



GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

Country Profile

Luxembourg

Capital:	Luxembourg
Geographical Size:	2586 km ²
Population:	549 680 (2014)
Population as % of total EU population:	0.1% (2014)
GDP:	€ 45.478 billion (2013)
Defense Expenditure:	€ 176 million (2013)
Official EU language(s):	French, German
Political System:	Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
EU member country since:	1 January 1958
Seats in European Parliament:	6
Currency:	Eurozone member since 1 January 1999
Schengen area member?	Schengen Area member since 26 March 1995
Presidency of the Council:	11 times between 1960 and 2005 (Next in 2015)

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The Global Governance Institute
Pleinlaan 5, Brussels
B-1050 Belgium
Email: info@globalgovernance.eu
Web: www.globalgovernance.eu

a. Political System

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is a constitutional democratic monarchy that has been independent since 1867. The country has enjoyed a long period of stability with only a short interruption in 2008 when Grand Duke Henri refused to sign a Euthanasia bill, which resulted in a constitutional reform to avoid similar issue in the future. Despite its small size, it is a very complex country with three official languages, Luxembourgish, French, and German. The country is further divided into twelve cantons and four electoral constituencies.

Even though there is a separation of powers, the relationship between the legislative and the executive is rather flexible. The main institutional figures are the Grand Duke and the Prime Minister. The Grand Duke acts as the Chief of State and inherits this post. His power has been decreasing over time and is mostly ceremonial by now. Grand Duke Henri has held this position since 2000. The current Prime Minister is Xavier Bettel (Democratic Party, *DP*) acting as the Head of Government. He is chosen after the election of the Chamber of Deputies based on who the majority party becomes. The Council of Government is the main executive body that also has access to the Chamber of Deputies and has to be heard when demanded. The ministers are recommended by the Prime Minister and officially chosen by the Grand Duke. The current Government is made of ministers from the Luxemburgish Labor Socialist Party (*LSAP*), the Democratic Party (*DP*) and the Greens (*DG*).¹

Legislative decisions are made in the unicameral Parliament or Chamber of Deputies holding 60 politicians elected every five years by proportional representation. The Chamber passes bills and also has an oversight function over the executive. The Council of State acts as the advisory to the Chamber. In opposition to the political parties represented in the government (*LSAP*, *DP*, and *DG* having 32 seats) are the Christian Social People's Party (*CSV*), the Alternative Democratic Reform Party (*ADR*), and The Left, totalizing 28 seats.²

Luxembourg has a civil law system with a constitution that has been in effect since 1868. The highest courts are the Court of Appeal, the Court of Cassation, as well as the Constitutional Court. All judges are appointed for life by the monarch.³

b. Foreign Policy

Luxembourg's foreign policy is closely linked to that of the EU and is generally marked by **multilateralism**, as the country is aware of the fact that it cannot do too much due to its small size. Nonetheless, a few priorities exist, such as maintain **good relations with neighboring countries** (especially France and Germany) and developing a **competitive economy**. Both of these goals have been successfully achieved so far. Its small size also allows the country to be a defender and mediator in international agreements as Luxembourg does not have a definite foreign policy and its power is often underestimated⁴.

¹ "Luxembourg's Constitution of 1868 with Amendments through 2009", *Constitute*, 2012. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Luxembourg_2009.pdf.

² "Organisation et Fonctionnement", *Chambre des Députés du Grand Duché du Luxembourg*, 2015. Web. Accessed December 16, 2015.

http://www.chd.lu/wps/portal/public!/ut/p/b1/04_SjzQ0MLQwtDCyMDbSj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOJdjFzCgixNjAz8XYPNDIyMA4wdg4KNDawMTIAKIoEKDHAARwNC-v088nNT9XOjciwANogr9w!!/dl4/d5/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS80SmtFL1o2X0QyRFZSSTQyMEc3UTQwMkpFSjdVU04zR0gz/

³ "Luxembourg", *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last update October 29, 2015. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lu.html>.

⁴ Hey J.A.K., "Luxembourg: Where Small Works (and Wealthy Doesn't Hurt)", in Hey J.A.K. (ed.) *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Politics Behavior*, p. 75-93, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, CO, 2003.

