



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG

# **Strategy for the Promotion of the Luxembourgish Language**

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# Strategy for the Promotion of the Luxembourgish language

## A long-term language and culture policy

The government recognises the importance of the Luxembourgish language as a language of communication, integration and literature. Although many measures are already in place to promote the Luxembourgish language, the government wants to once again strengthen its commitment to the language. However, multilingualism is a defining feature of Luxembourg too. In addition to Luxembourgish, German and French, other languages are used in everyday life. Together they shape the identity of our country and contribute significantly to social cohesion. Therefore, the government's commitment to the promotion of the Luxembourgish language promotes multilingualism at the same time.

## Four strong commitments by the government

The government is targeting four major, overarching goals and is committed to:

1. strengthening the status of the Luxembourgish language;
2. advancing the standardisation, use and study of the Luxembourgish language;
3. promoting the learning of Luxembourgish and learning about Luxembourgish culture;
4. promoting Luxembourgish-language culture.

### 1. A 20-year action plan for a Luxembourgish language and culture policy

As this concerns practically all areas of the public as well as all the ministries, the government believes that a uniform strategy, that all actors support and work towards, must be established. Determining common and comprehensive guidelines will facilitate the implementation of measures. This strategy for the promotion of the Luxembourgish language will be developed in collaboration with all social actors and will be laid out in a 20-year action plan for the promotion of the Luxembourgish language.

### 2. A Commissioner for the Luxembourgish Language

To prepare this 20-year action plan and to further strengthen the government's commitment to the Luxembourgish language, the post of "Commissioner for the Luxembourgish Language" will be created. Their mission will be to advise the ministers of Education and Culture with a view to the promotion of the Luxembourgish language and to coordinate corresponding efforts by all ministries and administrations. The Commissioner should, among other things, provide a framework for existing measures and efforts, ensure the coherence of linguistic considerations, institutionalise the observance of measures, and establish, coordinate, and sustain the dialogue between the various stakeholders concerned with language use and culture in Luxembourg. The Commissioner is assisted in his work by an inter-ministerial committee which also has the capacity of assigning missions to the Commissioner.

### **3. A “Zentrum fir d'Lëtzebuergesch”**

The Commissioner for the Luxembourgish Language will further be supported by a “Zentrum fir d'Lëtzebuergesch” (Centre for Luxembourgish). Its missions include the standardisation and study of the Luxembourgish language and the language situation in Luxembourg, as well as the promotion of the language, both in Luxembourgish society and at a European and international scale. The Centre will work closely with the other actors in the field (CNL, CNA, University of Luxembourg,...). Its staff will be linguistic and cultural experts from various disciplines (linguistics, language history, education, culture,...).

### **4. Embedding the Luxembourgish language in the Constitution**

In our multilingual and multicultural society, the Luxembourgish language has a special status: it is at the same time a language of communication, integration and literature. This significance must not only be maintained but also strengthened. For this reason, the government is of the opinion that Luxembourgish should be enshrined in the Constitution as a national language. At the same time, however, language diversity is a defining feature of our cultural identity and of Luxembourg's social cohesion. Therefore, this aspect too should have a place in the Constitution.

### **5. The Luxembourgish language at EU level**

The government will initiate negotiations with the European institutions in order to reach an agreement on an “administrative arrangement” as stipulated in the conclusions of the EU Council under the Luxembourg Presidency in 2005.

Every citizen should thus have the right to address European institutions in Luxembourgish and to receive a reply in Luxembourgish.

The aim of the government's procedure is that the institutionalisation of Luxembourgish, as set out in the Law of 1984, shall be applied at EU level. In concrete terms this means that the French language will continue to be the language of official national and European documents, as well as the working language for exchanges between the Luxembourg State and European institutions.

**In addition to these higher-level measures,** the government has taken several initiatives – always in the context of the country's multilingual situation – to strengthen the role of Luxembourgish in society. Through this package of measures, the four objectives are to be achieved and the promotion of the Luxembourgish language and culture secured in a coherent and sustainable manner. Each measure targets different groups, both in terms of subject matter and age.

