

PRESS RELEASE

Social Integration of Refugees through sport: EL teams up with strong partners in a pan-European project

Lausanne/Brussels, 10 February 2017: The Project ASPIRE (*Activities, Sport & Play for the Integration of Refugees in Europe*), led by the European Non-Governmental Organisation (ENGSO) and co-funded by the European Commission, through its ERASMUS+ programme, was inaugurated yesterday in Brussels. Beyond the European Lotteries (EL), the project comprises a very strong network of partners, including the International Center of Sports Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Observatory on Sport and Employment (EOSE) and a good number of national sport partners.

Commenting on the kick-off of the ASPIRE project, EL President, Hansjörg Höltkemeier noted: *“Commitment to society has always been a cornerstone of our model. As European Lotteries, we are deeply concerned by the current refugees’ crisis and we believe that sport and play activities constitute an excellent tool for the social integration, empowerment and trauma relief of refugees. We are positive that the ASPIRE project will have a lasting societal impact and EL is looking forward to be actively involved in this significant initiative.”*

The ASPIRE project, having as a main aim to offer suitable participation opportunities in and through sport for refugees by the provision of training and coaching for facilitators across Europe, will focus on the social inclusion for people at risk, especially refugees. The project will start with research on relevant best practices in order to ground the development of further project activities on underpinning evidence. The research will lead to the creation of a handbook and a training module, which will be disseminated in the second phase of the project through national trainings in the countries of the project partners. The project will finish with the organisation of a Pan-European event.

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European Lotteries (EL) is the European umbrella organisation of national lotteries operating games of chance for the public benefit. EL has members from 45 European countries including all 28 EU Member States. The association’s EU members contribute more than 20 billion € p.a. to the state budgets and the funding of sport, culture, social projects, research and other causes of general interest. Unlike many commercial online gambling operators, EL members only offer gambling and betting services in the jurisdictions in which they are licensed by the respective national government.