Luxembourg prides itself in the fact that it is one of the most generous **development aid** donors by contributing 1% of its GNI since 2009. The focus lies on countries with a low Human Development Index such as Mali, Senegal, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Niger, Laos, Vietnam, Nicaragua, and Salvador whom receive 65% of the aid. Priority areas in these regions are health, education (especially technical and vocational), as well as micro financing. Most of the work is done bilaterally where 20% of the annual budget is located to five Luxemburgish NGOs. These are *Caritas Luxembourg*, *Handicap International Luxembourg*, *Red Cross Luxembourg*, *Médecins sans Frontières Luxembourg*, and *CARE Luxembourg*. In case Luxembourg participates multilaterally, this is either done by giving funds or by supporting projects of international organizations in already established partner countries.⁵ Luxembourg believes that further economic development is needed in the countries of the Arab Spring. It strongly believes that Africa is the continent of the future and that much potential lies there. In addition, Luxembourg maintains a strong relationship with the US while developing an increasingly important relationship with China.⁶

European Union (EU)

Luxembourg has been part of the European Union since its genesis. The country belongs to the most **convincing** members and many EU institutions have their seat in Luxembourg such the European Court of Justice. Several Luxembourgers have played important roles in the EU, such as the founding father Robert Schuman, as well as three European Commission Presidents including the current President Jean Claude Juncker. All of this involvement shows that Luxembourg is interested in achieving a tight **community** instead of simply an intergovernmental organization. Thus, Luxembourg advocates a deeper integration so that the EU institutions can be active on the international scene and effectively speak with one voice.

From June to December 2015, Luxembourg held the Presidency of the Council of the EU and voiced several main priorities. One of these is **investment**, which needs to be stimulated in order to boost growth and competitiveness in the EU. This should be achieved by implementing a fund for strategic investments, a bigger role of the capital market, and the development of a real European industrial policy that also focuses on space. Similar to this, the **single market** is in need of revision too, in order for the EU to be able to play a role in the digital revolution. In addition, European **competitiveness** needs to be placed in a global and transparent framework in order to fight against fraud and tax evasion. Thus, Luxembourg advocates that negotiations with Vietnam, Japan, and Canada should be concluded and that of Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) should advance with a focus on investors. Also, Luxembourg believes that the EU's **social dimensions** need to be deepened by increasing the overall youth employment as well as their political participation. Other important priorities for the country were to manage the refugee crisis, promote a sustainable development by boosting green economy as well as strengthen the EU presence globally with a new foreign policy strategy.

⁵ "Politics and Institutions", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-tour-horizon/politique-et-institutions/index.html>; "Cooperation and Humanitarian Action", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update May 7, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-monde/cooperation-au-developpement/index.html>.

⁶ Asselborn Jean, "Declaration on the European and Foreign Policy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg", *Le gouvernement du Grand Duché de Luxembourg*, November 14, 2012. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015 <http://www.gouvernement.lu/3506878/traduction-anglaise-2012.pdf>.

Luxembourg favors further EU **enlargement** in order to promote the Union's projects with a larger scope, especially in the Balkans. Recent openings of embassies in this region illustrated the country's interest. Luxembourg sees that Turkey can be an important EU member due to its dynamic economy and strategic position that would open up new trade routes. In light of the possible accession of Serbia and Kosovo, Luxembourg advocates prior reconciliation.⁷ On the regional scale, the **Benelux** countries have a long history of cooperation, starting with a custom union between Belgium and Luxembourg already in 1921. In 1947, the Netherlands joined to cooperate in the field of economy, security, and sustainable development. It is sometimes seen as a model for reinforcing EU ties at the institutional level⁸.

c. Peace & Security Policy

The Luxembourgish Army has been a professional armed force since 1996 but remains rather small with no special navy or air force. The country may however use NATO's air force stationed in Luxembourg. Luxembourg's peace and security policy focuses on unconventional threats, with a particularly well-developed **cyber security strategy**. Other peace and security priorities are climate change, human rights, non-proliferation of weapons, disarmament, and combatting impunity. Luxembourg believes that during armed conflicts, solidarity should be shown against sexual violence toward women and children, and against weapon trafficking. Engaging in international organizations is important in this process as they help preserve peace and security globally while keeping in mind fundamental rights. In line with this, Luxembourg also aims to guarantee **collective security** especially with the help of NATO.

