promote a discussion on youth interests on municipal level, funding opportunities for youth initiative, youth employment, etc. Although those are local examples, these examples are chosen as good practice examples because they demonstrate various aspects of child participation that have visible results.

¹ http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/draudziga_skola/kustiba_draudziga_skola/

² <http://www.jaunatneslietas.lv/jaunumi/702-aizstavot-savas-intereses-jauniesi-versas-pec-palidzibas-talsu-novada-dome>

Part 2: Specific settings and vulnerable groups within the Member State

Setting / vulnerable group 1: [children in out-of-family care]

Overview of the country context What is the situation / circumstances for this setting / group of children (incl. services and support structures)	Children who receive care services that are regulated by legislation have the right to express their views. Children in residential care are financed by the State for children aged 0-2 (or 0-4 if severely disabled) or by local government if aged 2-18. Young people leave the residential care when they are 18 years old. All services essential to living are provided such as accommodation, food, clothing as well as support from carers, social workers, psychologist, etc. In many institutions children's councils formally exist.
Legislation and policy frameworks - What are the main legislative / policy drivers for child participation for this setting (incl. Article 12 & others) - Which children are covered through legislation and practice (age ranges, classifications, etc.)? - How effectively has the legal framework supported implementation of children's participation?	The Law on Children's Rights concerns all children under the age of 18. Article 13 defines that child has a right to express his/her thoughts and should be listened to, as well as rights to participate in self-government in education, culture and sports. In all other areas related to child interests, their view should be taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity. The legal framework has defined the necessity to organise school Councils with participation of children/youth. The Education law (Art.30, Art.31) defines that the school headmaster has to organise the school Council. The National Centre for Education has a duty to develop and provide methodological support to the school administration and school councils in the development of the school councils.
Supporting infrastructure - What specific institutions are involved in implementing children's participation in this setting / context, and how are they funded? - What networks exist and how do they interact with policy? - How is participation supported by standards and training?	Municipalities, municipal orphan homes, children's homes have primary responsibility for children. The Latvian SOS Children Association (http://www.sosbernuciemati.lv/en) is involved in implementing child participation of this specific group of children at SOS villages. The Association participates in the Alliance of Alternative Child Care, and as a member of Alliance cooperates with Latvian State Agency on child protection, and with the Ministry of Welfare. The Association organises training for children and youth in care and aftercare, depending on project funding. In some regions the Orphan society also implements child participation.

Setting / vulnerable group 1: [children in out-of-family care]**Developing participation in practice**

- *In what contexts and for what purpose does participation typically / less typically occur?*
- *At what stages in the decision-making cycle, and what are the predominant forms of participation? How do they work in practice?*
- *What structures or forums and feedback mechanisms exist to support participation?*
- *To what extent has the agenda for participation been shaped by children on their own terms?*

In some child care institutions, there are formal children's councils. According to interviews with children from the Institutions, children have no experience and skills how to participate in decision making and no experience to listen. They do not participate in the youth leader forums, and even do not know about existence of child or youth forums. The child participation policy for children's activation in the decision making at least on institutional level.

A good practice example is the SOS Children's Villages Association's activity named Peer Research "[Starting the independent life after out-of-family care](#)", within which youth care leavers were trained and made a study on peer experience in institutions and life after institutions. (SOS Children's Villages Latvia is a social charity organization that provides a long-term family based care for children without parents. Their work is based on a child-cantered approach, taking into consideration child's individual needs and rights.) In 2012, the Latvian SOS Children villages organised the first peer research: "[Start of independent life after the institutional care](#)". 10 young people who themselves have experienced the out-of-family care at SOS Children villages or orphan houses have been trained and performed a study of the out-of-family care system. 100 young people aged 15-29, who was planning to leave the care or have already left the care, have been interviewed. The research report provides information of limited participation experience and noted that the Association should organise some project activities to improve the skills necessary for participation.

Effectiveness

- *How are 'quality' and 'effectiveness' defined, and what influences inform these definitions?*
- *What forms of participation have proven more / less effective and why?*
- *Where does good / bad practice exist, and what does it look like?*

No definitions were identified for either quality or effectiveness of participation, nor were any mechanisms defined by experts.

Less effective practice appears to be the formal structures that have been established e.g. the children's councils or complaints procedures. While these forms allow participation, in the case of written complaints by institutionalised children to the State Agency of Child Protection, children who made the complaints consider that their opinion (complaints) have not been taken into account. These forms are less effective as children are not given the wider support and skill development to fully maximise the opportunity to participate.

