

Everything you need to know
about the
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Geography

History

Political system

National symbols

Economy

Population

Languages

Education

Culture

Everything you need to know about the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

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At a glance

Official designation

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Capital

Luxembourg

National day

23 June

Currency

Euro

Geography

Geographical coordinates

Latitude 49° 37' North and longitude 6° 08' East

Area

2,586 km², of which 85.4% is farmland or forest (2013)

Neighbouring countries

Belgium, Germany, France

Climate

Luxembourg enjoys a temperate climate. Annual average temperatures range from -2.6° C (average minimum value) to 21.6° C (average maximum value) (1981-2010).

Territory

Administrative division

- 12 cantons (Capellen, Clervaux, Diekirch, Echternach, Esch-sur-Alzette, Grevenmacher, Luxembourg, Mersch, Redange-sur-Attert, Remich, Vianden, Wiltz)
- 105 municipalities
- 4 electoral constituencies (South, Centre, North, East)

Judicial division

- 2 judicial districts (Luxembourg, Diekirch) comprising 3 magistrates' courts (Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette, Diekirch)

Population

Total population

549,700 inhabitants, including 248,900 foreign residents representing 45.3% of the total population (January 2014)

Most densely populated towns

Luxembourg (107,200 inhabitants)
Esch-sur-Alzette (32,600 inhabitants)
Differdange (23,600 inhabitants)
(January 2014)

Languages

National language

Lëtzebuergesch

Administrative languages

French, German, *Lëtzebuergesch*

Political system

Form of government

Parliamentary democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy

Head of state

HRH Grand Duke Henri
(acceded to the throne on 7 October 2000)



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Geography

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is located in the heart of Western Europe between Belgium, Germany and France. It has two natural regions: the Oesling in the north and the Gutland, comprising the Moselle valley in the east and the mineral basin in the south.

The total area of the country is 2,586 km², with the Oesling covering 828 km² and the Gutland 1,758 km².

Capital

Luxembourg City lies 300 m above sea level. The capital offers a striking contrast between the modern quarters perched on a rocky plateau with a sheer drop and the three lower quarters of Grund, Clausen and Pfaffenthal.

The quarter housing the European institutions has been located on the Kirchberg plateau to the north-east of the city since the 1960s.

Regions

The variety of its landscapes is one of Luxembourg's greatest attractions. The country is divided into two main regions, the Oesling and the Gutland.

- The **Oesling**, in the north, forms part of the Ardennes massif and borders the German Eifel plateau. This wooded region covers one third of the country (32%) and is a magnet for tourists. The highest point in Luxembourg is situated in this region rising to 560 m (Wilwerdange). There are villages on the uplands, as well as rivers and lakes. Oak and pine forests cover the steep slopes. The climate is harsher than in the rest of the country. The main towns in this region are Wiltz, Clervaux and Vianden.
- The Troisvierges plateau in the north of the Oesling is predominantly arable land with few forests. It is the coldest and wettest area of Luxembourg.
- The Ardennes plateau, crossed by rivers, south of the Wiltz basin, is the most typical area of the Oesling, with landscapes rich in contrasting forms and colours, plateaus and forests.

The area along the Oesling-Gutland boundary is one of the country's prime agricultural regions on account of its rich and varied soils.

- The **Gutland** ("good country"), in the south and centre of the country, occupies along with the capital the remainder of the territory (68%). It is made up essentially of fields and forests and comprises the following main regions:
- Luxembourg's sandstone plateau is the dominant feature of the Gutland, where some of the country's finest forests are to be found.
- Marly depressions are the largest and most characteristic feature of the Gutland landscape. They extend to the foot of the Dogger and Luxembourg sandstone escarpments and are made up of wide valleys. Over two thirds of this area is given over to farming.
- The Moselle valley is the most impressive in Luxembourg both in terms of size and variety of landscapes. It is one of the country's main tourist attractions, largely on account of its winemaking activities.
- The region Mullerthal – Luxembourg's Little Switzerland is located to the north of the Moselle valley along the border with Germany. Its main town, Echternach, is one of the oldest in Luxembourg.



The Moselle region: its river and vineyards
© ONT

- The Terres rouges (Red Lands) are situated to the south of the marly depressions. The area has been moulded by industry where iron ore has been extracted from the red earth, hence the region's *Lëtzebuergesch* name "Minett" (from "minette", the designation for iron ore in the Lorraine, France). The main towns are Esch-sur-Alzette, the second-largest town in the Grand Duchy, Differdange and Dudelange.
- The Valley of the Seven Castles boasts the castles of Mersch, Schoenfels, Hollenfels, the two castles of Ansembourg and also Septfontaines and Koerich, all along a 24-km stretch. They are part of a landscape of meadows and old villages that is perfect walking country.

Climate

Luxembourg does not have a clearly defined climate; it ranges between the oceanic climate of the Atlantic zone (small seasonal variations, mild and wet winters) and the continental climate of the eastern European plains (pronounced seasonal variations, harsh winters and rainy summers).

Oceanic influence brings rain in all seasons and continental influence brings biting, dry weather in winter. The climate is temperate from May to mid-October. June, July and August are the hottest months, with July and August frequently seeing the most sunshine. Luxembourg often experiences its own version of an Indian summer in September and October.

The annual average temperature is 9.4° C, it ranges from -2.6° C (average minimum value) to 21.6° C (average maximum value) (1981-2010).

There are slight variations in temperature, of around 2° C, between the north and south of the country due to the difference in altitude.



Haute-Sûre lake
© Christof Weber/SIP

River network

The four largest rivers in the Grand Duchy are the Moselle, Sûre, Our and Alzette. The other rivers are the Mess, Mamer, Eisch, Attert and Wark in the west; the Wiltz, Clerve and Bles in the north; the White Ern, Black Ern, Syr and Gander in the east. The Pétrusse is a minor river running through the city of Luxembourg, before flowing into the Alzette.

