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**Ad-Hoc Query on 2024.63 Language proficiency requirements on family reunification and pre-entry language tests**

**Requested by EMN NCP Finland on 12 November 2024**

**Compilation produced on 5 January 2025**

**Responses from EMN NCP Austria, EMN NCP Belgium, EMN NCP Bulgaria, EMN NCP Croatia, EMN NCP Cyprus, EMN NCP Czech Republic, EMN NCP Estonia, EMN NCP Finland, EMN NCP France, EMN NCP Germany, EMN NCP Greece, EMN NCP Hungary, EMN NCP Ireland, EMN NCP Italy, EMN NCP Latvia, EMN NCP Lithuania, EMN NCP Luxembourg, EMN NCP Netherlands, EMN NCP Poland, EMN NCP Slovakia, EMN NCP Slovenia, EMN NCP Spain, EMN NCP Sweden (23 in Total)**

Exported for: Wider Dissemination

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of amending the conditions of family reunification, the Finnish government is examining the possibility to introduce a pre-entry language test. In the test, the spouse of a sponsor who has been granted international protection, seeking to enter the country on the basis of family ties, would have to demonstrate a certain level of language proficiency in the country of origin.<sup>1</sup> The Finnish Immigration Service has been given the assignment to collect information on pre-entry language tests in the context of family reunification. As part of this assignment, the Finnish Immigration Service would like to launch an ad-hoc query to gather information if other EU countries have language requirements for family reunification process and how they are applying these requirements in practice.

**We would like to ask the following questions:**

- 1. Do you have a language proficiency requirement for the applicant of family reunification in cases where the sponsor has been granted international protection (refugee status or subsidiary protection)? YES/NO. If you answer yes, please explain (indicating the level of language proficiency required).**
- 2. If you answer YES to Q.1, does your Member State foresee possible exemptions for this requirement? YES/NO. If YES, can you please list these exemptions?**
- 3. Do you have any residence permit categories in which language proficiency is required prior to the entry to the Member State? YES/NO. If YES, please indicate in which categories of residence permits this requirement is applied and what is the level of language proficiency (if it is not the same for all the residence permits please specify)?**
- 4. If you answer YES to Q.1 and Q.3, how do the applicants demonstrate their language proficiency in their country of residence or origin? (e.g. by participating in a language test or by providing a certificate etc.)?**
- 5. Does your Member State require pre-entry language tests? YES/NO. If you answer YES can you please indicate where, how and by whom the language test is conducted?**

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<sup>1</sup> Publications of Finnish Government 2023:60, available at A strong and committed Finland : Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government 20 June 2023 (valtioneuvosto.fi).

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**6. If your Member State has a language proficiency / language test requirement, does your Member State provide or organize any language training for the applicants to reach the required language levels in their country of origin or residence? YES/NO. If yes, please elaborate what kind of training you provide.**



## 2. RESPONSES

		Wider Dissemination <sup>2</sup>	
	EMN NCP Austria	Yes	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. N/a</p> <p>3. Yes, in Austria, third-country nationals who are older than 14 years of age must provide proof of at least elementary German language skills at the most basic level when submitting an initial application for certain residence permits – such as the residence permit “Red-White-Red Card Plus”, “Settlement Permit”, residence title “family member” (with exceptions) (Art. 21a para. 1 in conjunction with para. 4 subpara. 1 Settlement and Residence Act).</p> <p>4. In Austria, proof is provided in the form of a generally recognised language diploma from an institution specified by regulation, in which the institution confirms in writing that the third-country national has at least elementary knowledge of German at the simplest level (A1). The language diploma must not be older than one year at the time of submission.</p>

<sup>2</sup> A default "Yes" is given for your response to be circulated further (e.g. to other EMN NCPs and their national network members). A "No" should be added here if you do not wish your response to be disseminated beyond other EMN NCPs. In case of "No" and wider dissemination beyond other EMN NCPs, then for the Compilation for Wider Dissemination the response should be removed and the following statement should be added in the relevant response box: "This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further."



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			<p>Proof is also deemed to have been provided if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the requirements for the fulfilment of Module 1 or 2 of the Integration Agreement are met or</li> <li>• the issuance of a residence title “Settlement Permit – Artist” for the pursuit of an artistic activity in legally defined artistic fields is sought</li> </ul> <p>(Art. 21a Settlement and Residence Act, Art. 9b Regulation on the Implementation of the Settlement and Residence Act).</p> <p>5. A corresponding language test is required to obtain the language diploma.</p> <p>6. Online courses, exercises and learning materials for learning German are available free of charge on the language portal of the Austrian Integration Fund. No other language training options provided by Austria are known.</p>
	EMN NCP Belgium	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No.</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Bulgaria	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. There is not a language proficiency requirement.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. There are no language proficiency requirements.</p>