Good practice tends to emerge from NGO organisations, where more effective forms of participation are in the form of peer research, such as the SOS Villages peer research project on the "[Start of independent life after the institutional care](#)". This has proven more effective as appropriate support was provided.

Setting / vulnerable group 1: [children in out-of-family care]

Impact

- *How successful has children's participation been in influencing decisions within this setting / for this group?*
- *What is the evidence for the benefits of participation for children and adults? Where is this strongest / weakest?*
- *What are the main barriers and challenges, and what additional legislation, policy or culture change is needed to achieve full participation? (identify national and EU actions as appropriate)*

There is some information about success of child participation in decision making. For example, the Youth parliament has developed Declarations and recommendations for the National Parliament. (<http://jauniesusaeima.lv/#/?t=/1/2/3/4/5>) The Youth Parliament works on concrete declarations that are submitted the National Parliament and are discussed at the Parliamentary Committees. For example, the third Youth Parliament worked on declarations in four main fields: development of sustainable rational educational systems, child and youth health policy, national economy and increasing competitiveness, and children and youth participation on the issues of European Union. Youth Parliament members have opportunities to be heard, their ideas are discussed and later voted at the Parliament Committees.

The work of the Youth Parliament can be assessed as successful participation and has influenced Parliament's decision on youth issues.

Both governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders have expressed a view that a culture around promoting child participation in policy-making decisions needs to be developed at all levels: institutional, regional and national. According to research, these children out of family care are all but invisible: for example, in one case children complained about the Director of an institution but their voice was not taken into account. There are cases, however, when children's complaints about carers have been taken into account and their violent or abusive carers were dismissed.

One good practice example was the participation of a child from a foster family in a European Conference "[Framework, Quality, and Impact of Young Europeans' Learning Mobility](#)", 2010. According to a qualitative study ([Trapenciere, 2011](#)), children from the orphan houses and foster care have fewer opportunities to participate in any projects, and mobility projects in particular, and share their views internationally. In this case the author of the Report had an opportunity to involve the child from a foster family in the international conference. That was the first opportunity for the girl to participate in any international event in her life, to be listened by European youth (and adults), to be involved in a skills training workshop. (Before the conference there have been discussions whether this particular group of risk children should be involved in any youth projects with mainstream youth).

Nongovernmental stakeholders have expressed the view that there is a need to improve the normative regulations, in particular, on the topic of participation of children from the out-of-family care. According to the NGO stakeholders, the policy and culture of child participation within institutional care needs to be developed.

Setting / vulnerable group 2: [children with disabilities]	
Overview of the country context What is the situation / circumstances for this setting / group of children (incl. services and support structures)	Stakeholders from the NGO sector have noted that the majority of children with disabilities stay at home and have fewer opportunities to participate in any child and youth activities. Those children with less severe disabilities attend regular schools, but those children with severe disabilities attend special boarding schools. Recently, this group has a better access to education and training in public schools. However, according to experts the expression of the thoughts of children with severe disabilities and their participation in any decisions and their views on improvement of their conditions is almost non-existent. That can be characterised as discriminatory situation.
Legislation and policy frameworks - What are the main legislative / policy drivers for child participation for this setting (incl. Article 12 & others) - Which children are covered through legislation and practice (age ranges, classifications, etc.)? - How effectively has the legal framework supported implementation of children's participation?	The Law on Children's Rights concerns all children under the age of 18. Article 13 defines that child has a right to express his/her thoughts and should be listened to, as well as rights to participate in self-government in education, culture and sports. In all other areas related to child interests, their view should be taken into account in accordance with their age and maturity.
Supporting infrastructure - What specific institutions are involved in implementing children's participation in this setting / context, and how are they funded? - What networks exist and how do they interact with policy? - How is participation supported by standards and training?	Disabled Children's interests are represented by their parents' organisations. There are no specific special needs or disabled children organisations in Latvia. The parents are united within various organisations to promote the interests of their children in education and training, arts, leisure and recreation (e.g. summer camps), and healthcare. There is collaboration between NGO "Apeirons" (http://www.apeirons.lv/w), which is an NGO named "Disabled people and their friends" (www.apeirons.lv) and the State Agency for Protection of Children Rights (BTI). There is limited evidence of child participation and training for participation: the only example suggested by governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders was an ESF project on the risk of social exclusion of youth with special needs http://www.ppf.lu.lv/v.3/eduinf/files/2009/ESF_koncepcija.pdf (<i>Sociālās atstumtības riskam pakļauto jauniešu un iekļaujošas izglītības atbalsta sistēmas izveides nostādnes</i>). The Concept was a basis for the development of training for children from the social risk groups of social exclusion.

