

## **EAPN Estonia: rise in subsistence benefit badly necessary**

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TALLINN, Jan 27, BNS - It was stated at an Estonian working meeting of the European Anti-Poverty Network (**EAPN**) that an unacceptably large number of people belong to the risk group threatened by poverty and raising of the subsistence benefit could help alleviate the situation.

The organizations and persons that have acceded to **EAPN** appealed to the government and the parliament to raise the subsistence level in connection with the rapid rise in the prices of food items already by an additional budget of 2012, **EAPN** told BNS.

The state budget bill for 2012 left the subsistence allowance at the previous level. Statistics Estonia said that during 2011 the average consumer price index climbed 5 percent compared with the average of 2010, whereas the prices of food items and non-alcoholic beverage rises by an average of 9.7 percent in price.

"The rise in the prices of food and other goods has deteriorated the welfare of very many residents of Estonia. Taking into consideration insufficiency of the subsistence allowance people with a lower income suffer the most," the organization said. "Their income often doesn't cover even minimal expenditure on food, not to mention minimal other needs of consumption. Such a situation is not morally acceptable and is clearly in contradiction with the law."

In 2011, 24,332 households received subsistence allowances.

The NPO **EAPN** Estonia was established in 2010 and it includes 18 Estonian organizations and networks that protect the interests of the most vulnerable target groups in the society.