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			<p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No, Bulgaria does not require pre-entry language proficiency tests.</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	<b>EMN NCP Croatia</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. No</p>
	<b>EMN NCP Cyprus</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NO</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. YES. An entry permit for work purposes in Cyprus, requires sufficient documents certifying that the applicant has knowledge of the Greek or English Language on a basic level. Yet, regarding family reunification , upon the renewal of the initial residence permit for family members of a refugee, the law sets a prerequisite for the submission of a certificate of success "in an oral examination issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, or any other equivalent qualification accepted by the said Ministry, which proves that the said member has adequate knowledge of the Greek language at level A2 [...] and basic elements of the contemporary political and social reality of Cyprus. However, in practice this requirement is not applied and is overlooked.</p>



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			<p>4. As stated in Q3, for an entry permit for work purposes and for the renewal of initial residence permit in family reunification, a certificate of language proficiency on a basic level, should be demonstrated.</p> <p>5. NO</p> <p>6. NO. However there are a number of courses usually offered free of charge for third- country nationals who want to learn Greek in Cyprus. The courses are financed from EU fundings run by NGOs or other organisations or institutions in CY.</p>
	EMN NCP Czech Republic	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NO.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. NO.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. NO.</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Estonia	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No.</p>


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			6. N/A
	EMN NCP Finland	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NO.</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. NO.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. NO.</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP France	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NO. France does not impose a language proficiency requirement on family members as part of a family reunification procedure.</p> <p>2. n/a</p> <p>3. No. However, in order to obtain a long-stay visa and/or a first residence permit marked "student" or "student mobility programme", a certificate of enrolment produced by the establishment or certificate of pre-registration is required. To be accepted into a higher education establishment, most institutions require a minimum level of French language proficiency of B2. For the humanities, a C1 level is strongly recommended. Some institutions may require a higher level. This depends on the requirements of the French institutions. In this case, the minimum level of mastery of the French language is not a criterion to justify the applicant's integration, but it does ensure that the student will be able to follow courses in French.</p> <p>4. n/a</p>



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			<p>5. No</p> <p>6. N/a</p>
	<b>EMN NCP Germany</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. Yes. Spouses of foreigners who have been granted international protection in Germany have to demonstrate proficiency in the German language at A1 level (CEFR).</p> <p>2. Yes. If the marriage took place before the foreigner relocating his or her main ordinary residence to Germany the spouse does not have to demonstrate any proficiency in the German language.</p> <p>3. Yes, for various residence permit categories language proficiency is a prerequisite. The level of language proficiency required varies depending on the specific residence permit category. The following list provides examples of residence permit categories and the corresponding language requirements.</p> <p><b>A1 level:</b> Subsequent immigration of spouses (Section 30 Residence Act); permanent settlement permit for Blue Card holders who have resided in Germany for 27 months (Section 18c Residence Act)</p> <p><b>A2 level:</b> Usually in cases of recognition measures for foreign professional qualifications (Section 16d Residence Act); <b>Permanent residence</b> for recognised refugees (Section 26 Para 3 Residence Act)</p> <p><b>B1 level:</b> Doing a basic and advanced in-company vocational training (Section 16a Residence Act) - Seeking a vocational training place or a place in higher education (Section 17 Residence Act); <b>Permanent residence</b> for TCNs with five years of residence (Section 9 Residence Act) - EU long-term residence permit (Section 9a Residence Act) - Skilled workers (Section 18c Residence Act) - Blue Card holders who have been resident in Germany for 21 months (Section 18c Residence Act) -</p> <p><b>C1 level: Family purposes</b> for minor, unmarried children aged 16 or over subsequently migrating to their parents (Section 35 Para 1 Residence Act); <b>Permanent residence</b> for recognised refugees with a residence permit for three years (Section 26 Para 3 Residence Act).</p> <p>4. Usually, German language proficiency can be demonstrated by means of passing a standardised German language test. Other ways of demonstrating German language proficiency – such as having attended a German language course - are possible but usually play a minor role.</p>



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			<p>5. Yes, Germany requires pre-entry language tests as a possible means of demonstrating language proficiency. Standardised German language tests are offered for instance by the Goethe-Institut e.V. and the Telc GmbH.</p> <p>6. Yes, the Goethe-Institut e.V. organises language trainings in many (not all) countries. However, while abroad, the foreigner is not entitled to attend an integration course to learn German. Hence, it is entirely up to the foreigner to try and get the training to acquire the German language skills needed to apply for a visa.</p>
	EMN NCP Greece	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NO, our national legislation, Presidential Decree 131/2006 (GG A'143) which transposes the Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification (L 251) does not provide a language proficiency requirement for the applicant of family reunification in cases where the sponsor has been granted international protection, as specifically art.7 par.2 of the Directive is optional for Member States.</p> <p>2. -</p> <p>3. NO</p> <p>4. -</p> <p>5. NO</p> <p>6. NO</p>
	EMN NCP Hungary	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No</p>