Setting / vulnerable group 2: [children with disabilities]

Developing participation in practice

- *In what contexts and for what purpose does participation typically / less typically occur?*
- *At what stages in the decision-making cycle, and what are the predominant forms of participation? How do they work in practice?*
- *What structures or forums and feedback mechanisms exist to support participation?*
- *To what extent has the agenda for participation been shaped by children on their own terms?*

Participation occurs within special projects developed for children with special needs. The best examples of children's participation are different types of activities by children with special needs. For example, in Cesis district, within the project "Mechanisms of social integration for children and youth with special needs" there have been activities devoted to social inclusion of children with special needs into the local society. In 2014/2015, This is an opportunity for children with special needs to meet publically, to learn new skills and later also to express their views on the activities. Children with special needs express their views in the evaluation of the project, their needs for future activities to become integrated into society <http://www.cesis.lv/lv/sakums/aktualitates/izglitiba/projekta-aktivitates-bernu-un-jauniesu-ar-speci>.

Participation of children with special needs takes place mainly at local level. The expert from the municipality has mentioned a good practice example of child participation in the youth centre "Open Youth centre JACi", which is a non-formal education organization financed by local municipality, where disabled children and youth could meet <http://jacis.blogs.lv>. The objectives of the JACi are:

- to develop and to organize youth leisure time and non-formal education activities;
- to involve youth in the local and international youth projects;
- to develop tolerance, understanding and respect to other cultures;
- to provide necessary information about healthy life style, studies and work possibilities;
- to promote youth active participation in society and voluntary work;
- to support children/youth from social risk groups/ disadvantaged families and to organize activities for them;
- to develop youth work in the city.

The JACi children and youth centre welcomes children and youth aged 12 – 25. Different kinds of activities are provided by JACis. Children participation in the various activities of JACi is a very good aspect of involvement in any public activities. Earlier they had very limited opportunities to come together, to choose the activities they want, and to evaluate the activities according to their needs and interests. It means that the activities they participate are largely based on the needs they have expressed, and not only offered by adults. They have access to Internet, play games, participate in youth projects and realize their own ideas. All activities depend on the interests and needs of youth and children (Hip-Hop festival, Pop-iela festival, writing and realizing of small cultural projects, discussions, meetings with Erasmus students and EVS volunteers. All activities are for free.

Setting / vulnerable group 2: [children with disabilities]	
	There is no information about forums or feedback. The only information about child forums is an organisation "Children Forum" www.bernuforums.lv), which organises various activities and training on youth social activities. However, there is no written information about the feedback mechanisms to support child participation.
Effectiveness • <i>How are 'quality' and 'effectiveness' defined, and what influences inform these definitions?</i> • <i>What forms of participation have proven more / less effective and why?</i> • <i>Where does good / bad practice exist, and what does it look like?</i>	No definition of "quality" or "effectiveness" exists. So far, there has not been a wide variety of activities, therefore all activities have to be evaluated as being qualitative and effective, because they provide the opportunity to participate. All disabled children's participation in organised activities should be evaluated as being good example and effective, because for many years, children with special needs have been excluded from mainstream society (staying in special schools or at home). Within the projects, they had opportunities to come out of their closed environment. There is no information about bad practice. The bad practice has been – to keep children with special needs in homes and schools for children with special needs.
Impact • <i>How successful has children's participation been in influencing decisions within this setting / for this group?</i> • <i>What is the evidence for the benefits of participation for children and adults? Where is this strongest / weakest?</i> • <i>What are the main barriers and challenges, and what additional legislation, policy or culture change is needed to achieve full participation? (identify national and EU actions as appropriate)</i>	Children have participated within the activities of the JACi http://jacis.blogs.lv, including the decision making. The municipal expert has mentioned the benefits for children with special needs which are that children increase their self-esteem and feel more satisfied with the improved activities within the centre. The main barrier is that children with special needs are seen as not able to participate in decision making. The challenge therefore is to develop the culture of child participation within this specific group. The National Artistic Festival of disabled children (for example, http://www.iksd.riga.lv/public/44812.html) and children with special needs was the first attempt to publically show the talents of the children.

