



**EMN Ad-Hoc Query on 2019.15 Early language support**

Requested by Simon WOOLLACOTT on 29 January 2019

**Protection**

Responses from EMN NCP Slovakia, EMN NCP Luxembourg, EMN NCP Estonia, EMN NCP Lithuania, EMN NCP Belgium, EMN NCP Germany  
(6 in total)

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*The following responses have been provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.*



## **Background information:**

On arrival to the UK, resettled refugees enter the mainstream English language provision offered to all immigrants. The UK is currently exploring if there would be a benefit of offering an early, intensive language course for refugees, and what the objectives and delivery model of such a course would be. As part of this we are keen to seek Member States' views and experiences.

## **Questions**

- 1. Do refugees and other migrants attend an intensive language course on arrival in your country?**
- 2. Is this mandatory or optional?**
- 3. If not, is this something you have considered?**
- 4. If yes, is this course the same for all refugees/migrants or is it differentiated to meet differing integration needs?**
- 5. What is the content of this course? Topics, skills, vocabulary, grammar...?**
- 6. What is the delivery model? (e.g. Length of course? Number of hours per week? Face to face/digital/blended? In the community/schools?)**
- 7. What lessons have you learnt from your early intensive language provision?**

## **Responses**

### **EMN NCP Slovakia**

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Simona MESZAROSOVA, EMN NCP Slovakia*

1. Refugees vs migrant integration policy is differentiated in the SR. There is no systematic state language support for migrants from third countries coming to SK for either employment purposes, family reunification purposes, study, business or other reason for which they can be granted temporary or permanent residence if applied. There are some options for them to attend language courses at private institutions or IOM Migration Information Centre offers free language courses for TCNs. On the other hand, beneficiaries of international protection in the Slovak Republic are not obliged to participate in the integration project, but in that case, they are not provided with any integration services. If they join the integration project, they are required to attend the Slovak language courses and job counselling otherwise their financial support is cut down. Persons who were granted international protection are not required to obtain any compulsory results in the integration project. Passing an exam is obliged only when applying for a citizenship. As far as resettled group of refugees is concerned, they attended the long and intense language course upon their arrival to Slovakia in the State language school or language and intercultural exchange institute in combination with the individual teaching approach. Upon their arrival they were accommodated in the Reception Centre where the first language courses started.

2. See Q1

3. See Q1

4. See Q1

5. The content is the combination of all the above mentioned, but mainly topically oriented.

6. Course for BoIP includes language classes at least 6 hours per week (2-3 times per week) in smaller groups for the duration of the integration project (6 months). In case of families the conditions can differ based on their needs and assessment of their situation by Migration Office of the MoI SR. In case necessary, the individual lessons are also an option. They attend the face to face group courses organised by the State language schools and the civic organization or private lessons (in this case it is an individual learning). As for the group of resettled refugees in 2016 they had 3 lessons of Slovak language 5 times a week for 10 months. The aim was to have a good command of the Slovak language at A2-B1 level in listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. Before the course started there had been an initial meeting with mediators, textbook authors and the teachers' training was organised. Within two weeks: teaching of the originally formed groups, testing and splitting into new groups based on the test results and study prerequisites (education, foreign language knowledge, knowledge of Roman/Latin characters, age) was carried out. The language goals were elaborated for each group.

7. Based on our experience, we see the setup of the level of language knowledge as necessary. (E.g. after 6 months the language knowledge at the A1 level at least.) Further needs: e.g. textbook for those who cannot read letters written in Roman/Latin characters, intensive language courses for children before they start attending the school, support and more stimulating environment (e.g. older group of refugees did not have enough courage and trust in themselves to have the ability to learn the language).

## EMN NCP Luxembourg

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Adolfo SOMMARRIBAS, EMN statelessness platform*

1. No, there is no specific intensive language course foreseen for migrants and recognized refugees on arrival in the country. In general normal courses are provided. For migrants and beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs), resettled refugees or not, the Law of 16 December 2008 on the reception and integration of foreigners in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg establishes the Welcome and Integration Contract (CAI - articles 8 to 13) which is proposed to any foreigner of at least 16 years of age who resides legally on the territory of Luxembourg and wishes to remain on a permanent basis (not included the international protection applicants). It is optional and aimed as much at EU and EEA citizens as at third country nationals, to new arrivals as well as to people who have been living in Luxembourg for many years. It is not mandatory in any way. The services offered within the framework of this contract are : • A language training course • A citizenship training course • An orientation day. Another advantage of completing the requirements of the Welcome and Integration Contract is to get an exemption from one of the modules of the course "Living together in Luxembourg" for the acquisition of Luxembourg nationality. The CAI was officially launched on 29 September 2011 in accordance with the Grand ducal regulation of 2 September 2011 on the implementation conditions and modalities of executions concerning the Welcome and Integration Contract.