With the exception of the Chiers, which flows from the south-west of the country into the Meuse basin, Luxembourg's rivers are tributaries of the Rhine basin by way of the Moselle.

Administrative division

The country is divided into 12 cantons, 105 municipalities and 4 electoral constituencies.

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History

Luxembourg's origins

The name Luxembourg (Lucilinburhuc) first appears around 963 in a deed of barter in which Count Siegfried acquired from the abbey of St Maximin of Trier a small fort situated on a rocky outcrop dominating the Alzette valley, commonly called the Bock. This fortified site became a foothold, allowing the counts of Luxembourg to accumulate territory over the course of the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. By the late 13th century, the County of Luxembourg occupied a vast area stretching from the Meuse to the Moselle.

From the house of Luxembourg to the Habsburg dynasty

At the start of the 14th century, the house of Luxembourg acceded to the imperial throne and played a major role on the European stage. In 1308, Count Henry VII was elected king by the prince-electors; in 1312, he was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire by a papal legate in Rome. His son, known as John the Blind, became king of Bohemia. Three other members of the Luxembourg dynasty bore the royal or imperial crown: Charles IV (1346-1378), Wenceslas (1376-1400) and Sigismund (1410-1437). In 1354, Charles IV promoted the County of Luxembourg to the rank of duchy.

The male Luxembourg line died out with Emperor Sigismund in 1437. In 1443, the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, conquered the town of Luxembourg. The Duchy of Luxembourg then became a province of the Netherlands. Its fate was to be allied to this territorial entity for the next four centuries. The duchy belonged to the Burgundians (15th century), the Spanish Habsburgs (16th and 17th centuries) and the Austrian Habsburgs (18th century) in succession, with a brief period of French rule between 1684 and 1697. Luxembourg occupied an important strategic position on the European chessboard. The town of Luxembourg was gradually transformed into a formidable fortress dubbed "Gibraltar of the

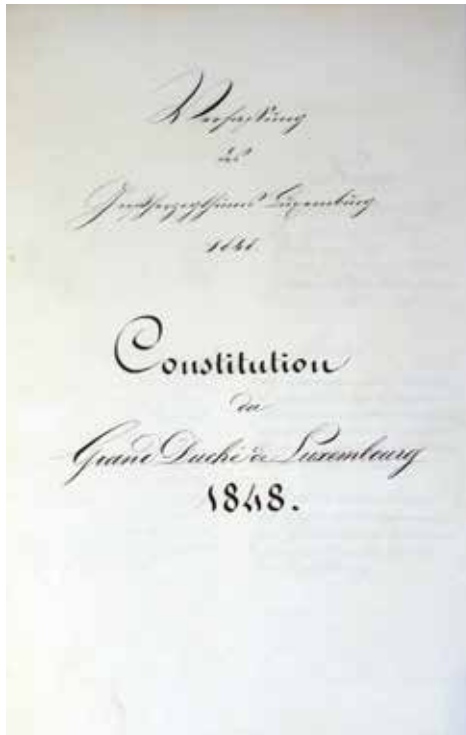
North", which European powers fought to control. In 1795, the French revolutionary armies conquered the stronghold. The country was annexed to France and became the Département des Forêts (Forests Department).

Towards the birth of an independent state

The collapse of the Napoleonic Empire in 1815 also had repercussions on the status of Luxembourg. The major European powers that gathered at the Congress of Vienna in that year decided to create a vast kingdom of the Netherlands to thwart any possible French ambitions. Elevated to the rank of grand duchy, Luxembourg was theoretically autonomous, but bound in a personal union to William I of Orange-Nassau, king of the Netherlands and grand duke of Luxembourg. At the same time, Luxembourg's membership of the German Confederation entailed a Prussian garrison being stationed within the fortress.



Old fortifications of the capital
© Christof Weber/SIP



© SIP

When the Belgian Revolution erupted in 1830, part of the Luxembourg population fought on the side of the Belgian insurgents, expressing its opposition to the policies of William I. The major powers then decided to separate the Belgians and the Dutch by creating the Kingdom of Belgium in 1831. However, a solution for Luxembourg was slow to emerge. In the absence of an agreement between the Belgian Parliament and William I, the fortress town remained under Dutch authority, while the rest of the country was administered by the provisional Belgian government.

Finally, the Treaty of London of 19 April 1839 decreed that the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg should be divided between the two countries. This date is considered to be the starting point for the creation of the independent state of Luxembourg. The French-speaking part of the former duchy was allocated to Belgium. The borders of the Grand Duchy were thus established and have not changed since. The absence of a territorial link with the Netherlands forced the king-grand duke to grant Luxembourg a separate administration. A constitutional charter in 1841 and three successive constitutions in 1848, 1856 and 1868 conferred an institutional basis on the new state and guaranteed the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens. The current political regime is that of a representative democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy.

From this point onwards a national sentiment began to develop, as witnessed by the appearance of patriotic songs and the growth of literature in *Lëtzebuergesch*.

From 1839 to the First World War

Following the Treaty of London in 1839, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg remained bound to Germany by its membership of the German Confederation and to the Netherlands through the dynastic connection (Orange-Nassau).

As an agricultural country with high levels of emigration, Luxembourg could not be self-sufficient. Therefore, William II, son of William I, took the country into a customs union with Germany – the Zollverein – in 1842. From the second half of the 19th century onwards, the country experienced strong economic growth with the discovery of mineral deposits and the construction of railways to transport coal. The need for manpower entailed high levels of immigration in the late 19th century.

The Treaty of London in 1867 consolidated the international status of the Grand Duchy. Luxembourg became a perpetually neutral and

unarmed state under the guarantee of the signatory powers. The Prussian garrison withdrew from the fortress, which was then dismantled.

The personal union between Luxembourg and the Netherlands eventually came to an end in 1890 with the death of William III. When the last remaining male descendant of the Orange-Nassau dynasty died, the grand-ducal crown passed to the Nassau-Weilburg branch, the only branch of the Nassau dynasty to have a male descendant. Luxembourg was therefore granted its own dynasty with Grand Duke Adolf as its first representative.