Setting / vulnerable group 3: [Children left behind – Euro-orphans]	
Overview of the country context What is the situation / circumstances for this setting / group of children (incl. services and support structures)	This group includes children (0-18), whose parents have left the country for more than 6 months due to economic reasons. This is an increasing group of children (around 8,000 in 2012) and a very vulnerable group because they are left behind with siblings, relatives, friends of parents or on their own. They can be economically, socially and culturally excluded.
Legislation and policy frameworks - What are the main legislative / policy drivers for child participation for this setting (incl. Article 12 & others) - Which children are covered through legislation and practice (age ranges, classifications, etc.)? - How effectively has the legal framework supported implementation of children's participation?	The Law on Children's Rights concerns all children; however the issue of Euro orphans is a very new and rapidly increasing phenomenon. Starting from 2009, when the unemployment increased due to economic crises in Latvia, many people started to emigrate from Latvia. Many of them left their children behind with grandparents, adult siblings or even juvenile siblings, friends of parents or even by themselves; those children are called "Euro orphans". According to research (Trapenciene I., Trapenciene A., http://www.isa-sociology.org/buenos-aires-2012/), these children are at risk of social exclusion, sometime at the risk of poverty, when their parents do not provide their children with necessary resources. Therefore new normative acts needed to be developed to increase parental responsibility on their children. Parents, who leave the country, have to register at the municipality and to sign an authorization about the person responsible for the child during their absence– in case of health, behaviour or other problems. In those cases, when children have unacceptable behaviour and parents (when being abroad) are not able to control them and to improve the child's situation, parents may be deprived from parental rights.
Supporting infrastructure - What specific institutions are involved in implementing children's participation in this setting / context, and how are they funded? - What networks exist and how do they interact with policy? - How is participation supported by standards and training?	On a local level, the social worker, school and custody courts should take care of those children. However there is no funding for participation, nor are there any networks or training.
Developing participation in practice - In what contexts and for what purpose does participation typically / less typically occur? - At what stages in the decision-making cycle, and what are the predominant	This particular group is "invisible" (stakeholder), and there is no participation or representation of this group in any child organisation. The group can be defined as discriminated. The Art lab of the Liepaja University http://www.liepu.lv/lv/162/akslas-petijumu-laboratorija has developed research aimed at decreasing social exclusion of Euro-orphans and increasing participation through the art project. The Art project was performed as a volunteering part of the EU

Setting / vulnerable group 3: [Children left behind – Euro-orphans]	
<i>forms of participation? How do they work in practice?</i> • <i>What structures or forums and feedback mechanisms exist to support participation?</i> • <i>To what extent has the agenda for participation been shaped by children on their own terms?</i>	project SHAREIT http://www.peopleproject.eu/wiki/PEOPLE%20WIKIS/socialand-inclusion/mainSpace/files/SHAREIT/4. Final Report Activity.pdf Latvian part of the project included a qualitative pilot research and Art project performed by children – Euro Orphans under the guidance of art students. The research concluded that the major problems of Euro Orphans are loneliness, lacking parental advice, emptiness and other psychological problems. Within the project Euro-orphans participated in the 'happiness expertise' of the creative workshop. Within the workshop the children were invited to actively participate and express their views what makes them happy, to develop a scenario for an animation and to make a small animation film. A film was made, focussing on 13 year old children and characterising their child participation and understanding their problems.
Effectiveness • <i>How are 'quality' and 'effectiveness' defined, and what influences inform these definitions?</i> • <i>What forms of participation have proven more / less effective and why?</i> • <i>Where does good / bad practice exist, and what does it look like?</i>	The art project had a good impact on children participation through the art activities. The children had improved their communication skills, were introduced to animation techniques, and were participating in the serious work of young artists. Children had highly evaluated the project, were willing to continue training in animation and other filming techniques. It has been also a good way for spending the leisure time. The teachers had noticed that the behaviour and school success of Euro orphan children participating in the project has improved, they have been more enthusiastic and during the participation in the project they did not look depressed and sad as before.
Impact • <i>How successful has children's participation been in influencing decisions within this setting / for this group?</i> • <i>What is the evidence for the benefits of participation for children and adults? Where is this strongest / weakest?</i> • <i>What are the main barriers and challenges, and what additional legislation, policy or culture change is needed to achieve full participation? (identify national and EU actions as appropriate)</i>	• On local, school and municipal levels, there are good examples when children opinions are taken into account (for example, school councils, Riga city student council). They have influenced the school work, and the development of children friendly environment. • The strong impact is in Riga city, Cesis and Rezekne (children with special needs). The weakness of the child participation in longer term – in those cases when child participation is project based, is a risk of discontinuation after the end of the project. • A culture of understanding among the local and national policy makers on child participation needs to be developed. There is a likely need for the EU to develop an understanding of the scope of the problem within Eastern Europe countries. On policy level, adult policy makers need 1) to understand that children' opinions, views and needs expressed by children have to be heard; 2) their opinions needs to be taken into account not only once a year during the Youth parliament, but also on local level