## **I. Strengthening the status of the Luxembourgish language**

### **6. Documentation of the language history**

Archival work and the exhibition of the most significant documents of language history are other important tasks that serve to increase the prominence of Luxembourgish in the diverse language landscape. The country's language history shall be visualised and explained, through an exhibition for example, to show how our linguistic situation has developed within the context of an ever-growing and lived multilingualism. The target audience includes residents of Luxembourg, border residents, as well as tourists who would like to learn about our language.

### **7. Translating government websites into Luxembourgish**

Due to the importance of French as the main administrative language, the websites of the ministries and government services are currently provided mainly, if not exclusively, in French. In order to expand the use of Luxembourgish in a public context, Luxembourgish shall be given a firm place on government websites in the future. For this reason, the government wants to translate part of the online content relevant to the Luxembourgish public.

## **II. Advancing the standardisation, use and study of the Luxembourgish language**

### **8. LOD web portal**

The "Lëtzebuenger Online Dictionnaire" (Luxembourg Online Dictionary – LOD), launched by the Ministry of Culture in 2004, will be completed in the course of 2018 and will be fully accessible, including open data access. The advantage of an online dictionary is that it can constantly be updated and thus continually respond to linguistic phenomena and developments. In addition to the dictionary, the functions of the LOD web portal are to be further expanded.

### **9. Standardisation of orthography and grammar**

A further priority is the reappraisal and mediation of structural aspects of the Luxembourgish language. This includes the standardisation of the language's orthographic and grammatical elements.

The future Commissioner for the Luxembourgish Language will further ensure that unexplained elements of the Luxembourgish orthography are addressed as soon as possible. Building on this basis, the Conseil fir d'Lëtzebuenger Sprooch (*Permanent Council for the Luxembourgish Language*) will determine a coherent orthography which will be published as a coordinated text.

### **10. Helpline for questions about the Luxembourgish language**

Government support of the services provided by the LOD, which include language support to the public (via text message, telephone or e-mail assistance) as well as to administrations (translations, corrections, glossaries), will continue.

#### **11. Online portal for promotion measures for the Luxembourgish language**

The Commissioner for the Luxembourgish Language ensures the publication of a complete inventory of measures for the Luxembourgish language. A national platform will be created, on which all training, projects and financial aids will be published.

#### **12. Publicity work by research institutions**

Scientific and qualitative information on the language situation in Luxembourg must be prepared in a comprehensible way for the general public. Through direct cooperation between the “Centre for Luxembourgish” and the “Institute for Luxembourgish Linguistics and Literature Studies” at the University of Luxembourg, ongoing research and research results will be published. This creates synergies that will help make research on the Luxembourgish language and literature more visible and become more entrenched in society.

Regular lecture series on specific topics in the field of the Luxembourgish language and culture will provide the interested public with opportunities to meet and engage in an exchange with language researchers and experts.

#### **13. Cooperation with universities abroad**

Support measures for the Luxembourgish language are also being launched at university level. The “Institute for Luxembourgish Linguistics and Literature Studies” at the University of Luxembourg constitutes a national research team that deals with very specific linguistic and cultural elements and regularly provides interesting data. The cooperation with universities abroad will be maintained and expanded if possible (e.g. Centre for Luxembourg Studies in Sheffield). Of particular importance is the cooperation with universities in the Greater Region.

#### **14. Study on youth language and youth communication**

New technological and communicative possibilities, such as text messages and social networks, have increased the use of the Luxembourgish written language, also and especially among younger people. Therefore, it is of interest to take a closer look at young people's everyday usage of written language. A large-scale study will provide insights into how young people, as *digital natives*, write and generally communicate in the context of their technological and multilingual competencies. With the help of a documentary film, aspects of youth language and youth communication shall be conveyed in a more appealing way.