The guarantees provided by the Treaty of London did not, however, prevent Luxembourg from being invaded by German troops in 1914. The occupation was restricted to the military sphere. The Luxembourg authorities protested against the German invasion, but demonstrated absolute neutrality towards the warring parties. Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde and the government remained in power, which was to have political repercussions in the aftermath of the First World War.



Grund quarter
© Christof Weber/SIP

The interwar period

After the departure of the German troops in 1918, representatives of the left wing accused Marie-Adélaïde of having chosen to come to an accommodation with the occupying power and called for the dynasty to be deposed. In January 1919, the sovereign abdicated in favour of her sister Charlotte.

In September 1919, the Luxembourg government decided to organise a two-part referendum bearing both on the form of state (monarchy or republic) and on the economic direction of the country following the denunciation of the Zollverein. The population, which was enjoying universal suffrage for the first time, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the monarchy and an economic union with France. When France withdrew, the Luxembourg government forged an economic union with Belgium in 1921, the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU). Luxembourg adopted the Belgian franc as the currency of the BLEU, while retaining a limited issue of Luxembourg francs.



The Grand Duchess Charlotte in 1944
© Archives Cour grand-ducale

The economic downturn of the immediate postwar era was followed by a period of prosperity. However, from 1929, Luxembourg was also affected by the world economic crisis.

Luxembourg consolidated its position on an international scale in the 1930s, playing an active role in the work of the League of Nations in Geneva, whilst maintaining its neutral status.

The Second World War

On 10 May 1940, German troops invaded Luxembourg again. Grand Duchess Charlotte and the Luxembourg government went into exile and joined the Allied powers.

The German occupation heralded the end of Luxembourg's independence. A German civil administration was put in place demonstrating the Nazi desire to destroy the structures of the state of Luxembourg and germanise the population. A sustained propaganda campaign attempted to win the allegiance of the people of Luxembourg to the Reich. From 1942, young Luxembourg men were forcibly enlisted into the Wehrmacht. The majority of the population demonstrated a strong sense of national cohesion and resistance movements formed, like in other occupied territories. The occupying forces responded with a reign of terror and deportations. During the Second World War, 2% of the total population of Luxembourg lost their lives.

After the country was liberated by the Allied troops in 1944, the Marshall Plan allowed for a major modernisation and infrastructure initiative.



Gëlle Fra, symbol of the freedom and resistance of the Luxembourg people
© SIP

Greater openness to the world

The Second World War led to a change of direction for Luxembourg's foreign policy. As a result of fighting alongside the Allies, the country abandoned its neutral stance and took part in building all the multilateral cooperation institutions in the postwar period. The Grand Duchy is a founder member of the United Nations (UN), Benelux, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the Brussels Pact, the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Luxembourg also played an active role in the construction of Europe. Luxembourg joined the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the European Economic Community (EEC) in

1957. The ECSC heralded a new era of growth and membership of the EEC was the stimulus for economic expansion. As the first headquarters of the ECSC, Luxembourg City – along with Strasbourg and Brussels – has played host to major Community institutions over the years.

At the dawn of the 21st century

Luxembourg is now well represented on the European and international scene. As a member of the European Union and the euro area, it is characterised by its active advocacy of European integration. Its international commitment is reflected notably in the field of official development aid, which represents 1% of gross national income (GNI), placing the Grand Duchy among the five countries that spend over 0.7% of GNI on development cooperation.

Luxembourg is seen as a model for openness and a microcosm of Europe with its population comprising 45.3% of foreign residents. The country's small size has enabled it to maintain an image of harmony "on a human scale".



Kirchberg quarter
© Christof Weber/SIP

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Political system

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, a sovereign and independent state since the Treaty of London of 19 April 1839, is a parliamentary democracy within the framework of a constitutional monarchy, in which the crown is passed down through the Nassau family.

As in all parliamentary democracies, the separation of powers is flexible in Luxembourg: there are many links between the legislative and executive powers. Only the judicial power is totally independent.

Legislative power

Parliament, the government and the Council of State are involved in legislative procedure.

Parliament (Chamber of Deputies), composed of 60 deputies (members) elected every five years by universal suffrage, holds sole legislative power. Its main function is to vote on government and parliament bills. Deputies have a right of parliamentary initiative to table parliament bills.

The Grand Duke also has the right to initiate legislation, which is in fact exercised by the **government**. This right to initiate legislation, known as governmental initiative, allows the government to present bills to Parliament – in which the government usually has a majority –, this being standard practice. Laws passed by Parliament are promulgated and published by the Grand Duke. A law comes into force when it has been published in the *Mémorial* (compendium of legislation).

The **Council of State** is a consultative organ of the executive composed of 21 councillors appointed and dismissed by the Grand Duke.

In legislative matters, the Council of State is required to pronounce its opinion on all government and parliament bills presented to Parliament prior to voting by the deputies. Laws are submitted twice for voting in Parliament, with the second vote taking place three months at the earliest after the first vote. If Parliament decides to dispense with the second vote with the agreement of the Council of State, then it can be waived, which has become common practice.



Parliament
© Chambre des députés

In regulatory matters, every draft grand-ducal regulation must be submitted to the Council of State for its opinion, except when the Grand Duke considers the circumstances to be an emergency.

The Council of State is also required to pronounce an opinion on all amendments to government and parliament bills and to draft grand-ducal regulations.

In the context of its opinion, the Council of State must ensure that bills comply a priori with higher-ranking legislation, such as the Constitution, international conventions and treaties, as well as the general rule of law.

Executive power

The executive power lies in the hands of the **Grand Duke** and the **members of the government**, who support him in the exercise of his constitutional powers.

The Grand Duke is the head of state. His person is inviolable, which means that he cannot be called to account: he can neither be charged nor prosecuted in court. The Grand Duke's irresponsibility has its corollary in ministerial responsibility. For an act of the Grand Duke to come into force, it must be countersigned by a member of the government who assumes full responsibility for it. This responsibility is of a general nature with regard to acts relating directly or indirectly to ministerial functions. It can be legal, i.e. criminal or civil, as well as political. In principle, any act bearing the signature of the Grand Duke must previously have been submitted to the Government Council for debate.