Setting / vulnerable group 4: [children in correctional institutions]

Overview of the country context What is the situation / circumstances for this setting / group of children (incl. services and support structures)	They are children, aged 14-18, who have committed a serious crime and who are under pre-court investigation or have been sentenced. In Latvia, those children are placed in a correctional institution "Strautiņi" http://cesu-audzinšanas-iestade-nepilngadigajiem.infolapa.zl.lv/ in Cesis city, which is "closed type institution". Their stay is regulated by the Law on Imprisonment. (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=68492). Children have to stay there up to age 18 or shorter period, if the sentence is shorter or the court decision is taken. The legal framework of education of children at the correctional institution is regulated by Education Law, General Education law, Law on Child's Rights protection, Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers and other normative acts, School rules. Schools have to follow the Latvian Code of Sentence execution (http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=90218) and the Law on imprisonment order (http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=138990). School staff consists of 14 teachers, psychologist, social worker, Inspectors of rehabilitation and others. The school offers four educational programmes (Cēsu audzinšanas iestāde nepilgadīgajiem) – in Latvian and Russian. Children receive basic education (1-9th year), and a few of them acquire upper secondary education (10th-12th grade). (Cēsu audzinšanas iestāde nepilgadīgajiem, Par problēmām Cēsu audzināšanas iestādē, According to the Self Evaluation report of Cesu evening(shift) school)(Cēsu audzinšanas iestāde nepilgadīgajiem), there is a need to develop the inclusive education forms, the individual approach to pupils, to teach children to express their views and to speak out, to tie the knowledge and skills with the real life. Children live in institutional settings. The children receive support from the school staff, educators and class teachers. There are limited possibilities to receive vocational training or participate in hobby education. They have limited opportunities of spending their leisure time. Many of the children are from orphan homes or from broken families. It means that they are double disadvantaged.
Legislation and policy frameworks - What are the main legislative / policy drivers for child participation for this setting (incl. Article 12 & others) - Which children are covered through legislation and practice (age ranges, classifications, etc.)?	The Law on Children's Rights; however there is no particular emphasis on any specific child group. According to self-evaluation by schools located within these institutions, there is a Pupils' Council at the school where the heads of classes participate. The Pupils' Council is a place, where children can express their views about the school and their life related problems and potential improvements. As it is closed institution, it is not possible to comment on the effectiveness of the legal framework support children's participation.

Setting / vulnerable group 4: [children in correctional institutions]	
How effectively has the legal framework supported implementation of children's participation?	
Supporting infrastructure - What specific institutions are involved in implementing children's participation in this setting / context, and how are they funded? - What networks exist and how do they interact with policy? - How is participation supported by standards and training?	No specific institutions have been identified. The Latvian State Inspectorate for Child Protection (www.bti.lv) is involved in protection of children's rights, including correctional institutions. No standards exist, nor are regular training on participation possible for that group of children. The only example of any training that can be related with non-formal training of those children is ESF funded project "Step by step" http://www.facebook.com/pages/LSKJ-projekts-Soli-pa-Solim/289123521157665 and http://www.draugiem.lv/projekts.solipasolim/. NGOs have organised monthly training on various youth issues. The objective of the project is to meet, to discuss serious life issues, to learn about different life environments for children, to learn about human relations, to learn about different cultures, to participate in various activities (charity arts, sports). Project aims at changing stereotypes that limit youth life opportunities, freedom to express one's opinion, discussing intolerance, violence and discrimination. Within the project children and youth from different youth organisations (Christian youth, volunteers from Charity organisations, other youth organisations) and children from the institution have a monthly meeting. Project aimed also at breaking stereotypes on understanding the young offender. There were monthly meetings in between youth organisations and juvenile offenders. They participated in lectures and seminars on relations between boys and girls, participate in sport activities, develop arts products (drawings, slogans), developed ideas for young people in urban settings. Each meeting finished with an evaluation circle, where every participant had to evaluate the day. In the evaluation of performed activities, the participants have mentioned changing understanding on juvenile offenders, Christians, Red Cross youth, charity and volunteering. The number of participants is 50 children from the Correctional institution, and 50 youth from youth organisations.
Developing participation in practice In what contexts and for what purpose does participation typically / less typically occur?	Children staying in the Correctional institution participate in the School Council regularly. The meetings of the school Council take place in accordance with the meeting plan, and all the members are invited to participate. Correctional institutions are a rather "closed" environment, and therefore there is no publically available information about Children organised participation. There is no information about Forums or feedback mechanisms.