### **III. Promoting the learning of Luxembourgish and learning about Luxembourgish culture**

#### **In early childhood**

#### **15. Luxembourgish in childcare facilities**

Experts confirm that young children learn languages in a natural and intuitive way. The government would like to take advantage of this opportunity to introduce a program for multilingual education for children ages 1 through 4. Starting September 2017, Luxembourgish and French will be spoken in all nurseries and childcare facilities that are part of the childcare voucher system (CSA). Qualified and specially trained educators playfully introduce the children to both languages, taking into account their age and individual needs. In this way, young children that speak a foreign language

systematically come into contact with Luxembourgish, which will help them integrate into Luxembourgish society and later learn to read and write German in primary school.

### **In primary school**

#### **16. Luxembourgish in cycle 1**

The Luxembourgish language will retain the important role it already has in cycle 1 of primary school (early childhood and preschool education). To support the teaching staff in their efforts, the teaching material “Lëtzebuergesch an der Spillschoul”, an outline for the playful handling of and the first (school) experiences with Luxembourgish in cycle 1, will be reviewed. Didactic and pedagogical methods are adapted to the language reality of the country. Additionally, a “best practices” guide will be put together.

#### **17. Luxembourgish as a Foreign Language (LaF)**

A curriculum and appropriate teaching materials are being developed to teach “Luxembourgish as a Foreign Language” to young children. The focus will be on the development of oral skills (receptive and active) through the help of engaging visual materials and audio recordings. After a pilot phase at the *Differdange International School* and *Government reception classes* at DPI facilities, the materials are systematically developed for all classes at primary school level.

#### **18. Multilingual learning materials**

For the 2017-2018 school year, a revised curriculum for Luxembourgish and a number of new, multilingually applicable materials will be introduced at primary school level. These materials, developed by the Ministry of Education, can be used individually in various language classes (German, French, Luxembourgish) as well as help stimulate reflection and discussion about languages in general. The materials allow for a differentiated use of languages and can be applied in class in various ways: to encourage children to speak, as a first contact with vocabulary and language training, to discover language in public spaces (identifying language on signs,...), as supplementary material for the promotion of reading and writing skills to facilitate alphabetisation,...

#### **19. Compulsory Luxembourgish classes in international primary schools**

The Luxembourgish language is a key factor for the coexistence in our society. For that reason, every young person attending an international school in Luxembourg should be able to learn Luxembourgish during their school career. The revised law on private schools will therefore require all international schools to include Luxembourgish classes for all pupils in their curricula. The Ministry of Education is developing a coherent concept for these classes.

#### **20. Writing competition for children's literature**

In recent years, many works in the field of children's literature, by both established and young authors writing in the Luxembourgish language, have seen the light of day in Luxembourg. In order to further the presence of Luxembourgish authors in education and to guarantee a certain topicality of subjects, a writing competition is launched through which new text material is commissioned. In addition, the stories will be presented on a digital platform, where one can, through readings by the authors themselves for instance, practice listening comprehension in an authentic way.



## **In secondary schools**

### **21. Supplementary materials in the LaF field**

Secondary education and technical secondary education too will see new resources and measures to teach Luxembourgish as a Foreign Language (LaF) in an even more goal-oriented manner. The textbook *Wat gelift* from 2011, which specifically targets adolescents in LaF programs, is being revised and supplemented.

### **22. Promotion of reading skills**

The revision of well-known Luxembourgish texts aims to impart literary knowledge and general reading skills to secondary school students. The concept of the 2014 reading book *Lies de bal*, which contains engaging classical and modern texts, will be revised and a didactic dimension will be added. *Fiches pédagogiques* will be designed to help teachers provide background information on texts, authors, and key topics.

### **23. Elective course “Orthography”**

New offers are also being created to promote the correct spelling of the language. In the future, all interested students will have the opportunity to attend the elective course “Luxembourgish Orthography” in their respective secondary schools. These elective courses – meaning students cannot fail this subject – will be taught by Luxembourgish teachers and will show that Luxembourgish is not as complicated as it might seem.