The Constitution gives the Grand Duke the formal right to organise his government freely, i.e. to create ministries, divide up ministerial departments and appoint their members. In practice, the Grand Duke is guided by the results of the five-yearly legislative elections in his appointment of an



HRH the Grand Duke, followed by his son the Hereditary Grand Duke, attending national day celebrations
© SIP/Jean-Christophe Verhaegen

informateur (person appointed to lead exploratory talks) and/or a *formateur* (person appointed to form the government). The latter generally becomes prime minister. The *formateur* presents the members of government to the Grand Duke, who appoints them and swears them in. The number of ministerial departments very often exceeds the number of members of the government called upon to hold ministerial office, resulting in one minister frequently holding several portfolios.

The appointed government presents its political programme to Parliament, which expresses its confidence by a vote of approval. The government therefore has a majority on which it can rely in Parliament.

The government as a whole and each individual minister are politically answerable to Parliament for their actions. The political responsibility of ministers can be sanctioned by an obligation to resign from office when Parliament withdraws its confidence (motion of censure). It is customary for a minister to resign after the first negative vote of Parliament. The Constitution gives the Grand Duke the right to remove a member of the government from office at any time, but in practice a minister or the entire government present their resignation to the Grand Duke through the Prime Minister.

Judicial power

The courts and tribunals are empowered by the Constitution to exercise judicial power. They are independent in the exercise of their functions.

In addition to the Constitutional Court, there are two other levels of jurisdiction: judicial (the Supreme Court of Justice, district courts, magistrates' courts) and administrative (the Administrative Court, the Administrative Tribunal).

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Reference websites

www.etat.lu
www.justice.public.lu

National symbols

National flag

The first known flag was carried by Count William of Luxembourg in 1123. It was barred, i.e. horizontally striped, probably yellow and red.

The current Luxembourg flag is made up of three horizontal bands of red, white and sky blue. The Luxembourg flag bears a close resemblance to the flag of the Netherlands, but the latter has a distinctive cobalt blue stripe.

Most modern tricoloured flags are based to varying degrees on the *tricolore* of the First French Republic. Even the ancient flag of the Netherlands was officially defined as red, white and blue only in 1795 under French influence by the Batavian Republic.

The Luxembourg flag and state coat of arms are protected by the law on national emblems of 23 June 1972. The red of the flag corresponds to Pantone 032 C and the blue is Pantone 299 C (grand-ducal regulation of 27 July 1993).



© Christof Weber/SIP

National anthem

The national anthem consists of the first and last verses of the song *Ons Heemecht* (our homeland) dating from 1859, with lyrics by the poet Michel Lentz set to music by Jean-Antoine Zinnen. It was performed for the first time in public during a grand ceremony in Ettelbruck in 1864.

The Luxembourg national anthem is an invitation to peace. It expresses the country's great joy at having achieved independence in 1839, in an atmosphere of peace and prosperity.

Anthem of the grand-ducal house

Inspired by a trumpet call or cavalry fanfare, of which no written trace exists prior to the 16th century, the *Wilhelmus* is struck up when a member of the grand-ducal family arrives at or leaves an official ceremony.

National day

The custom of celebrating the anniversary of the birth of the sovereign has existed since the late 18th century. During the long reign of Grand Duchess Charlotte (1919-1964), this celebration took place in mid-winter on 23 January, the date of the sovereign's birthday.

A grand-ducal decree of 23 December 1961 set the date of the public celebration of the sovereign's birthday and therefore that of national day as 23 June, largely for climatic reasons. Celebrations begin the evening before.

The term "national day" does not feature in legal texts. It is described as the "day of public celebration of the Grand Duke's birthday".

Coat of arms

The origins of the state of Luxembourg's coat of arms date back to the Middle Ages. It was established in around 1235 by Count Henry V of Luxembourg. From 1123, Count William of Luxembourg bore a barruly banner on his equestrian seal. Most of the descendants of the first house of Luxembourg have favoured a barruly field and the descendants of the house of Namur a lion.

The coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has three levels: lesser, middle and greater. It is barry of ten argent and azure with a lion rampant gules, crowned, armed and langued in gold with a forked tail crossed in saltire.

The coat of arms has enjoyed legal protection under the law on national emblems of 23 June 1972, amended and supplemented by the law of 27 July 1993.



Coat of arms on the grand-ducal palace
© Christof Weber/SIP

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Commission héraldique de l'État (State Heraldry Commission)

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Luxembourg owes its prosperity to the discovery of iron ore in the south of the country in the 1840s. This discovery gave its name to a whole region, Minett (from “minette”, the designation for iron ore in the Lorraine, France), and marked the transition from an agrarian to an industrial state.

Industry

The early days of industry in Luxembourg, dating back to the middle of the 19th century, were dominated by steel production, which enjoyed considerable growth from 1950 onwards. During this period, Luxembourg also attracted the first American companies such as Goodyear (tyre production), DuPont de Nemours (polyester production) and Monsanto (nylon fibre production), while concurrently developing its financial sector.

The steel and oil crises of the 1970s had a considerable impact on the steel industry, which was still the main pillar of the Luxembourg economy.

Industrial diversification started unfolding from 1980 with the creation of the Société nationale de crédit et d'investissement (National Society of Credit and Investment) – a public banking institution that specialises in financing Luxembourg businesses –, industrial zones and the launch of around a hundred new businesses. In terms of Luxembourg's gross domestic product (GDP), this resulted in a decline of the steel industry and a rise of the other industries.

In 2002, ARBED (Aciéries réunies de Burbach, Eich, Dudelange – United Steelworks of Burbach, Eich, Dudelange) merged with two other steel companies, Usinor and Aleralia, to form Arcelor, a global leader in steel production. Arcelor merged with Mittal Steel in 2006 creating the ArcelorMittal group, the world's leading steel producer.

