

## Online Linguistic Support for Refugees

### Frequently Asked Questions for Erasmus+ National Agencies



The Erasmus+ OLS is now available, free of charge, to around 100,000 refugees over the next 3 years. Participation in the OLS for Refugees is voluntary. 19 countries<sup>1</sup> are currently taking part and more than 55.000 OLS licences for refugees have been allocated so far.

New NAs can join and additional requests can be made at any time by email to [celine.peroni@ec.europa.eu](mailto:celine.peroni@ec.europa.eu).

OLS licences for refugees will continue to be distributed based on requests from NAs, after validation by DG EAC and on a first come-first served basis, until all available licences have been used.

1. NAs should collect the requests from their beneficiaries by filling in the template provided by DG EAC with the estimation of the needs for each beneficiary institution.
2. Once the requests are validated by DG EAC and transferred to OLS, NAs must validate these projects in OLS so that they become visible to their beneficiaries.
3. NAs notify their beneficiaries of how many licences are allocated to them for refugees and operators. A simple notification from the NA to the beneficiary is sufficient. There is no need to sign an additional contract nor to amend the grant agreement already signed.
4. Beneficiaries allocate OLS licences to refugees in the same way as for Erasmus+ participants. Refugees can be identified by Erasmus+ beneficiaries or by NGOs/other organisations in contact with them. Refugees are not required to be registered, to follow a study or training programme at the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation.

The simple allocation process for beneficiaries consists of 4 steps:

- i. Collect the refugees' e-mail addresses (a proof of refugee status is not required)
  - ii. Send the invitation to the language assessment (which can be done in batch by language)
  - iii. All refugees and operators automatically receive an invitation to the language course (no action needed).
  - iv. Reply to only one question in the final beneficiary report.
5. OLS licences are also available for operators for instruction and support purposes. Operators can be identified within the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation (Erasmus+ beneficiaries involved can therefore receive OLS licences for instruction purposes) or NGOs/other organisations dealing directly with refugees. These operators are not required to have a formal contractual relationship with, or to be part of the staff of the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation.
  6. OLS licences for refugees that are not used within the timeframe of the related project will ultimately fall back to DG EAC/EACEA without any further incidence. OLS licences for refugees will continue to be allocated based on the requests from NAs until all available licences have been used.

For further information please visit the [OLS for Refugees website](#) and download the [OLS for Refugees Promotion Package](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom.

<b>1. NA allocation process</b>	
Which Erasmus+ beneficiaries are concerned by this initiative?	<p>OLS licences for refugees can be allocated to Erasmus+ beneficiaries with an OLS approved project under the 2016 or following Calls, i.e. with an approved project to which OLS licences have been allocated, and which has been transferred to OLS.</p> <p>For KA103, beneficiaries with approved projects which foresee student mobility can therefore take part in this initiative. For KA102, KA116, KA105 and KA135, beneficiaries with approved projects which foresee long-term mobility of VET learners or Youth-EVS volunteers with OLS licences can qualify.</p>
Do beneficiaries need to have a project with course licences or is it sufficient to have a project with assessment licences?	<p>All KA102, KA103, KA105, KA116 and KA135 beneficiary institutions/organisations with an approved project under the 2016 or following Calls in OLS are eligible.</p> <p>This can be a project with language assessment licences only, or both language assessment and language course licences.</p>
Will it be possible for beneficiaries to receive additional licences for refugees later on?	<p>OLS licences for refugees will continue to be distributed based on requests from NAs, after validation by DG EAC and on a first come-first served basis, until all available licences have been used.</p> <p>Once all available licences have been allocated, if some beneficiaries express the need for additional licences, NAs may decide to reallocate licences between their beneficiaries by using the same template that was filled in at the request stage. Only <i>unused</i> licences can be reallocated to another beneficiary.</p>
Would it be possible to widen the participation to adult education organisations?	<p>As indicated above, for the time being, only higher education (KA103), VET (KA102 and KA116) and Youth (KA105 and KA135) beneficiaries with approved projects under the 2016 or following Calls can take part.</p> <p>Therefore, adult education organisations are not eligible for receiving directly OLS licences. However, in the participating countries, they can make the link between refugees and Erasmus+ beneficiaries in charge of allocating these licences, and provide the support needed to refugees in quality of operator.</p>
Will the OLS for refugees be continued in 2017 or further?	<p>The "OLS for refugees" initiative is planned to cover a maximum period of 3 years (2016-2019).</p>

<b>2. Guidelines for implementation</b>	
What is the criteria for eligibility? What do we intend by "refugee"?	<p>Within the "OLS for refugees" initiative, OLS licences can be made available to refugees based on the definition in Art. 2 of Directive 2011/95/EU:</p> <p><i>"In the EU context, either a third-country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it, and to whom Art. 12 (Exclusion) of Directive 2011/95/EU does not apply."</i></p> <p>This definition includes individuals having already obtained refugee status after asylum application, individuals having received a positive asylum decision with refugee status, temporary/subsidiary protection or humanitarian protection, asylum applicants, without age limits.</p>