2. It is optional as it was mentioned in the answer to Q.1.

3. N/A.

4. As it was explained in answer to Q.1 the courses are normal courses for everyone but in some cases they are adapted accordingly to the professional and/or personal needs (see answer to Q.5).

5. The general aim is the integration of the target population in the Luxemburgish society. It aims to enable the signatory of the CAI to reach at least Basic User Level A.1.1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in one or more of the three administrative languages of Luxembourg – i.e. Luxembourgish, French, or German and there are special courses for illiterate persons. For certain courses, a working language adapted to a specific public is used (i.e. French is used as a working language in German courses, Portuguese and English as working languages in a French course, German or French as working languages in Luxemburgish courses) An administrative meeting with the candidate to the CAI is held to determine the linguistic skill of the candidate and to orient him/her in the language training that is better adapted to his/her personal/professional needs. If the candidate reaches the introductory level A.1.1 either in Luxemburgish, French or German, he/she can, in accordance with his/her personal/professional needs develop his/her competences in one of the languages in which he/she has approved the introductory level A.1.1. (In case of need, the language training can be completed with literacy courses). However, the beneficiary of the CAI can continue to register in the following models if s/he passes the introductory level A.1.1 until completing the duration of the 2 years. Language courses are offered under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, who has within its responsibilities adult and continuous education through contracted providers who have a convention with the Department of Adult Education of the Ministry. The general content of the courses depends on the service provider but the beneficiary has to be able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Also he/she has to be able to introduce him/herself and others and to ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Finally the beneficiary can be able to interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

6. The courses are face to face in the installations of the INL, municipalities, NGOs or high schools. The duration of the language courses depends on the service provider: Municipalities normally propose yearly courses and the National Language Institute propose 6-months modules. Short intensive courses (6 weeks-2 month) are also available. There are normal courses that are proposed two times per week but there can be intensive courses (four to five times per year). There is not a point system put into place for evaluating the foreigner's performance. However, the skills acquired at the end of a course are assessed through a descriptive assessment of competences issued by the service provider. In the case of the National Language Institute at the end of each module there is an examination that consists in two parts: a) written examination and b) oral examination. If the beneficiary passes the first level then s/he can register to the next level (A.1.2) and so on.

7. N/A. Luxembourg does not have this kind of policy of early intensive language provision.

## **EMN NCP Estonia**

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Barbara ORLOFF, EMN NCP Estonia*

1. Yes. There are courses offered to beneficiaries of international protection as well as to other migrants.

2. The language courses are mandatory for beneficiaries of international protection. For other legal migrants the courses are optional.

3. N/A

4. The courses are different for refugees and other migrants in the sense that the courses offered to refugees are more thorough than the courses offered to other migrants (300 versus 80 academic hours). The refugees' language courses are provided by Tartu Folk High School and co-funded by AMIF and the Ministry of the Interior. The target group are all migrants who have received international protection in Estonia. For other migrants the language courses are offered under the Welcoming Programme and by Integration Foundation.

5. The aim of the courses is to give the learner communicative skills using different active learning methods. The topics discussed in the language training offered to migrants under the Welcoming Programme are as follows: • Polite expressions • Getting acquainted, introducing oneself and one's companions • Numbers and the clock • Countries, nations a languages • Food and beverages, eating habits • Café conversations • Arranging a meeting • My day and hobbies • My family • Asking and telling the way • Feeling well/unwell

6. The length of the course for beneficiaries of international protection is 300 academic hours. Lessons are carried out face to face 3-4 times a week, at least 2 academic lessons at once. The groups are formed based on needs in Estonian bigger cities, in general the minimal number of participants is 5. If necessary, also the smaller groups can be formed. Learners from complete beginners to those at A2 level are expected and the groups are formed by the language level. Some language lessons are held outside the classroom, and the language is also learned during practical activities, for example, by cooking or doing crafts. For other migrants the volume of the entire language training is 80 hours. Usually three to four classes take place on any given training day, one class lasting 45 minutes (academic hours). The language training takes usually place on two days per week and there are options to take a morning class or an evening class. On the last day of the language training, the participants will take a written test and the trainer will conduct a spoken conversation with them. The written test corresponds to the A1 level and consists of simple questions. In the conversation, the participant needs to talk about oneself, ask questions and answer simple, clearly posed questions according to the language level.

7. During the first years of AMIF project the language course was 100 hours which turned out to be too small. As a result the hours were increased to 300 hours which is more relevant for reaching the A2 level. The need for flexibility of the courses, especially in cases when refugees find employment.