Since 2004, the government has been implementing a new economic diversification policy with a view to multi-sectoral specialisation: information and communication technology, logistics, health sciences and technologies, environmental technologies...



© ArcelorMittal

Financial centre

Although originally specialising in activities linked to the Euroloan market in the 1960s and 1970s, the financial marketplace developed as a private banking centre and from the 1980s onwards as a domiciliation and management centre for investment funds. Its success is largely based on the country's great political and social stability, as well as a modern legal and regulatory framework which is permanently adjusting to changes in the markets through constant dialogue between the government, the legislative body and the private sector.

This modern legislative and regulatory framework and Luxembourg's openness to the world have proved attractive to banks, insurance companies, investment fund promoters and specialist service providers from all over the world. Luxembourg's financial centre is indeed very diversified, offering a wide range of services to international clients,

both private and institutional. It has also succeeded in developing unparalleled expertise in the field of cross-border financial products and services, supplied by multicultural and plurilingual specialist teams.

Monitored by effective and proactive supervisory authorities, the financial marketplace has developed a strong culture of investor protection and applies strict regulations in the fight against capital laundering.

Luxembourg's financial centre is today the second-largest investment fund centre in the world after the United States, the leading captive reinsurance market in the European Union, the leading centre for the cross-border provision of life insurance within the European Union and the leading centre for private banking for international clients within the euro area. Luxembourg is also the largest domicile for Islamic funds in Europe and the main European business centre for Chinese currency across several activities.



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Digital economy, media, space technology and audiovisual production

Luxembourg has always played a pioneering role on the European media scene. Two media and communications giants were born in Luxembourg and continue to expand from the Grand Duchy: RTL Group, the leading European television and radio broadcaster, and SES, the world's leading communication and broadcasting services provider, thanks to its fleet of over 50 satellites.

Latterly, many other companies active in the convergent fields of media as well as information and communications technology have settled around these twin pillars in Luxembourg.

As part of its ongoing concern with strategically developing the country's economic fabric through innovative projects in cutting-edge technologies, Luxembourg once and for all cemented its position within the space technology sector when it joined the European Space Agency in 2005.

Government efforts to diversify in this sector have resulted in excellent connectivity with major European centres, the establishment of very high-level data centres and a regulatory environment favourable to the digital economy. Luxembourg also boasts one of the highest number of IT specialists in the world. Furthermore, information security and high-performance telecommunications networks are a research and development priority for the government.

In this context, in addition to a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), multinational names from the digital economy such as Amazon.com, eBay, PayPal, iTunes and Vodafone have also established themselves in the Grand Duchy. They confirm Luxembourg's position as a hub for companies operating in data processing, e-commerce and the communications sector in general.



The digital network operations room of SES
© Toby Smith/Reportage by Getty Images

The audiovisual production field has also benefitted from the government's proactive policy by means of several public aid schemes aimed at stimulating its development.

Logistics

Luxembourg's geographic location at the heart of the European markets and within reasonable distance of major European freight ports such as Antwerp and Rotterdam makes it an ideal gateway for logistics-related activity. Operations are not limited to simply transporting goods, however; the aim is to offer a value-added service (packaging, handling, dispatching and invoicing of goods).

The Grand Duchy is thus an operational base for several global players in the field of logistics, such as Cargolux, China Airlines, Cobelfret and DB Schenker.

Luxembourg's international airport is one of the leading places on the European freight scene. This sector is reinforced by the presence of Freeport Luxembourg, a free-trade zone established near the airport in 2014, where new standards for the conservation, storage and management of works of art and valuables have been set over a surface area of 22,000 m².



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Research and innovation

In recent years, the government has made substantial investment in research and innovation, establishing a whole series of direct and indirect instruments to promote this sector.

A legal framework for promoting research, development and innovation was created in June 2009 to stimulate the capacity for innovation of companies and private research organisations.

The government has succeeded in mobilising 700 million euros for the construction and fit-out of the University of Luxembourg buildings as well as the research and innovation institutions in Esch-Belval's Cité des sciences.

In recent years, it has made a substantial investment of some 140 million euros in the development of the health technologies sector to promote economic diversification in a rapidly growing leading-edge sector.

To further consolidate and structure Luxembourg's research system, the government in 2015 merged the public research centres Centre de recherche public Gabriel Lippmann and Centre de recherche public Henri Tudor to form the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology. It also joined the Integrated Biobank of Luxembourg and the Centre de recherche public de la Santé (Public Research Centre for Health) to form the Luxembourg Institute of Health. Research and innovation remain a priority of the government, as reflected in the financial contribution of 1.1 billion euros, which is being allocated over the 2014-2017 period to the contract of the state contribution to the funding of the University of Luxembourg and to the performance contracts of the public research institutions and the Fonds national de la recherche (National Research Fund).

Furthermore, the government is promoting the growth of environmental technologies with the aim of reviewing all activities producing goods and services in the light of sustainable economic development.

The National Society of Credit and Investment includes in its many instruments a loan service specifically designed to support research, development and innovation.



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Population

Luxembourg has experienced strong population growth since industrialisation began in around 1870. This can largely be explained by steady immigration since the late 19th century. In 1910, Luxembourg recorded 260,000 inhabitants; by January 2014, the population had risen to 549,700, having more than doubled in the space of a century.

This growth has not been regular, however, and can be divided into four major periods: a decline in the first four decades of the 20th century, a (moderate) baby boom in the 1950s and 1960s, a very rapid decline in the 1970s and an upsurge in growth since the 1990s due to an increase in the birth rate, linked notably to a rise in immigration.

A plural society

Until the First World War, the country witnessed a distinct trend in overseas emigration, particularly for economic reasons. The industrialisation of the late 19th century, however, led Luxembourg gradually to change from a country of emigration to one of immigration. A first wave of immigrants was followed by others in the 1960s and 1970s, a proactive immigration policy attracting a huge number of Italian and Portuguese immigrants to the steel and construction industries.