Setting / vulnerable group 4: [children in correctional institutions]

• <i>At what stages in the decision-making cycle, and what are the predominant forms of participation? How do they work in practice?</i> • <i>What structures or forums and feedback mechanisms exist to support participation?</i> • <i>To what extent has the agenda for participation been shaped by children on their own terms?</i>	It is not possible to discuss the agenda for participation with children because it is a closed type institution.
Effectiveness • <i>How are 'quality' and 'effectiveness' defined, and what influences inform these definitions?</i> • <i>What forms of participation have proven more / less effective and why?</i> • <i>Where does good / bad practice exist, and what does it look like?</i>	No definition. Good practice example – within the ESF project “Step by step” children from correctional institutions could meet children and youth from NGOs e.g. Red Cross, NGO “True love waits”, and religious youth organisations (http://lskj.lv/vai-jauniesi-uzsakusi-pasaules-glabsanu-projekts-%E2%80%99Esoli-pa-solim-ka-mes-tuvojamies-nospraustajiem-merkiem/). . This is a good example, because children from correctional institution had an opportunity to participate in activities with other children, could discuss important topics for themselves. It is a good practice example, because children from youth organisation due to participation in the project could break the stereotypes on children – offenders. It helped both groups of children to understand the other group, to break the stereotypes on themselves and the “others”.
Impact • <i>How successful has children's participation been in influencing decisions within this setting / for this group?</i> • <i>What is the evidence for the benefits of participation for children and adults? Where is this strongest / weakest?</i>	The project has helped imprisoned children to develop positive thinking, increase self-esteem and to develop social skills. They could offer their own developed activities to others, to develop skills to plan activities, to feel useful, and discussion skills important for participation http://www.ievp.gov.lv/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=243:csu-audzinanas-iestdes-nepilngadgajiem-jaunieji-soli-pa-solim-lau-stereot . The teachers from the correctional institution have noted that culture and policies surrounding child participation need to be developed.

Setting / vulnerable group 4: [children in correctional institutions]

- *What are the main barriers and challenges, and what additional legislation, policy or culture change is needed to achieve full participation? (identify national and EU actions as appropriate)*

Part 3: Nominated good practice example(s)

Good practice examples	
Type of organisation and level of operation	Riga Pupils' Council (RSD) (http://www.rsd.lv/index.php/about) operates on the city level.
Description of sector/setting and profile of children involved	The City of Riga has 156 pre-school education institutions (kindergartens) and 125 comprehensive elementary education and comprehensive secondary education institutions (schools). The RSD is open to representatives from all schools but its membership and committee members are those attending secondary school. The age range of the Committee is typically 14-18.
Description of example/type of participation	The mission of the RSD is to express the opinion, represent and defend the interests, opinions and ideas of Riga pupils. It promotes Riga's school student councils, and raises the action and cooperation with other student councils all around the country. The objective of the RSD Council is to encourage young people to be more involved with the decision making process within their schools and the Riga City Council as a whole. Being pupils, they want to share knowledge gained through RSD with others by organising educational and leisure events. RSD represents and defends the school students and their opinions on council and governmental matters in the best way possible. The main form of participation through the RSD is in the form of an Executive Board. The main RSD Board informs students about relevant events, which could be interesting and educational for students. It also provides opportunities for students to spend their leisure time. RSD organises seminars, lectures, workshops etc. In order to increase children's skills on expressing themselves. Beyond the board, the Riga Pupils' Council's (RSD) work is also organized in 5 main committees (education, culture, sport, environmental and health). Each committee is headed by a pupil who is responsible for the work of the committee and a wider group of pupils can participate in these Committees.
Outcomes	Active participation of pupils in the decision making and organising activities in the following areas – school life, leisure, healthy lifestyle. Awareness raising among children on need to actively participate in the school life, increasing responsibility on own activities.
Contact details/resource for more information	www.rsd.rsd.lv