### **24. Elective course “Luxembourgish Culture and Literature”**

Culturally relevant topics should be mediated in secondary schools via the elective course format. To this end, the “Institute for Luxembourgish Linguistics and Literature Studies” at the University of Luxembourg is working on a lecture series that focuses on the pillars of Luxembourg's cultural history – from past to present. On the one hand, this course will become part of the *Master in Secondary Education* to provide future teachers with knowledge about certain key elements of Luxembourgish culture: literature, theatre, media history including film, radio and cinema, as well as language history. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education will provide *Fiches pédagogiques* for the elective course “Luxembourgish Culture and Literature”, which will help teaching staff decide on a main focus area.

### **25. Elective course “Creative Writing in Luxembourgish”**

In order to promote creative production by students, an elective course called “Creative Writing in Luxembourgish” will be offered in secondary schools. Through a targeted use of songs, texts and poetry slam productions in Luxembourgish, produced by well-known and young artists alike, students should be introduced to new types of text, encouraged to participate in creative writing activities, and become acquainted with the Luxembourgish written language in an informal way. Teachers' classroom activities can be complemented with the help of professionals from the Luxembourgish literary, music and film industry.

### **26. Compulsory Luxembourgish classes in international secondary schools**

As it is the case in primary schools (cf. Measure 19), international secondary schools will also be required to include Luxembourgish classes for all students in their curriculum.

## **In adult education**

### **27. Expanding the offer of Luxembourgish courses (LaF and orthography) in adult education**

Another focus is the promotion of Luxembourgish in adult education. In recent years, the offer of but also the demand for Luxembourgish courses (“Luxembourgish as a Foreign Language” and orthography) has increased significantly. As a result, the offer will be further expanded nationwide and more resources are being made available at different levels:

- Training for course instructors. The training program “Lëtzebuenger Sprooch a Kultur”, which is being offered by the *National Institute for Languages* (INL) and the “Institute for Luxembourgish Linguistics and Literature Studies” at the University of Luxembourg, is to be further promoted so that more professionally competent instructors can be trained.
- Expansion of the nationwide offer of Luxembourgish courses to other municipalities (“Luxembourgish as a Foreign Language” and orthography), through the recruitment of more INL teachers for the *Department of Adult Education (Service de la Formation des Adultes)* by the Ministry of Education;
- Improvement of didactic materials. Following the textbook *Schwätzt Dir Lëtzebuergesch – A1*, designed by the INL, the textbook *Schwätzt Dir Lëtzebuergesch – A2* will be released for the fall semester 2017-2018.

### **28. New offer of language courses (LaF) for people with DPI and BPI status**

In order to facilitate the integration of adults who arrived in Luxembourg as a part of the recent influx of refugees, the *Department of Adult Education* by the Ministry of Education will offer an *Intégration linguistique* (Language integration) for Luxembourgish. In this course, which consists of 4 sessions of 2 hours each and takes place at the *First reception facilities*, people will learn about Luxembourg's multilingual situation and, with the help of the word pool *100 Wierder Lëtzebuergesch*, receive an introduction to Luxembourgish in order to promote social communication. To ensure the *Intégration linguistique* courses, the *Department of Adult Education* will create 3 new posts.

### **29. Linguistic leave**

The “linguistic leave” is a special leave of 200 hours per working life which enables employees of all nationalities (as well as the self-employed and those who practice a liberal profession) to learn Luxembourgish, or to perfect it, in order to facilitate social integration.

The employees concerned must make a request to their employer who will give their opinion. Thereafter, the employees are entitled to be paid their regular salary per hour of leave. The compensatory benefit is paid by the employer, who will then receive a 50% reimbursement by the state. Freelancers and people that pursue a liberal profession are entitled to compensatory benefits corresponding to 50 % of the reference amount calculated on the basis of the previous year's income used as the contribution base for pension insurance. In both cases, the benefit amount cannot exceed 4 times the minimum wage per hour for unskilled workers.

Luxembourgish courses, offered in Luxembourg and abroad, are eligible for the “linguistic leave”. If the employer decides to organise Luxembourgish courses for their employees on their own initiative, the Ministry of Labour will contribute towards the organisation costs.