## EMN NCP Lithuania

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Vytautas EŽERSKIS, EMN NCP Lithuania*

1. Yes.
2. Lithuanian language courses are mandatory for persons staying in the Refugees Reception Center and/or are participating in the integration program in their municipality.
3. n/a
4. Lithuanian language courses are the same for both refugees and migrants. The goal for of the courses for both groups: to learn Lithuanian language and integrate successfully. The courses would be different only if foreigner had previous knowledge of Lithuanian language (e.g. would start with A2, in stead of A1).
5. The aim of the course is to develop A1 level (at the Refugee Reception Center) and/or A2 level language skills (during the integration program in municipality) in order to be able to communicate in Lithuanian in his/hers everyday life. After completing the course, the students are able to: 1) understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to key areas of life (for example, people, family, shopping, place of residence, work, etc.); 2) communicate about common things when it is necessary to inquire or provide information in everyday situations; 3) speak about their education, environment, basic needs using simple language. The lessons plan is based on a curriculum description of Lithuanian as a foreign language. During the course students are taught not only vocabulary and grammar but through songs, movies, games, etc. they are also introduced with the culture of the country.
6. Lithuanian language course consists of 96 hours (face to face) in the Refugees Reception Center and/or 190 hours for persons participating in the integration program in municipalities. Lessons are usually held 2-3 times a week. If needed, lessons are organized every day.

7. It is very important to adapt the teaching methods to the abilities of each student and his/hers motivation. Students often communicate only in their native language but manage to learn Lithuanian because of suitable learning methods for a particular person. It is also worth mentioning the importance of teacher's experience working with illiterate foreigners and the help of visual materials speeding up the learning process. Practice shows that students successfully pass their A2 level exams without even completing the entire course. Migrants often understand the importance of learning the language and go on to prepare for the B1 level exams.

## EMN NCP Belgium

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Martine HENDRICKX, Practitioners (Government Officials only)*

1. Preliminary remark: the language courses described below are applicable for adult applicants/resettled refugees / newcomers. Children under the age of 18 year are integrated into the mainstream education system (where they receive intense language courses in so-called 'reception' or 'bridging' – classes. Resettled refugees: After arriving in Belgium resettled refugees stay in one of the four reception centres for resettled refugees for a duration of 6 weeks. During this period a reception programme is foreseen. Among different activities and information modules, language lessons are included in this programme. Applicants for international protection: Language courses are offered in the reception facilities given by volunteers once or twice a week. Applicants can also follow language courses outside of the reception facilities organised by NGOs or by the centres for adult education or the centres for basic education. To facilitate the access to languages courses organised by these centres for adult and basic education, applicants for international protection are exempt from payment of the registration fees. Beneficiaries of international protection and newcomers: All the Communities in Belgium have developed (civic) integration programmes for newcomers. All these integration programmes offer languages classes (in French, Dutch or German).

2. It depends. Resettled refugees: The language lessons in the reception centres are mandatory for all resettled refugees who are above the age of 18 years old (minors as of the age of 2,5 years are enrolled in school or kindergarten). If it is impossible to provide baby-sitters, babies can be brought to the lessons but if this is too complicated for some reason one of the parents is excused. The parents are then encouraged to alternate so they can both follow some lessons. Even though the lessons are mandatory there are no sanctions for those who do not attend. Applicants for international protection: the language offer is optional. Beneficiaries of international protection and newcomers: All the Communities in Belgium have developed a mandatory (civic) integration programme (although the mandatory integration trajectory in Brussels-Capital Region is not yet in force - the goal is to achieve a mandatory integration programme in Brussels by January 2020. In the meantime, migrants in the Brussels-Capital Region do have access to the existing integration programmes on a voluntary basis). The other integration programmes are mandatory for newcomers (including beneficiaries of international protection) who have obtained a residence permit valid for at least three months. Concerning early access: Flanders' civic integration programme is open for applicants for international protection after a period of four months after lodging their application for international protection, on the condition they didn't receive a first instance decision yet. The enrolment of applicants for international protection is on a voluntary basis.

3. See above

4. Resettled refugees: In 3 out of 4 resettlement reception centres a specific tailor-made language programme is foreseen. This programme is adapted to the specific needs of this group and, above all, to the very limited period that they are in the reception centre. In the fourth resettlement reception centre, the language lessons are continuously foreseen for all residents. Though the content is the same, the lessons are organised separately for the resettled refugees (as they are arriving in group they generally fill one class) and it is assured that the lessons start from the beginning. Other newcomers: the languages classes of the civic integration programmes are the same for all newcomers, but are adapted to the their level and learning skills.