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			<p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. No</p>
	<b>EMN NCP Ireland</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. NA</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. NA</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. NA</p>
	<b>EMN NCP Italy</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. NA</p> <p>2. NA</p> <p>3. YES, only for study purposes.</p> <p>4. In our case, it is the University that carries out the checks.</p> <p>5. NA</p> <p>6. NA</p>



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	<p><b>EMN NCP Latvia</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No.</li> <li>2. N/a</li> <li>3. No.</li> <li>4. N/a</li> <li>5. No.</li> <li>6. N/a</li> </ol>
	<p><b>EMN NCP Lithuania</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No</li> <li>2. N/A</li> <li>3. No.</li> <li>4. N/A</li> <li>5. No</li> <li>6. There is a language test requirement for those who apply for a permanent residence permit having lived in Lithuania for 5 years with a temporary residence permit. The state does not provide or organize language training.</li> </ol>

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	<p><b>EMN NCP Luxembourg</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NO.</li> <li>2. N/A.</li> <li>3. NO.</li> <li>4. N/A.</li> <li>5. NO.</li> <li>6. N/A.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>EMN NCP Netherlands</b></p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>1. No, the Netherlands does not have a language proficiency requirement for the applicant of family reunification in cases where the sponsor has been granted international protection.[1] Family members who intend to reside in the Netherlands in the context of family reunification or family formation do not have to take the basic integration examination, which includes language proficiency.[2]</p> <p>[1] IND, "Aanvraag voor een 'machtiging tot voorlopig verblijf – nareis asiel' (647)", <a href="https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/7039.pdf">https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/7039.pdf</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>[2] IND, "Werkinstructie SUA: WI 2021/21 inburgering in het buitenland", <a href="https://www.mvv-gezinshereniging.nl/assets/files/Documenten/wi_2021_21-inburgering-in-het-buitenland.pdf">https://www.mvv-gezinshereniging.nl/assets/files/Documenten/wi_2021_21-inburgering-in-het-buitenland.pdf</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. N/A.</li> <li>3. Yes, there are categories of residence permits in which language proficiency is required prior to the entry to the Netherlands. The people that fall within one of the following groups are required to start civic integration before coming to the Netherlands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aged from 18 years to the AOW-eligible (Old Age Pensions Act) who;</li> <li>• Want to join their partner who is a Dutch citizen and need an MVV to come to the Netherlands;</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to join their partner who is living in the Netherlands and is not Dutch and need an MVV to come to the Netherlands;</li> <li>• Are moving to the Netherlands with their partner and need an MVV to come to the Netherlands;</li> <li>• Are a cleric (such as a priest or imam) who needs an MVV.[1]</li> </ul> <p>The MVV is an entry long-stay visa which is intended for persons who want to stay in the Netherlands for more than 90 days. The MVV allows for people to travel to the Netherlands to pick up their residence permit.[2] The following countries are exempted from the MVV: Australia, Canada, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Vatican City, United Kingdom, United States, South Korea, Switzerland, and an EU/EEA Member State.[3]</p> <p>The required level of language proficiency is a minimum language level of A2.[4]</p> <p>[1] IND, “Do I need to start civic integration before I arrive in the Netherlands?”, <a href="https://www.government.nl/topics/immigration-to-the-netherlands/question-and-answer/do-i-need-to-start-civic-integration-before-i-arrive-in-the-netherlands#:~:text=Civic%20integration%20exam%20outside%20the,and%20knowledge%20of%20Dutch%20society.">https://www.government.nl/topics/immigration-to-the-netherlands/question-and-answer/do-i-need-to-start-civic-integration-before-i-arrive-in-the-netherlands#:~:text=Civic%20integration%20exam%20outside%20the,and%20knowledge%20of%20Dutch%20society.</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>[2] IND, “Provisional residence permit (MVV)”, <a href="https://ind.nl/en/provisional-residence-permit-mvv#:~:text=The%20MVV%20is%20an%20entry,pick%20up%20your%20residence%20permit.">https://ind.nl/en/provisional-residence-permit-mvv#:~:text=The%20MVV%20is%20an%20entry,pick%20up%20your%20residence%20permit.</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>[3] IND, “Mvv exemptions”, <a href="https://ind.nl/en/mvv-exemptions">https://ind.nl/en/mvv-exemptions</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>[4] IND, “Inburgeringsexamen: voorwaarde voor naturalisatie in het buitenland”, <a href="https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/3007.pdf">https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/3007.pdf</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>4. As of July 1, 2019, the basic integration examination consists of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the Dutch society</li> <li>• Speaking (A2)</li> <li>• Reading (A2)</li> <li>• Listening (A2)</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing (A2)</li> </ul> <p>Applicants can register for the integration exam at the Dutch embassy or consulate general. However, not all Dutch embassies and consulates general offer the exam. After registration, applicants can make an appointment to take the integration exam. It is also possible to take the integration exam in the Netherlands. However, this requires applicants to also take the Orientation on the Dutch Labor Market (ONA) component.</p> <p>Not everyone is obliged to fulfill the integration exam. Some examples of exemptions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those that have a Dutch Diploma or certificate (issued on the basis of a Dutch law for education at a higher level than primary education);</li> <li>• Those that have a diploma State Examination Dutch as a second language (NT-2), program I or II. [1]</li> </ul> <p>[1] IND, “Inburgeringsexamen: voorwaarde voor naturalisatie in het buitenland”, <a href="https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/3007.pdf">https://ind.nl/nl/formulieren/3007.pdf</a>, last accessed 14 November 2024.</p> <p>5. No, the Netherlands does not require pre-entry language tests for spouses of a sponsor who has been granted international protection, seeking to enter the country on the basis of family ties.</p> <p>6. Yes, the Netherlands provide integration training for the applicants. This includes language training to reach the required language levels. The Dutch government has developed a study package called “Naar Nederland” (To the Netherlands). This package contains teaching material for people who want to prepare for the Basic Civic Integration Examination Abroad. Naar Nederland contains teaching material to learn how to speak, listen and read in Dutch.</p> <p>Applicants can also use it to practice for the exam components: knowledge of the Dutch society, speaking proficiency and reading proficiency. Naar Nederland allows applicants to order or download this teaching material. The package is available in 33 languages.[1]</p>
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			[1] Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, “Basisexamen inburgering in het buitenland”, <a href="https://www.naarnederland.nl/">https://www.naarnederland.nl/</a> , last accessed 14 November 2024.
	EMN NCP Poland	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NO</li> <li>2. N/A</li> <li>3. NO</li> <li>4. N/A</li> <li>5. NO</li> <li>6. N/A</li> </ol>
	EMN NCP Slovakia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No.</li> <li>2. NA</li> <li>3. No.</li> <li>4. NA</li> <li>5. No.</li> <li>6. Based on the Act on the Residence of Foreigners, from 1 July 2025, TCNs seeking long-term residence in the Slovak Republic will be required to demonstrate proficiency of Slovak language equivalent to the A2 level or higher as per the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).</li> </ol>