<p>Do refugees have to be enrolled or registered at the beneficiary organisation?</p>	<p>No. Refugees are not required to be registered, to follow a study or training programme at the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation in order to receive an access to OLS. Refugees are not required to take part in the Erasmus+ project activities either.</p>
<p>How should OLS licences for refugees be allocated, in case the demand is higher than the number of available licences?</p>	<p>Beneficiaries can request additional licences at any time, until all 100,000 available licences have been used. After this ceiling is reached, it is up to HEIs, VET and Youth organisations to decide on priority criteria, if needed.  As the main objective of this initiative is to support Member States' efforts to integrate refugees in Europe's education systems and ensure their skills development so that they can continue their education at higher education or vocational education and training level, and increase their chances to integrate into the labour market, they may decide to give priority to refugees who registered at a university in the host country, who are following training courses at a VET organisation or who are being supported by Youth volunteering organisations. However, <u>these should not be considered criteria for eligibility</u>.</p>
<p>May some costs be incurred on the refugees?</p>	<p>No, no cost should be incurred on the refugees. They should not be asked to contribute to or pay for the OLS licences.</p>
<p>Are there any additional costs for beneficiaries which choose to take part in this initiative?</p>	<p>No, there are no additional costs for HEIs, VET or Youth Erasmus+ beneficiaries which intend to take part in this initiative.</p>
<p>Are voluntary beneficiaries required to provide additional IT facilities or equipment?</p>	<p>Beneficiaries that are willing to take part in this initiative may make computers or other IT facilities available to refugees; however, <u>this is not a requirement</u>. OLS can be accessed online by anyone with an internet connection. It is compatible with mobile devices and all major browsers; therefore, a computer is not strictly necessary.</p>
<p>Will OLS be adapted for smartphones and tablets, so that refugees who do not have access to a computer can use it?</p>	<p>OLS is currently compatible with all major mobile internet browsers and can be accessed via mobile devices (smartphone or tablet) with an internet connection.  In addition to this, further improvements are planned to improve the usability and navigability of OLS courses on mobile devices.</p>
<p>Can refugees choose any of the languages available in OLS?</p>	<p>As from 2017, OLS is available in 18 languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, German, Greek, English, Spanish, Finnish, French, Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak and Swedish. Language courses in the first six languages are available from A1 to C2. Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Greek, Finnish, Croatian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak and Swedish language courses are offered at A1 level, while Portuguese language courses are available up until B2 level.  Refugees who wish to receive an OLS licence can choose <u>any of the languages available in OLS</u>.  It is up to the beneficiary institution to indicate this choice directly in OLS, based on the needs of the refugee and the levels available for the different languages.</p>
<p>Can NAs advise their beneficiaries to allocate licences mostly in the national language(s) and, only exceptionally, in other languages?</p>	<p>Refugees should be able to choose any of the languages available in OLS, based on their needs and the levels available for the different courses. However, it is up to NAs to decide whether they wish to give priority to the national official language(s) of the country and to issue more restrictive recommendations.</p>

<p>Who shall decide on the length of the course? Is there an average duration to be recommended?</p>	<p>The maximum duration of an OLS language course is 13 months.</p> <p>To receive the longest access to the course, we recommend that refugees indicate the following when filling in their OLS profile, upon their first log-in:  <i>Start date:</i> the current month and year (for example: July 2017)  <i>End date:</i> the same month the year after (for example: July 2018)</p> <p>This gives them access to the language course for 13 months. Refugees can however indicate a shorter duration if they wish so.</p>
<p>What should refugees indicate in the field "Country of mobility" in their OLS profile?</p>	<p>In the field "Country of mobility", refugees shall indicate the country they currently live in.</p>
<p>Will the OLS interface also be available in Farsi, Arabic or other non-EU languages, so that it is easier for refugees to use it?</p>	<p>The OLS interface is currently available in all 24 EU official languages. The possibility to introduce Turkish and Arabic as additional interface languages is currently subject to an amendment of the current OLS contracts.</p> <p>Most dissemination and communication materials (videos, guided tour, poster, leaflet, technical guidelines, etc.) are also available in Turkish and Arabic.</p>
<p>Is the final language assessment compulsory for refugees?</p>	<p>Refugees receive an invitation to take the final language assessment. However, it is not compulsory for them.</p>