5. Resettled refugees: The content is very basic and starts from scratch (alphabet). The programmes further focuses on topics and vocabulary that are useful in the daily life of a newcomer: greeting, taking the bus or train, going to a supermarket, going to a doctor's appointment, etc. Newcomers: Depending on the level of the participant: literacy education, Dutch/French/German as second language (with additional literacy support). At the end of the programme, the participant should be able: - oral: to conduct short, social conversations, to give basic information about himself, his work, his environment, his training; to understand a slowly spoken conversation about a familiar subject, and - written: to write a simple letter of application, a structured internship report, to read a longer but structured newspaper article about a familiar subject, and a text about his field of knowledge.

6. Resettled refugees: The courses are organised in group, but in most centres no distinction is made at this stage between the different levels within the group. There is one exception, in the reception centre of Kapellen the group is split up in a group for illiterates and a group for those who can read and write. All resettled refugees who arrived at the same moment follow the same lessons together. The number of hours of language lessons depends on the centre and go from 20 to 40 hours spread over the entire stay in the reception centre (6 weeks). Newcomers: For example in Flanders: To determine which is the most suitable Dutch as second language course for the newcomer, the regional contact points of the Flemish Integration and Civic Integration Agency will organise an intake interview. During an intake interview questions are asked about the expectations, language skills, highest diploma, etc. Sometimes a logic and level test is proposed to better refer the newcomers to the respective language class providers (a reading and writing test or a covar test (cognitive skills test). On the basis of his/her learning pace, the newcomer is referred to the most suitable Dutch language course. The low-skilled or 'slow learners' are referred to a centre for basic education (in small groups and at the pace of the newcomer. Classes can be attended during the day or in the evening). There they follow a course of 240 hours. Higher educated or 'fast-trackers' can go to an adult education centre (in groups according to the knowledge and learning pace of the newcomer. Classes can be attended during the day or in the evening) for a course of 120 hours. Newcomers who wish to start higher studies and meet the admission requirement for higher education can enter a course of 90 hours. These courses are organized by university language centres (in group and at a high pace, a part of the training consists of self-study). For example in Wallonia: A new decree relating to the integration of foreigners, the decree of 8 November 2018 and its implementing order have been adopted. The purpose of this decree is to reinforce the mechanisms constituting the integration trajectory in order to amplify the effects and the number of beneficiaries. These new provisions have come into force in January 2019. The decree provides 400 hours minimum training for French as a foreign language, instead of the 120 hours previously.

7. Resettled refugees: Besides learning some important words and sentences to be able to manage and perform daily basic activities, there is an added-value to be found in the fact that the newcomers who haven't been in school for a long time (or some haven't been to school at all) get used again to an educational system and daily structure of lessons and homework. The centres experience that, in general, the resettled refugees are eager to follow the language lessons and by answering to this need they are motivated to learn more and to continue their language lessons after leaving the centre.

## EMN NCP Germany

Wider Dissemination: Yes

*Heiko HECHT, EMN NCP Germany*

1. Preliminary remark: Within the scope of an ad-hoc query, the answers to the questions can only give a rough overview without any claim to completeness. 1. Yes. There is a federal programme administered by the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) for "integration courses". Participation is possible for all immigrants, compulsory upon administrative decision of the aliens authority and/or the employment office when they deem it necessary. The basic course consists of 600 units (45min) of language training and 100 units "orientation class". Specific courses (e.g. alphabetization classes) comprise 900 units (language) + 100 (orientation). Refugees with a high probability of being granted protection (SYR, IRQ, IRN, SOM, ERI) have immediate access to the classes, all other immigrants

when they receive a residence permit. In addition, there are numerous programmes on regional and local level, mostly aiming at people not entitled to an instant access (e.g. asylum seekers without high probability of being granted protection as above or people whose application for asylum / protection has been rejected).

2. See above

3. n/a

4. There are different types of courses to meet the differing needs and skills. Special courses include - Alphabetization classes - Courses for people not familiar with the Latin alphabet - Courses for young people - Courses for parents / women - Courses for people with special needs (e.g. deaf/blind) - Intensive courses An entry-level test defines the correct type of course and level. All classes are for every nationality and type of immigration.

5. The content of the courses is laid down in a concept available here (German only):

<http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Kurstraeger/KonzepteLeitfaeden/konz-f-bundesw-integrationskurs.html>

Details go beyond the format of this questionnaire. At the end of the courses, participants pass an exam (written and oral) and are expected to reach level B1 of the Common European Framework of reference for languages (A2 for alphabetisation classes)

6. 20 units (45min.) per week is a typical number of hours. The courses are held by private languages schools as well as public institutions such as "Volkshochschulen" (adult education centres)

7. The effectiveness and outcome of integration courses has been scientifically evaluated, a new evaluation period has started 2018 and will be concluded 2021/22. Details go beyond the format of this questionnaire.