Nearly half the country's population currently consists of non-Luxembourg citizens. There are 248,900 foreign residents, accounting for 45.3% of the total population, with approximately 86% of foreign residents coming from the 28 member states of the European Union. The main communities represented are the Portuguese (36%) and the French (15%), followed by the Italians (8%) and the Belgians (7%). There are more than 160 nationalities present in Luxembourg.

Structural changes in society

• Population and demographics

Luxembourg's population is increasing steadily. In 2013, the birth rate was 1.55 children per woman. The total number of births rose to 6,115, a number that has seen minor fluctuations since 2000. Births to foreign residents account for almost 50% of total births in Luxembourg.

At the beginning of 2014, 29% of the population of the Grand Duchy was composed of young people under the age of 25, with people in the 25-64 age bracket representing 57% and individuals aged 65 and over accounting for 14%.

Luxembourg is among the five leading European countries in terms of life expectancy: in 2012 it was recorded at 84.3 years for women and 79.5 years for men. The gap between the two sexes is relatively small and has steadily decreased over time.

• Population and employment

There has been a steady growth in employment in the second half of the 20th century. Over the last decade, the number of cross-border commuters from France, Belgium and Germany has doubled, exceeding 160,000 people in 2013. 71% of the salaried population of Luxembourg is composed of cross-border commuters (45%) and foreign residents (26%).

The female employment rate has risen steadily, reaching 64.1% in 2012.



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Luxembourg nationality

The law of 23 October 2008 on Luxembourg nationality came into force on 1 January 2009. The aim of the reform was to adapt the legislation regarding nationality to changes in society.

Luxembourg nationality can be acquired by birth, full or simple adoption, or naturalisation. It confers on a foreign resident all the civil and political rights that come with Luxembourg citizenship.

A person seeking naturalisation must fulfil the following conditions:

- have reached 18 years of age at the time the application is submitted;
- have held a Luxembourg residence permit for at least 7 consecutive years immediately preceding the application and have actually resided in the country for the same period;
- demonstrate a sufficient active and passive knowledge of at least one of the three administrative languages of Luxembourg (French, German, *Lëtzebuergesch*) and have successfully passed an evaluation test in spoken *Lëtzebuergesch* (unless they have completed at least 7 years of schooling in Luxembourg or hold a Luxembourg residence permit issued before 31 December 1984 and have resided in the country at least since this date);

- have attended at least three civic instruction sessions (unless they have completed at least 7 years of education in Luxembourg or hold a Luxembourg residence permit issued before 31 December 1984 and have resided in the country at least since this date);
- meet the requirements of good repute.

The main change consists in a broadening of the principle of dual nationality. An applicant for Luxembourg nationality is no longer required to relinquish their original nationality. Moreover Luxembourg nationality is not lost when a foreign nationality is voluntarily acquired.

The law also makes provision for loss, forfeiture, reacquisition, proof and renunciation of Luxembourg nationality.

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Languages

The linguistic situation in Luxembourg is characterised by the use and legal recognition of three languages: *Lëtzebuergesch*, French and German.

History

Multilingualism in Luxembourg is rooted in the historical coexistence of the Romance and Germanic ethnic groups.

In the 14th century, the territory was made up of two parts: Walloon was spoken in the French area, whereas the *Lëtzebuergesch* dialect was used in the German-speaking area. The French and the German of that time were the written and administrative languages. Although Luxembourg City was located in the German-speaking area, it was the exception to the rule as French was the norm.

After the use of German had declined under French occupation in the 17th century, the return of French troops in the late 18th century promoted the use of French to the extent that it permeated local administration in the German-speaking area. The Napoleonic Code (French civil code) was introduced in 1804, and its influence has lasted until the present day as French has remained the exclusive language of legislation.

Grand-ducal decrees of 1830, 1832 and 1834 established the right to freedom of choice between German and French. French was given clear preference over German in the administrative domain as it was the language of the notables. German, by contrast, was used as the written language in the political sphere to comment on laws and ordinances so that these texts could be understood by all. Primary school teaching was restricted to German, while French was added in secondary education.

After the Treaty of London of 1839 and the dismemberment of the Grand Duchy, the territory of the new independent state lay entirely within the German-speaking zone. However, the Luxembourg notables managed to impose French as the language



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of administration, justice and political life. The law of 26 July 1843 introduced French teaching in primary schools and French became a compulsory subject, on a par with German. German-French bilingualism was enshrined in the Constitution of 1848, which stipulated that people were free to choose between German and French.

Throughout the 19th century, alongside French and German, the people of Luxembourg spoke a Moselle Franconian dialect in everyday life known until the end of the century as *Lëtzeburger Däitsch* (Luxembourg German). As a sense of national identity developed, *Lëtzebuergesch* eventually became the mother tongue of the Luxembourg people. It was introduced as a taught subject in primary schools in 1912. Luxembourg



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nationals demonstrated their attachment to their language in particular during the Second World War when *Lëtzebuergesch* became the language of resistance and national cohesion in the face of compulsory germanisation at the hands of the German occupying power.

Current situation

The law of 24 February 1984 on the languages regime finally officially established the linguistic status of *Lëtzebuergesch* for the first time, enshrining it as the national language. *Lëtzebuergesch* became an administrative and judicial language alongside French and German, bringing it into the administrative domain for the first time.

In 1989, *Lëtzebuergesch* was recognised by the European Lingua programme – an initiative to promote language teaching and learning –, thus confirming its sociocultural importance.

The creation of the Conseil permanent de la langue luxembourgeoise (Permanent Council of the Luxembourg Language) and the spelling reform of 1999 helped to meet the growing need for works on *Lëtzebuergesch* (school textbooks, grammars, dictionaries).

The law of 23 October 2008 on Luxembourg nationality, which entered into force on 1 January 2009, marks another important stage in so far as it includes an adequate active and passive knowledge of *Lëtzebuergesch* among the prerequisites for acquiring Luxembourg nationality, thus recognising it as a factor in integration.