Good practice examples	
	<i>Peer research on Independent life, coordinated by the SOS Children Village (2012),</i>
Type of organisation and level of operation	Latvian SOS Children Village, an NGO organisation operating in two local areas in Latvia.
Description of sector/setting and profile of children involved	In Latvia, SOS Children's Villages runs two Villages - Islice and Valmiera. Each SOS Children's Village has 12 residential houses. These villages provide an alternative environment for children to grow up in when they are no longer able to remain in the parental home. The villages house children from 0-18. The specific example of peer research involved a sample of 100 children and youth aged 15-29 being interviewed about their preparation to independent life. The interviewers were 10 young people who had just turned 18 and who have experienced out-of-family care (institutions, SOS villages, foster families).
Description of example/type of participation	The opportunity to participate in the research project as a researcher was advertised amongst the residents of the two villages. 10 young researchers were recruited and trained to interview their peers. The focus of the research was on the living conditions within the institutions and the aftercare support and experiences after young people leave care. While the overall topic and research questions were devised by adults, the young researchers had the opportunity to comment on the topics covered and suggest others. Between September and December 2012, the peer research project „Starting independent life after out-of-family care” (http://www.sosbernuciemati.lv/lv/ko-mes-daram/bernu-interesu-aizstaviba/1879/) was conducted.
Outcomes	The young people were trained to have in-depth discussions about their peers' perspectives of independent life after the child care system. One of the main findings of the study by young people indicated a lack of financial support, while noting that the emotional and moral support for them is also very important. Based on the results of the study proposals were prepared by SOS Children's Villages and submitted to the Ministry of Welfare and the State Children Rights Protection Inspectorate in 2013 to run a programme of discussions and seminars for professionals highlighting the results. The young people involved as researchers reported increased self-esteem and improved knowledge on issues related to independent life after leaving the institution as a result of their participation.
Contact details/resource for more information	http://www.sosbernuciemati.lv/lv/1339/informativie-materiali/ (in LV); Kristine Veispale

Good practice examples	
	<i>Network of child friendly school</i>
Type of organisation and level of operation	Project initiated by the Ministry of Welfare and coordinated by the State Inspectorate on Protection of Children's Rights.
Description of sector/setting and profile of children involved	All main players involved – pupils, teachers, and parents. The objective of the movement "Friendly school" develop the socio-psychological environment of school in order to improve the relations between pupils, teachers, school administration and parents. The aim is improve the collaboration between all the players, and to develop regular violence preventive work at schools.
Description of example/type of participation	At school level, children participate in the decision making on child-friendly school issues – on the issues of child friendly environment, child safety at school, accessibility of environment for children with disability and special needs, healthy life style, on the basis of regular monitoring of children's opinions. Children are involved in the development of the opinion about the psychosocial environment on the basis of surveys, discussions, focus group discussions and competitions on the development of psychosocial environment. Children actively participate in the school council; children's opinion is widely discussed in the school newspaper, information desk. Teachers and other personnel are regularly informed about the children's opinion about necessary support and assistance. School administration, pupils and parents participate in voluntary activities to improve the collaboration and good mutual relationships. All partners participate to ensure the equality among children, irrespective of economical situation in the family and other aspects. Once a year, a school organizes a seminar about ideas, vision and recommendations about the school development with participation of children, local government, parents and teachers.
Outcomes	Active participation of pupils in the decision making and organising activities in their school, leisure time, and around healthy lifestyles. There was a 'child-friendly school' in April 2013. Skills of participation, collaboration with adults, and wide discussion of the school environment among children. Negotiation skills developed. Each participating school puts updated information about the main events at the home page of friendly school: http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/draudziga_skola/vienojosie_pasakumi/ The home page informs about the new activities, good experience examples, the participating schools and classes (starting already from the 1st year of school).
Contact details/resource for more information	http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/draudziga_skola/kustiba_draudziga_skola/?doc=1957

