Demographic situation

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is situated at the heart of Western Europe between Belgium, France and Germany. With a surface area of 2 586 km², the country extends from North to South over a maximum distance of 82 km.

Population

With 602 005 inhabitants on 1 January 2018, Luxembourg’s population has been consistently increasing.

According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (STATEC [1]), the resident population has been growing by more than 300 000 people in the last 30 years (in 1988, inhabitants were 372 000). This increase is mainly due to immigration. The population had been growing significantly in the 1990s, and more steadily through the years 2000.

Population evolution (from 1990 to 2018)

(Source: Statec [2])
Population density is highest in Luxembourg city and Esch-sur-Alzette, with respectively 2,260.5 and 2,441.8 inhabitants per km² in 2018. High and medium density areas (with respectively 861 to 1,570 and 371 to 860 inh./km²) are mainly located in the centre of the country and the South. Rural areas may have from 36 to 150 inhabitants per km².

For details on population density, please see STATEC's interactive PDF online.

More in-depth information on several markers concerning population and territory is also available on the online Luxembourg Geoportal. This thematic atlas offers a large array of detailed maps about markers such as territorial organisation, population, environment, tourism, etc.

### Population by nationality

According to STATEC, the ratio of foreigners in the general population was 48% on 1 January 2018. Foreign citizens' country of origin is mostly (84%) one of the 28 member States of the European Union: Portugal (33.5% of all foreign citizens), France (15.90%), Italy (7.62%), Belgium (7.01%), Germany (4.56%), United Kingdom (2.06%), Netherlands (1.49%), etc.

As shown by the Eurostat statistic in the figure below, the share of non-nationals in Luxembourg's resident population is the highest of all European countries.

[Image: Share of non-nationals in the resident population, 1 January 2018]

(source: Eurostat)

[6](source: Eurostat)
Natural increase and migration balance

Luxembourg’s population growth is largely due to immigration and to the fertility of the foreign population. Present-day natural increase (excess of births over deaths) is mainly due to the foreign citizens’ young age profile. The death rate has remained relatively low throughout the past decade, while the number of births has significantly risen.

The part of foreign citizens in the overall population has been growing consistently since the 1990s, whereas the number of Luxembourg nationals has increased at a slower pace. From 2012 to 2014, the natural surplus (difference between the number of births and the number of deaths) of Luxembourgers recovered from negative figures, in particular due to foreign residents taking the Luxembourg nationality.

Population by age and nationality

Total population, Luxembourgers and foreigners per age on 1 January 2018 (source: STATEC [2]):

[source: STATEC (7)]
Age distribution

The figure below shows the age structure of the population (children, people in working age and third age citizens) in 2001, 2006 and 2018:
As in other European countries, the **number of seniors has been rising** during the past decades. However, as a result of the strong net immigration of younger age groups, the share of seniors has remained relatively stable from the 1980s on, making up **around 14 %** of the total population.

**Employment and unemployment**

In the Luxembourg labour market, transborder workers from the neighbouring countries play an important role. Incoming borderers’ numbers outreach by far the numbers of outgoing cross-border workers.

The STATEC map below illustrates the cross-border professional mobility in the Greater Region (France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg):

![Population by age groups (%)](image_url)
As a consequence of transborder commuting, there is a significant difference between national and international employment.

The labour market overview of the years 2000-2017 shows that not only domestic employment has been rising during the current decade, but also the unemployment rate, from 2.4% in 2000 to 4% in 2005 and 5.9% in 2017.
Languages

Official languages

Luxembourg is a trilingual country:

- The **national language is Luxembourgish** (Lëtzebuergesch), a Moselle-Franconian dialect spoken by the country’s population
- The **legislative language is French**
- The **official administrative and judicial languages are French, German and Luxembourgish**: administrative requests written in one of these languages have to be answered, as much as possible, in the language chosen by the applicant (**law of 24 February 1984 on language regime** [12], Art.4).

French and German are also used for official communications and in the written press.

In addition to the three official languages (Luxembourgish, German and French), the immigrants’ languages (especially Portuguese and Italian), as well as English, play an important role in Luxembourg’s economic and cultural life. **Code switching**, i.e. the necessity to switch from one language to another, is part and parcel of the residents’ daily life.

Trilingualism has a long tradition in Luxembourg, with various usages according to social background, context and political situation. Basic knowledge of Luxembourgish is one of the **requirements for the acquisition of Luxembourgish nationality**.

Languages at school

The educational system is **multilingual**. It uses Luxembourgish as a language of integration and socialisation and progressively adds German, French and English. Depending on the educational options chosen, further languages can also be learned.
A **multilingual concept** [13] for nurseries and preschool education and care has recently been implemented.

The **provision of formal and non-formal education** has been diversified during the past years, such as to adapt to the linguistic and sociocultural diversity of the school population. Besides the mainstream Luxembourgish education system, an international provision is available, mainly targeted at anglophone and francophone pupils.

As to the **International School** of Differdange & Esch-sur-Alzette (EI [14]), this is a multilingual public establishment, open to all, and offering differentiated **linguistic pathways** [14].

Eurydice article **12.3 Support Measures for Learners in Early Childhood and School Education** [15] presents specific support measures for pupils newly arrived in Luxembourg or experiencing difficulties in one or more of the official languages of instruction.

Compared to other EU member States, Luxembourg is the country where figures are highest concerning the number of pupils using another language at home than the language of instruction, and where the number of teaching hours for foreign languages is the most significant (source: Eurydice & Eurostat, 2012. **Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe 2012** [16]). The acquisition of linguistic competences plays a central role in school education and in adult education.

## Religions

Luxembourg is a secular State. Article 19 of the **Luxembourg Constitution** [17] guarantees the freedom of worship and public practice of religion, as well as the freedom of expression of religious beliefs. According to article 22 of the Constitution, administrative and financial relationships between the State and religious communities are governed by means of conventions.

The law of 23 July 2016 defines the relations between the State and religions (see legislation: Cults). It also sets the State's financial contribution to the major religions established in Luxembourg: Christian churches (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican) and Jewish and Muslim communities.

Collecting personal information on religious beliefs or activities is formally prohibited in compliance with the law on personal data protection (**loi du 1er août 2018** [18]). Thus there are no statistics concerning the repartition of the different faiths in the population.

Ethical values are transmitted in school education by a course on moral and social education named 'Life and society' (vie et société). This course approaches cultural, philosophical and religious diversity in a pluralistic perspective. Since the implementation of the 2016 law (**loi modifiée du 24 août 2016** [19]), this subject is provided at all public schools.