Lëtzebuergesch was also promoted in the law of 22 May 2009, with the creation of the role of teacher of *Lëtzebuergesch* and the “Zertifikat Lëtzebuenger Sprooch a Kultur” (certificate in *Lëtzebuergesch* language and culture). This provides accreditation for speaking and teaching *Lëtzebuergesch*, as well as for knowledge of Luxembourg civilisation and culture. Since the 2009/2010 academic year, the University of Luxembourg has offered a “master en langues, cultures et médias – Lëtzebuenger Studien” (master’s degree in languages, cultures and media – Luxembourg studies), which means that the language, literature and culture of Luxembourg can be studied at university for the first time.

Although historic bilingualism has been transformed into multilingualism following the various waves of immigration and despite the presence of a community of foreign residents representing almost half of the population today, nobody would dare attempt to suppress French and German. The importance of these two languages is not purely political, but represents a national identity born of the coexistence of the Romance and Germanic worlds. By retaining French and German, Luxembourg remains the symbol of a meeting ground between Romance and Germanic as well as many other contemporary cultures. Recognition of *Lëtzebuergesch* reinforces and enriches the traditional bilingualism.



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The sociopolitical dimension of multilingualism

Multilingualism has deep roots in the everyday life of the country and permeates every level of society.

In general, *Lëtzebuergesch* – the national language – is the most widely spoken language at work, at school and/or at home. Portuguese is in second place, reflecting Luxembourg's large Portuguese-speaking community, followed by French and German. The linguistic situation is more nuanced, however, depending on context.

Politics

In Parliament (Chamber of Deputies), a language of use is not formally decreed, so deputies can choose which language to use. Regular debates take place in *Lëtzebuergesch*, while questions to the government are usually asked in French. Legislation is framed exclusively in French.



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Administration

According to the provisions of the law of 1984, “French, German or *Lëtzebuergesch* may be used” in administrative and judicial matters. Citizens can make administrative requests in any of the three languages and civil servants must attempt “in so far possible” to respond in the same language used by the applicant. French is favoured as the daily written working language of administration and *Lëtzebuergesch* as the spoken language (for work and communication).

Teaching

Languages occupy an important place in the Luxembourg education system. The plurilingual tradition in schools represents an enormous advantage for pupils, but also a challenge for an increasingly heterogeneous school population. Around half of the pupils speak a language other than *Lëtzebuergesch* as their first language at home.

German is taught in the first year of the second learning cycle of fundamental education (at the age of 6) and French is introduced into the syllabus in the following year. The *lingua franca* in fundamental education and the first years of secondary education as well as secondary technical education is German. In secondary education, French is the main language from the fourth year of study onwards.

English is added during secondary education and technical secondary education, with students in secondary education also having a choice of Latin, Spanish or Italian.

Language learning over the entire school career accounts for 50% of the curriculum.

Media

German has always been the language of choice of the printed press, although French has made up ground in traditional daily and certain weekly newspapers. By contrast, articles in *Lëtzebuergesch* are still the exception.



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Various publications – dailies, weeklies and periodicals – targeted at foreign communities living in Luxembourg or cross-border commuters have appeared in the last few decades. They are printed exclusively in Portuguese, French or English.

Lëtzebuergesch is the dominant language on the airwaves of national and local radio stations, with the place occupied by other languages (mainly French and English) varying according to schedules or the target audience.

Although the single national television channel broadcasts exclusively in *Lëtzebuergesch*, the TV news bulletin is subtitled in French or German. A five-minute news summary has also been available in French since autumn 2008.

Culture

The different languages all have their part to play in Luxembourg's cultural scene, although their importance varies depending on the artistic genre.

Although literary output and publications in *Lëtzebuergesch* are currently experiencing an unprecedented upsurge, a large number of works are written in French and German, depending on the author's affinity with one language or the other. Bookshops mainly supply publications in French and German, but also in *Lëtzebuergesch*.

and English, or even in other languages. Moreover, some bookshops exclusively stock titles in one language only. The law of 24 June 2010 on public libraries requires the latter to provide users with a collection that is of topical relevance, relating to the main fields of knowledge and culture in at least the three languages foreseen by the law of 24 February 1984 on the languages regime.

At the theatre, the public can see plays in *Lëtzebuergesch*, French, German or English, performed in their original language, either by Luxembourg theatre companies or by major companies from Germany, France and Belgium.

In cinemas, foreign films are always screened in their original version with French and Dutch or even German subtitles.

Professional and social life

Public life would be unthinkable without the coexistence and even the simultaneous use of several languages, with variations according to location and activity.

Since the working population is mostly made up of foreign residents and French, Belgian and German cross-border commuters, French is the main medium of communication, followed by *Lëtzebuergesch*, German, English and Portuguese.

French is used particularly in trade, hotels, restaurants and cafes, mainly in the capital and surrounding area. The north of the country is the exception to the rule as it is the only region where *Lëtzebuergesch* is more widespread than French.

English is the lingua franca of the large international community working in European institutions and staff in the banking and industrial sectors.

Because the community of Portuguese immigrants is so large, they often use their mother tongue in the workplace as well as during their leisure time.

Some words in *Lëtzebuergesch*

<i>Moien</i>	Hello
<i>Äddi</i>	Goodbye
<i>Jo</i>	Yes
<i>Nee</i>	No
<i>Wann ech geliift</i>	Please
<i>Merci</i>	Thank you
<i>Gär geschitt!</i>	You're welcome!
<i>Wéi geet et?</i>	How are you?

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Education

The Luxembourg Constitution confers on the state the right to organise and regulate the education system. The majority of schools are therefore state-controlled and free. However, there are still a few fee-paying private schools which follow the same curriculum and prepare students for the same qualifications. In addition to state and private schools, there are some fee-paying foreign schools which offer a different curriculum and therefore do not award the same qualifications.

