

Citizens' Participation

LUXEMBOURG

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Voting Rights

- Voting right at national level

- Luxembourgish nationals
- 18+ years old
- Luxembourgish nationals living abroad can participate by postal vote.
- Not allowed to vote are people who have been convicted of criminal offences and majors in guardianship.
- <https://elections.public.lu/en/systeme-electoral/legislatives-mode-emploi/conditions.html>

- Voting right at local level

- Luxembourgish nationals who reside in Luxembourg
- 18+ years old
- Also: EU citizens and other foreign nationals who have been living in Luxembourg for at least 5 years can request to be added to the electoral roll. The last year of residence immediately prior to the request for registration on the electoral list must be uninterrupted.
- <https://elections.public.lu/en/systeme-electoral/communales-mode-emploi/conditions.html>

Election Right (I)

- National level

- 60 Members of the *Chambre des Députés*

- 4 Constituencies:

- the Southern District: 23 deputies
 - the Central District: 21 deputies
 - the Northern District: 9 deputies
 - the Eastern District: 7 deputies

- five-year term

- Proportional open-list election system

- Universal suffrage, direct elections.

- Voting is mandatory for all registered voters except for those over the age of 75 or living in another municipality than the one where they have to vote.

- <https://elections.public.lu/en/systeme-electoral/legislatives-mode-emploi/principes.html>

- Appointment of the Government

- According to the Constitution, the Grand Duc can appoint the ministers freely.

- However, in practice, the Grand Duc appoints the Prime Minister based on the outcome of the elections. The Prime Minister then forms a government that holds a parliamentary majority.

Election Right (II)

- Regional level
 - No regional level in place

Election Right (III)

- Local level: Municipal elections

- Take place every 6 years
- Direct elections. Voters have as many votes as there are councilors to elect.
- Voting is mandatory, postal votes are possible.
- There are always an odd number of municipal councilors, with the precise number depending on the size of the population of the municipality:
 - From 7 members in municipalities with a population of up to 999 inhabitants; to 19 members in municipalities of 20,000 inhabitants or more; with the exception of the municipal council of the City of Luxembourg, which is composed of 27 members.
- The number of municipal councils allocated to each commune is determined by Grand Ducal regulation.
- 2 different election modes
 - In municipalities with a population of under 3,000 inhabitants, elections take place according to the system of relative majority.
 - In other municipalities, elections are carried out according to the list system with proportional representation.
- The College of Aldermen of each municipality is composed of one mayor and between 2 and 6 Aldermen depending on the size of the municipality.
 - Aldermen are appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs following the suggestions of the municipal council
 - The mayor is appointed for 6 years by the Grand Duke following the suggestions of the municipal council
- <https://elections.public.lu/en/systeme-electoral/communales-mode-emploi/principes.html>

Election Right (IV)

- Elections to the European Parliament
 - To vote in the European elections, an elector must:
 - be a national of Luxembourg or of another member state of the European Union;
 - 18+ years of age
 - enjoy civil rights and not have been stripped of the right to vote either in Luxembourg or in their home country;
 - Nationals of other EU member states must register in order to be able to vote.
 - Luxembourg elects 6 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)
 - 5-year mandate
 - A single electoral constituency
 - Proportional open-list system
 - Voting is mandatory for all registered voters.

Voter turnout in national and European elections

	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2013	2014	2018	2019
National elections	89.3	88.8	88.81	87.39	86.51	91.92	90.81	91.32		89.66	
European elections	88.91	88.79	87.39	88.55	87.27	91.35	90.76		85.55		84.24

Source: Högenauer A.L. (4/11/2019), The 2019 European Parliament Elections in Luxembourg in the Context of Past Elections. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3480491> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3480491>.

Election Right (V)

- Social elections (every 5 years)
 - All employees and pensioners (including cross-border workers) can vote for 60 representatives of the professional chamber.
 - The professional chamber can take positions on legislative proposals.

Direct Democracy

- Referendums

- Are consultative (i.e. non-binding)
- Exist at the national and local level.
- 5 national referendums so far. After World War 2 mainly:
 - 10 July 2005 on the Constitution for Europe (approved)
 - 7 June 2015 on lowering the minimum voting age to 16 (rejected), on giving foreign residents the right to vote in national elections (rejected), on limiting the number of terms ministers can serve to two (rejected).
- Voting is mandatory.

Other forms of citizens' participation

- Petitions (<https://www.petitions.lu/>)
 - Citizens can submit two types of petition
 - Ordinary petitions:
 - The citizens writes a letter explaining their concern and submits this to the petitions office by email, by post or in person
 - The Committee on Petitions will examine the petition. They can:
 - Request a statement from the competent member of Government;
 - Forward the petition to another committee or call for the opinion of another committee;
 - Hear the petitioners or any competent expert or institution during one of its meetings, make on-site visits as part of the petition inquiry.
 - The petitioner is informed by post of the outcome
 - 117 ordinary petitions were submitted since 2014 (by 13 August 2021)
 - Public petitions:
 - Can be submitted via the petitions website or a form
 - Has to be of general and national interest and respect ethical principles.
 - If the petition meets the requirements, the person proposing it will have 6 weeks to collect at least 4.500 signatures.
 - If enough signatures are collected, the petition will be discussed in a public debate. The petitioner will be invited to speak on the topic of your petition. The debate will be broadcast on TV and streamed on the petitions website
- Demonstrations, sit-ins, manifestations, strikes are rather rare