European Union (EU)

Luxembourg is part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), advocating a more coherent and efficient approach. Luxembourg believes that the EU should push for a nuclear free Middle East. First steps of this are already being taken with the recent nuclear deal with Iran. The country sees the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) as an important step that should be further developed. So far Luxembourg has only participated in a few CSDP missions: the EULEX mission in Kosovo and the EUCAP mission in Niger.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Luxembourg has been a member of NATO since 1949, when it abandoned its traditional status of neutrality that it had held since 1867. Even though the initial threat for which NATO was founded could be prevented, new threats are arising that NATO needs to be ready for. Luxembourg itself is an active member of NATO by participating in several operations and missions such as KFOR in Kosovo and ISAF in Afghanistan. A NATO **radar aircraft fleet is notably** situated in Luxembourg⁹. In 2015, the country devoted 0.5% of its GDP to defence expenditures¹⁰. For the period 2014-2015, Luxembourg contributed to 0.15% of NATO's Common-Funded Budgets and Programmes¹¹.

⁷ "Programme and Priorities", *Presidency of the Council of the European Union - Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last updated July 1, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/la-presidence/a-propos-presidence/programme-et-priorites/index.html>.

⁸ "Benelux", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-monde/organisations-internationales/benelux/index.html>.

⁹ "NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015 <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-monde/organisations-internationales/otan/index.html>.

¹⁰ "NATO publishes defence expenditures data for 2014 and estimates for 2015", Press release PR/CP(2015)093-COR1, *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, June 22, 2015, p. 6. Web. Accessed

United Nations (UN)

Luxembourg has been a member of the UN since its creation in 1945. In 2013 and 2014, the country was able to hold a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council. During this period, Luxembourg advocated a **comprehensive approach** of defense, diplomacy, and development, as crises are always multidimensional. Luxembourg favored Palestine becoming an observer state in the UN, as it believes the country should become recognized and the actions of Israel should be condemned.¹² For the period 2014-2015, Luxembourg contributed to 0.08% of the UN Peacekeeping budget¹³, but as of October 2015, does not participate in any Peacekeeping Operation.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Luxembourg has been a member of the OSCE since 1973, when it was called the *Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. Luxembourg's participation in the OSCE has taken place by funding several projects especially with the goal of promoting human rights¹⁴. In 2014, Luxembourg contributed to 0.3% (€476,245) of the Organization's unified budget¹⁵, and one national was involved in its staff¹⁶.

Council of Europe (CoE)

Luxembourg became a member of the Council of Europe in May 1949, being one of its founding members. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights issued no judgments concerning the country. In 2015, Luxembourg contributed to 0.21% (€905,024) of the unified budget of the CoE¹⁷.

Strategic Culture

Luxembourg has a rather small army, which means that most of its security needs to be guaranteed with the help of various international organizations. Within these organizations, Luxembourgish goals are vague and involvement is not very strong. Nonetheless, furthering the economy still remains an important priority that also makes its way into Luxembourg's security policy.

November 20, 2015.

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150622_PR_CP_2015_093-v2.pdf

¹¹ "NATO Common-Funded Budget & Programmes", *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015.

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf

¹² "UN – United Nations", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-monde/organisations-internationales/onu/index.html>.

¹³ United Nations General Assembly, "Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236", *Report of the Secretary General*, December 27, 2012, p. 2. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015.

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1.

¹⁴ "OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015 <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-monde/organisations-internationales/osce/index.html>.

¹⁵ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015, p. 105. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 109

¹⁷ "Luxembourg – Member state", *Council of Europe*. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/luxembourg>.

d. Economic Policy

Luxembourg has a small, stable and high-income economy characterized by solid growth, low inflation, and low unemployment. Originally, the rise of the steel industry made the country wealthy. Today, the biggest sector is the **financial sector** being worth 36% of the national GDP, making it a known international financial center. This is due to the fact that Luxembourg leads Europe in investment funds and private banking. Nonetheless, the country is aware of the disadvantages of focusing too much on one sector and has started to diversify its economy to information and communication technology (ICT), logistics, bio- and eco-technologies, as well as research. In all of these sectors national growth is achieved by making the economy more competitive.