Education system

Fundamental education

The law of 6 February 2009 which came into force in September 2009 covers the first nine years of schooling in four learning cycles under the heading “fundamental education”.

- The first cycle consists of one optional year of early childhood education and two years of compulsory preschool education.

Early childhood education is aimed at children aged 3. It is designed to improve children’s social skills and to teach them *Lëtzebuergesch* as the



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language of communication for all children, irrespective of their nationality.

Preschool education is compulsory for children who have reached their 4th birthday by 1 September of the current year.

- The second, third and fourth cycles constitute primary education, with each cycle normally lasting two years.

Primary education is for all children who have reached the age of 6 by 1 September of the current year.

Secondary and secondary technical education

After fundamental education, pupils are referred to either secondary education or secondary technical education. Secondary education (7 years) prepares pupils primarily to pursue university studies. Secondary technical education (from 6 to 8 years depending on the specialisation chosen) prepares mainly for professional life, but also enables entry into higher education.

Higher education and university

Higher education is provided by several technical secondary schools offering five main areas of training: applied arts, business, industry, health professions and the service industry. This training comprises a variety of specialist studies leading to a vocational training certificate (BTS – brevet de technicien supérieur) after two or three years of study.

University education has been offered by the University of Luxembourg since the 2003/2004 academic year. Teaching and research is divided into faculties and interdisciplinary centres bringing together cross-sector and interdisciplinary themes in teaching and research.

The complete university education cycle consists of three levels of study, each leading to a different qualification. The first level leads to the award of a bachelor’s degree, the second to a master’s degree and the third to a PhD.

One of the university's missions is to ensure the necessary link between teaching and research. It therefore fosters basic, applied and technological research. Research is implemented through projects conducted by virtue of agreements made with institutions, organisations, companies and national or international research establishments.

Language learning

Teachers speak *Lëtzebuergesch* to their pupils mainly in the first cycle of fundamental education. The aim is to develop all children's linguistic ability, especially young foreign residents, as school is often the first place where they come into contact with this language.

Language teaching plays an important role throughout a child's school education. From the age of 6 in the first year of the second cycle, children are taught to read and write in German, which remains the lingua franca for all subjects during fundamental education except for French. French is taught from the second year of the second cycle.

During the first three years of secondary and secondary technical education, all subjects are studied in German, with the exception of French and maths. Whereas French becomes the lingua franca for all subjects except languages from the fourth year of secondary education onwards, German remains the dominant language for technical education. English is taught from the second year; secondary education also provides an additional choice of other languages (Latin, Spanish or Italian). Some state secondary schools offer courses of study that are taught entirely in French or English.

As for *Lëtzebuergesch*, it is taught one hour a week in lower classes in secondary and secondary technical education. In integration classes, pupils who have recently arrived in the country learn *Lëtzebuergesch* according to a method specifically developed for this purpose.

In the few foreign schools – French, British and international – that exist in Luxembourg, French and

English are the main languages, although some time is devoted to the study of German and even *Lëtzebuergesch*.

The University of Luxembourg is also a multilingual institution. The law of 12 August 2003 concerning its foundation specifies the “multilingual nature of its teaching”. The university's languages are French, English and German. Multilingualism enables Luxembourg students to attend universities abroad, in German, French or English-speaking countries.

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Culture

The distinctive feature of culture in Luxembourg is its ability to surprise visitors to the country with the quality and richness of what is on offer, its multiculturalism and multilingualism. Visitors will find themselves swept up in the cultural whirlwind which is part of daily life and a characteristic of the rapid and continuous evolution of the Luxembourg cultural scene.

Contemporary culture with a history

Although Luxembourg has been influenced since the Middle Ages by the two major cultures of France and Germany on account of its history and geography, the indigenous cultural scene has successfully retained its own specific identity, a “personal touch” combining past and present.

Luxembourg’s culture won a great deal of international recognition during the country’s preparations for 1995, when Luxembourg City – a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994 – was named the European Capital of Culture for the first time. As the only city to date to have been awarded this title a second time, “Luxembourg and the Greater Region, European Capital of Culture 2007” broke ground by joining forces with the border regions of neighbouring countries.

Many prestigious and fascinating buildings were unveiled or renovated in the build-up to or in the wake of 1995: the Philharmonie designed by architect Christian de Portzamparc, the Théâtre national du Luxembourg, the Musée d’art moderne Grand-Duc Jean built by Ieoh Ming Pei, the Musée Dräi Eechelen, Neimënster – Centre culturel de rencontre Abbaye de Neumünster, the Grand Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg, the Rockhal – Centre de musiques amplifiées in Esch-Belval, the Centre national de l’audiovisuel in Dudelange...



The Musée Dräi Eechelen with the Musée d’art moderne Grand-Duc Jean in the background
© Christof Weber/SIP

A culture of many cultures

Located in the heart of Europe and home to over 160 nationalities, Luxembourg is a cultural crossroads. Respect, tolerance and openness are distinctive features of Luxembourg culture, which is a multicultural environment presenting an abundance of opportunities with the added unique feature of using several languages.

Culture at the heart of daily life

Despite its small size, Luxembourg boasts an impressive number of talented professional artists as well as modern cultural venues and sites. Culture forms an integral part of people's daily lives, be they consumers or players. Popular culture is also very widespread. Much like the artistic and creative potential, particularly among talented young people, the Luxembourg cultural scene receives support and substantial state funding and deserves to enjoy even greater recognition beyond national borders. International recognition of artists from Luxembourg by the foreign professional community, also resulting in international cooperations and partnerships with renowned cultural institutions, bears witness to the country's rich and varied cultural offer.

(Author: Ministry of Culture)



Philharmonie
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www.musee.lu

Literature

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www.cnl.public.lu

Theatre

www.theatre.lu

Dance

www.danse.lu

Music

www.philharmonie.lu
www.rockhal.lu
www.ugda.lu

Architecture, cultural heritage

www.luca.lu
www.anlux.lu
www.ssmn.public.lu

Audiovisual, photography

www.cna.public.lu
www.filmfund.lu

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