<p><b>3. OLS licences allocation</b></p>	
<p>Are OLS licences for refugees connected to the approved Erasmus+ project in any way, or are the two completely separated?</p>	<p>OLS licences for refugees and operators are <u>separated</u> from OLS licences for Erasmus+ mobility participants. However, for contractual reasons, OLS licences for refugees and operators can only be allocated to Erasmus+ beneficiaries with an OLS project approved under the 2016 or following Calls.</p> <p>OLS licences for refugees and operators are made available in OLS with the same access that beneficiaries already use to manage licences for Erasmus+ participants, but under <u>separate tabs</u>.</p> <p>These tabs are identified with a number which reflects the Erasmus+ project number, but with an additional prefix: if the approved project is 2017-1-SE01-KA103-016177, the corresponding licences for refugees are available under the tab "<b>OREF</b>2017-1-SE01-KA103-016177".</p> <p>Licences for operators are also available under a different tab in OLS. If the approved project is 2017-1-SE01-KA103-016177, the corresponding licences for operators are available under the tab "<b>OOP</b>2017-1-SE01-KA103-016177".</p> <p>OLS licences for refugees that are linked to a particular project number must be used during the timeframe of that project (between the project start and end date). The number of OLS licences for refugees and operators that have been effectively used must be reported in the final beneficiary report of that project (only one additional question).</p> <p>Refugees are not required to take part in the project activities in any way in order to receive an access to OLS.</p>
<p>Is there any additional reporting to do for beneficiaries willing to take part?</p>	<p>The additional reporting for voluntary beneficiaries is limited to <b><u>only one question in the final beneficiary report</u></b>. In this question, beneficiaries are requested to report the number of OLS licences used by refugees, as indicated in OLS.</p>

<p>Are there any other administrative obligations apart from allocating licences, such as signing an additional contract etc.?</p>	<p>No. <u>There is no need to sign an additional contract, nor to amend the grant agreement already signed. A simple notification from the NA to the beneficiary is sufficient.</u></p> <p>The process for beneficiaries consists of the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. collect the refugees' e-mail addresses (a proof of refugee status is not required)</li> <li>2. send the invitation to the language assessment (which can be done in batch by language)</li> <li>3. all refugees and operators automatically receive an invitation to follow the language course (no action needed)</li> <li>4. reply to only one question in the final beneficiary report.</li> </ol>
<p>Are refugees required to provide personal information, and if so, is their data safe?</p>	<p>As for Erasmus+ participants, when logging into OLS, refugees are required to complete their personal profile with last name, first name, gender, nationality, year of birth, mother tongue.</p> <p>OLS is subject to Regulation (EC) no 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the European Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data and respects the privacy of its users.</p> <p>Personal data is only collected and further processed for the following purposes: to enable the OLS function; to allow OLS users to communicate and collaborate in the spirit of mutual trust and respect; and to extract aggregate data for statistical purposes. More information at <a href="http://erasmusplusols.eu/privacy-statement">http://erasmusplusols.eu/privacy-statement</a>.</p>
<p>How are the licences allocated to refugees?</p>	<p>The licences for refugees are allocated by the Commission directly to the voluntary Erasmus+ beneficiaries that wish to take part. However, NAs must first validate these projects in OLS so that they become visible to the beneficiaries.</p> <p>These beneficiaries shall then allocate the licences to the refugees that have been identified by them or by NGOs/other organisations (operators).</p>
<p>Can OLS licences also be allocated to the organisations directly in contact with refugees?</p>	<p>Yes. OLS licences are also available for <i>operators</i> directly in contact with refugees, to accompany, support and guide them through the OLS platform.</p> <p>Operators can be identified within the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation or NGOs/other organisations dealing directly with refugees. Operators are not required to have a formal contractual relationship with, or to be part of the staff of the Erasmus+ beneficiary institution/organisation.</p>
<p>Is there any difference between licences allocated to refugees and licences allocated to operators?</p>	<p>No. Operators receive the same OLS access as refugees, meaning that they can access the same functionalities as any participant using the platform. Operators are not able to allocate licences themselves to other participants.</p>
<p>Can beneficiaries indicate a different contact person for the management of the "refugee project"?</p>	<p>Some beneficiaries may wish to keep the management of the "OLS for refugees" project separate from the already existing Erasmus+ project. To do so, they can identify a different OLS contact person for the "refugee project". For instance, for HEIs, while the general OLS contact person is often an Erasmus+ coordinator, the "OLS for refugees" contact person can be from the integration and social affairs department.</p> <p>Just like the general OLS contact person, the "OLS for refugees" contact person receives an e-mail notification as soon as the licences are available in OLS, and is responsible for allocating the licences to the refugees and operators.</p>
<p>Do beneficiaries have to send the invitation to the language course to refugees, or is it done automatically?</p>	<p>No. All refugees and operators are <u>automatically</u> invited to follow OLS language courses.</p> <p>This is equally valid for all fields (higher education, VET or Youth-EVS projects).</p>

<p>What happens if beneficiaries are not able to use the licences?</p>	<p>OLS licences for refugees that are not used within the timeframe of the related project will ultimately fall back to DG EAC/EACEA without any further incidence.</p>
<p>What happens if refugees or operators do not use the licences eventually?</p>	<p>In case refugees or operators do not use the OLS licences, the beneficiary institution/organisation may cancel the invitations that have been sent and decide to allocate licences to (an)other refugee(s) or operator(s).  Only <i>unused</i> licences can be reallocated.</p>