Luxembourgers enjoy a **very high standard of living**, as Luxembourg has the highest minimum wage worldwide and superb social benefits. Indeed, Luxembourg holds the highest GDP per capita in the Eurozone. However, this number is not totally accurate as it factors in the large amount of foreign and cross border workers (39%). Other positive indicators are a **high current account surplus** and **low public debt**, giving the country a big growth potential. The potential is further amplified by a favorable tax location that is slightly less strong today due to EU and OECD pressures. Nonetheless, tax burden for families remains very low.¹⁸

European Union (EU)

As a founding member of the EU, Luxembourg has also had the Euro since its establishment and today hosts various important **financial mechanisms** such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Investment Fund (EIF), the European Parliament's Secretariat, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), and the European Financial Stabilization Mechanism (EFSM). Nonetheless, the country has the impression that the full potential of the EU single market has not been used yet. Following steps supported by Luxembourg are the creation of **Banking Union** for further economic integration, the “communautarization” of public debts and the creation of “Eurobonds”, as well as **free trade agreements** conducted with Japan and the US to improve market conditions.¹⁹

According to the 2015 *Council Recommendations*, Luxembourg is currently in the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact. In its 2015 *Stability Programme*, the Government plans to bring down the headline surplus from 0,6 % of GDP in 2014 to 0,1 % of GDP in 2015. Thereafter, it plans to raise it again to 0,9 % of GDP in 2018. The Government plans to keep the government debt-to-GDP ratio well below the 60 % Treaty reference value. The Council is of the opinion that Luxembourg is expected to comply with the provisions of the Stability and Growth Pact. However, the long-term sustainability of public finances is threatened by growing pension expenditures. Furthermore, the Luxembourgish economy is characterized by a sizeable divergence of labor productivity across economic sectors, with productivity in the financial sector twice as high as that in the non-financial sectors²⁰.

¹⁸ "Luxembourg", *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last update October 29, 2015. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lu.html>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Council of the European Union, “Council Recommendation on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Luxembourg and delivering a Council opinion on the 2015 Stability Programme of Luxembourg”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C272/74 (July 14, 2015). Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/csr2015_council_luxembourg_en.pdf.

Economic Diplomacy & Foreign Trade

Luxembourg has been a founding member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), but today the EU is responsible for voicing one opinion of all members towards the organization. Despite this, Luxembourg still has several individual interests. These are a deep commitment to a multilateral trading system as well as the desire for Russia to join so the country also has to adhere to the various legislations. As a founding member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Luxembourg was recently qualified as a **model of good humanitarian practice**. The organization was also responsible for the push towards a very active development policy when Luxembourg joined the OECD Development Assistance Committee in.

Luxembourg's economy has an open attitude and good connectivity to international markets, which is required as the economy **depends on international actors** to trade with. This is due to the fact that 85% of Luxembourg's production is made for exports, most of which are services rather than goods. The motto of the Luxembourgish economy is "the freer the trade the better"²¹. Approximately 87% of Luxembourg's exports go to countries of the European Union. Important trading partners are Belgium, Germany, and France but relations have also been extended to American and Asian countries, as well as the Middle East.²²

Author	<i>Anna-Lena Scherer, Jacobs University Bremen.</i>
Content Revision	<i>Luca Nuvoli, Université Catholique de Louvain.</i>
Language Revision	<i>Joseph Aumuller, University of Denver.</i>

²¹ "The Economy and Key Sectors", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update April 28, 2015. Web. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/le-grand-duche-se-presente/luxembourg-tour-horizon/economie-et-secteurs-cles/index.html>.

²² "Foreign Trade", *The Official Portal of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*, last update May 2, 2015. Web. Accessed November 20, 2015. <http://www.luxembourg.public.lu/en/investir/portrait-economie/commerce-exterieur/index.html>.

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http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_06/20150622_PR_CP_2015_093-v2.pdf.

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http://www.chd.lu/wps/portal/public/!ut/p/b1/04_SjzQ0MLQwtDCyMDbSj9CPykssy0xPLMnMz0vMAfGjzOJdjFzCgjxNjAz8XYPNDIyMA4wdg4KNDAwMTIAKIoEKDHAARwNC-v088nNT9XOjciwANogr9w!/dl4/d5/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS80SmtFL1o2X0QyRFZSSTQyMEc3UTQwMkpFSjdVU04zR0gz/

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http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/224/Add.1.