Good practice examples	
	<i>Movement Child Friendly Home</i>
Type of organisation and level of operation	Coordinated by State Inspectorate on Protection of Children's Rights.
Description of sector/setting and profile of children involved	Though mainly adults, it can be seen as the first good practice example of child participation, because for the first time children's opinion are listened to. The mission of the "Friendly Home" is to improve the psycho-social environment in the children's out-of-family care, to improve relations between children, staff, and administration. According to the information of Child Rights Inspectorate (www.bti.lv), the number of participating foster houses is 17.
Description of example/type of participation	Children's opinions are surveyed on the issues of out-of-family care (residential care); children, staff and volunteers participate in various activities; circumstances are developed to provide equality between children of all ages, ethnicity and physical capability. Information on important issues for children is available and accessible (wall newspaper, internet page, etc.). Competitions among children and personnel teams of participating orphanages took part in Latvia. At the competitions children had to demonstrate the participation skills and public speech, creativeness, and unity of the children teams, the improvisation skills. Besides the children, teams included also administration and personnel of the orphan home or crises centre. The main task of the competition was to improve the participation skills, learning about the participation and cooperation practice and communication practice at the other orphan homes, to teach children how to improve constructive relations within the orphan house and everyday life. This experience is seen as a precondition of improvement of climate in the institution. Children learned how to collaborate with adults, when having common tasks, presentations and performances. The initiative "child to be heard" was started at the orphanages – children's discussions about life at orphanage and beyond, surveys, adult participation in the child organised leisure time activities. A new system was initiated to encourage child participation in hobby education and non-formal education.
Outcomes	At this stage, the outcomes reported by stakeholders are those for the children who participated in the process. Children are informed about the important aspects of their life and are encouraged to express their views. Where children participated in presentations their confidence is reported to have increased. As a result of children expressing their views through the competition, some small changes have occurred in some of the foster homes, for example, the opportunity to participate in art activities was rolled out in one home at the request of children.
Contact details/resource for more information	www.bti.gov.lv Director of VBTAI Ms. Laila Rieksta-Riekstiņa

Part 4: Appendix / details of interviews completed and documents reviewed

Interviews completed	Name, title, organisation and date
	Please include details of all persons interviewed / consulted (Name, title, organisation, date interview completed)
Int. 1	The State Inspectorate For Protection Of Children's Rights, March 21. (Inga Millere, Laila Rieksta Riekstiņa)
Int. 2	Youth in action (Daina Sproģe)
Int. 3	NGO on Orphan children "Sun Children".
Int. 4	Riga City Council (modra Jansone, Dmitrijs Zverevs, Dina Vīksna)
Int. 5	Cesis City Council (Līga Jermolajeva, Anna x, Dita Trapenciere)
Int. 6	Ministry of Education and Science (Inta Baranovska, Evija Pelša, A. Bērziņa, A.Auksmuksta)
Int. 7	University of Latvia (Dita Nimante, I.Koroļeva, R.Rungule)
Int. 8	SOS Children Association (Kristine Veispale, Daiga Eiduka)
Int. 9	SOS Children Association, August 28, 2013. (Jolanta Millere)
Int. 10	Ministry of Welfare, April, 2013. (Lauris Neikens)
Int. 11	Cesis Youth Center, May, 2013 (Līga Jermolajeva)
Int. 12	Foster parents' organization, July 13, 2013. (Ilze Golvere)
Int. 13	The State Inspectorate For Protection Of Children's Rights, April, 2013.
Int. 14	Dobele society of disabled children and youth, June, 2013.
Int. 15	Researcher, May, 2013.
Int. 16	Researcher, May, 2013.
Int. 17	"Step by step", Boļšakova.

Documents reviewed	Source details
	Please give full details of the sources of all material provided in the fiche. Full references should be included for publications. Data sources / files should be identified.
Doc. 1	Bērnu tiesību aizsardzības likums (Law on Child's Rights protection), Adopted in 1998, enforced since 2000, with Amendments, http://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=49096
Doc. 2	Pacientu tiesību aizsardzības likums (Law on Patients' Rights), 2009., www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=203008
Doc. 3	Valsts bērnu tiesību aizsardzības inspekcijas publiskais pārskats (Report on activities of State Child Rights' Inspectorate) 2011, 2012, 2013; http://www.bti.gov.lv/lat/zinas_par_iestadi/parskati_un_atskaites/
Doc. 4	Kārtējais ziņojums par ANO 1989.gada Konvencijas par bērna tiesībām izpildi Latvijas Republikā laika posmā no 2001.gada līdz 2004.gada 1.martam. (Report on Implementation of UN Convention on Children's Rights, 2001-2004, in Latvian), www.lm.gov.lv/upload/berns_gimene/bernu.../ano_zinojums.doc
Doc. 5	Glābiet bērnus, Latvijas bērnu ziņojums ANO par ANO Konvencijas par bērnu tiesībām izpildi (Save the Children, "Children Report on Convention of Children's Rights", Riga, 2006. http://www.rnc-rtb.lv/publikacijas_lv.html
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