Other forms of citizens' participation

- Private Associations, NGOs etc.
 - Membership fees for political parties tend to be low (usually less than 50 euro per year)
 - Great variety of associations and clubs
 - Several trade unions and employers' or sectoral organizations

Media (I)

- Main media in the country

- Luxembourg historically played an important role in the management of international media concessions (e.g. RTL) which has also encouraged a relatively diverse domestic media landscape (compared to the size of the country).
- Five daily newspapers, one free daily newspaper, several weekly and monthly newspapers.
- Six TV stations (four local and two national), access to channels from the neighboring countries.
- RTL as the biggest broadcaster has a “public service mission”, but is not a “public service medium” per se.
- Several radio stations.
- Multiple online news websites.
- TV and radio predominantly focused on Luxembourgish-speakers, the print medias publish predominantly in German and French, although some publications in Luxembourgish, Portuguese, English... exist.
- *Cf. Kies and Hamdi (2020). Monitoring Media Pluralism in the Digital Era: Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor in the European Union, Albania and Turkey in the years 2018-2019 Country report: Luxembourg. doi:10.2870/730558*

Media (II)

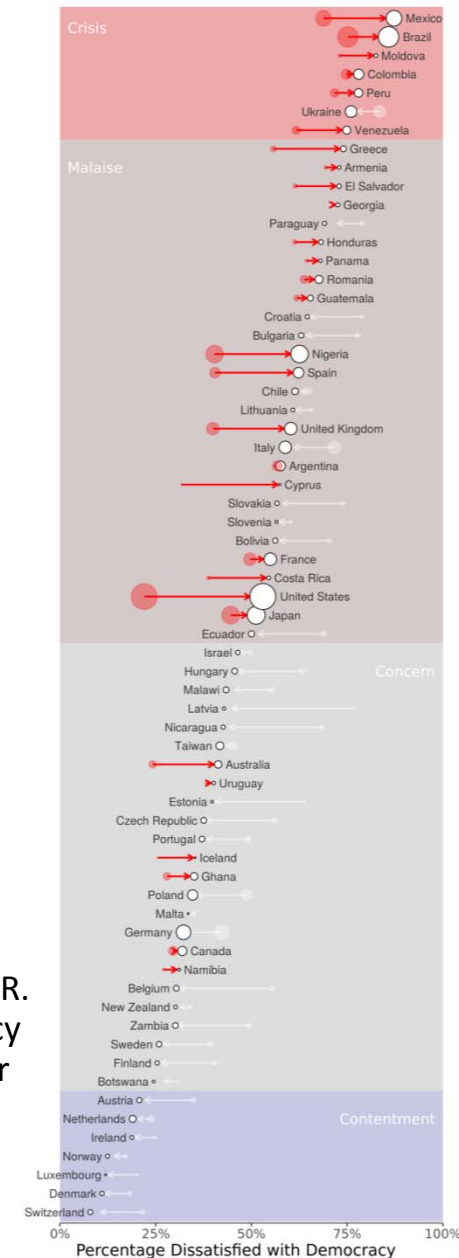
- Reporters without borders 2021 World Press Freedom Index (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>)
 - Luxembourg ranked on place 20
 - Liberal media law
 - Financial support of media by the state
 - Financial problems
 - Exacerbated by a fall in advertising revenue during the Covid-19 crisis. Several media outlets have laid off staff during the crisis.
 - Traditionally a close tie between politics and media
 - The two most-read newspapers are seen as close to two main parties.
 - The majority of the national press belongs to two publishing houses.
 - Challenge of access to information:
 - In practice journalists find it hard to get first-hand information from the government. This is visible for example in EU-related news coverage, which rarely provides a detailed discussion of the position of the Luxembourgish government.

Ranking	Country
15	Estonia
16	Iceland
20	Luxembourg
23	Liechtenstein
26	Cyprus
39	Andorra
81	Malta
104	Montenegro
-	San Marino

Satisfaction with democracy in the country

- High satisfaction with democracy
 - One of the countries with the lowest level of dissatisfaction with democracy in the World
 - Further increase in satisfaction since 1990s.

Source: Foa, R.S., Klassen, A., Slade, M., Rand, A. and R. Collins. 2020. "The Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report 2020." Cambridge, United Kingdom: Centre for the Future of Democracy.



Conclusion: Lessons and prospects

- A constitutional monarchy and parliamentary system. The influence of the Grand Duc on politics has decreased over time.
- High satisfaction with democracy, high voter turnout, vivid association culture
- However, only Luxembourgish nationals have the right to vote, but in 2021 47.2% of residents were foreigners (https://statistiques.public.lu/stat/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=12853&IF_Language=eng)
- Luxembourg has several radio stations, a variety of print media in different languages and some (limited) TV stations, but reports on media independence criticize that the media are state-subsidized.