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			<p>The only exceptions to this rule are stipulated in the Act on the Residence of Foreigners and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicant who did not reach the age of 14 at the time of the submission of application,</li> <li>• TCN who has a temporary residence as a Slovak living abroad,</li> <li>• Applicant who has a proof of lower secondary education at a school with Slovak as the language of instruction, or</li> <li>• Applicant who has a proof of at least two school years at a secondary school with Slovak as the language of instruction or at a university in a Slovak language study programme and that no more than five years have passed since the end of the studies.</li> </ul> <p>The language examination will be administered by language schools authorized to issue a Certificate on the level of foreign language proficiency as per the Decree of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic no. 321/2008 Coll. about the Language School.</p> <p>To aid migrants in preparation for the examination, the Ministry of Education will support Language schools in organizing free Slovak language courses at levels A1-B1 in accordance with Measure 2.2.2.6.: Institutionalization and support of language education of foreigners of the National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation 2023 Action Plan.</p> <p>On 27 September 2024, the first Call for Proposals was posted by the Ministry of Education for language schools to apply for. The maximum amount of financial compensation for the language school per one course attendant is 300 EUR for a minimum of 42 teaching hours. The maximum entitlement per language school per year is 60,000 EUR. The course attendants must attend at least 70% of the lessons for the language school to be eligible the financial support.</p> <p>Calls like these should run through 2030 pending the allocation of funds from the national budget.</p>
	<p>EMN NCP Slovenia</p>	<p><b>Yes</b></p>	<p>1. No. 2. N/A</p>

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			<p>3. No.</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. NO.</p> <p>6. NO.</p>
	EMN NCP Spain	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. No</p> <p>4. N/A</p> <p>5. No</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
	EMN NCP Sweden	<b>Yes</b>	<p>1. No</p> <p>2. N/A</p> <p>3. Residence permit as a self-employed person to start and run a business in Sweden, according to Chapter 5(10a) of the Aliens Act, requires showing that a person has relevant knowledge of Swedish or English.</p> <p>4. Applicants can submit a copy of a course certificate or other proof that they know Swedish or English at the relevant level.</p>

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			5. No
			6. No

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