### **30. Language skills in the social, therapeutic and family sector**

For approved or appointed organisations active in the social, therapeutic and family sector, specific language skills are required by law (*loi modifiée du 8 septembre 2008, réglant les relations entre l'État et les organismes œuvrant dans les domaines social, familial et thérapeutique*) and the associated

*Implementing regulations.* The managing director and staff of these infrastructures need to prove that they can express themselves in Luxembourgish and in at least a second of the three *working languages*. If these language skills cannot be substantiated, the Minister for Family Affairs may link the agreement to the condition that the people concerned participate in a *Formation en cours d'emploi* (continuous vocational training) in order to learn those languages.

### **31. Language skills in the healthcare sector**

Physicians, psychotherapists, and pharmacists, as well as regulated health professions are required by law to understand the three administrative languages of the Grand Duchy, including Luxembourgish, or to acquire the necessary knowledge in those languages.

The Minister of Health has the right to have language skills reviewed by the *Collège médical*.

Many efforts are already being made in the various hospitals to offer Luxembourgish courses to staff. These courses are generally a great success.

In addition, the Ministry is considering, together with the *Fédération des hôpitaux luxembourgeois* (FHL) and the *Collège médical*, in what ways this offer could be further extended.

### **32. Welcome and Integration Contract**

OLAI (*Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency*) recommends that all foreign residents who have a residence permit and who wish to establish themselves in Luxembourg in the long term, conclude a *Welcome and Integration Contract*. Thereby, the State makes a commitment to offer these people, among other things, a language course in at least one of the three languages, Luxembourgish, French and German, as well as a course in civics to facilitate their integration into Luxembourg society and the labour market.

### **33. Luxembourg Centre for Integration and Social Cohesion (LISKO)**

In June 2016, the *Luxembourg Centre for Integration and Social Cohesion* (LISKO) was founded. In collaboration with OLAI, its mission is to facilitate the integration of people who have been granted international protection (*beneficiaries of international protection*, BPI) into Luxembourg society and in particular the region that they live in. The people concerned receive assistance in various procedures, including their efforts to learn languages.

### **34. Elderly people**

The language situation in Luxembourg can also be a challenge for the elderly. To facilitate their access to information, a large number of brochures and websites are available in the three languages Luxembourgish, German and French. They are also offered Luxembourgish courses. Studies on the integration of elderly people with a migration background should help facilitate the integration of non-Luxembourgish residents into our residential structures for the elderly.

### **35. University of the Greater Region (UniGR)**

The *University of the Greater Region* (UniGR) brings together five regions and six universities (Saarland, Liège, Luxembourg, Lorraine, Kaiserslautern and Trier) and offers the opportunity to study and research in the three languages German, French and Luxembourgish. Thereby, the UniGR offers a multilingual and intercultural context that is excellently suited to fostering multilingualism and conducting studies on cross-border language use.

## The general public

### **36. Publicity campaign for the promotion of Luxembourgish orthography**

In recent years, the Luxembourgish public has kept expressing a desire to write correct Luxembourgish. Therefore, the Ministry of Education launched a large-scale spelling campaign in January 2017. At the end of the campaign, a wide range of materials will be made available to the public free of charge, allowing everyone to learn the different levels of spelling according to their needs:

- an online platform which presents the most important rules in a simple manner, arranged by chapters;
- a digital brochure which introduces the whole set of rules. A print version will also be released in March at selected locations across the country.

## **IV. Promoting Luxembourgish-language culture**

### **37. Cultural projects in Luxembourgish**

Language and culture are closely entwined. The Luxembourgish language is firmly entrenched in the cultural life of Luxembourg, but linguistic diversity also has its firm place on the cultural agenda. Cultural projects by associations or private individuals that promote the Luxembourgish language and language diversity in Luxembourg are financially supported by the Ministry of Culture through direct subsidies.

### **38. A National Day of Luxembourgish Language and Culture**

The Luxembourgish language and cultural events are part of our everyday life. In order to promote the language awareness of Luxembourgish and to focus on the linguistic and cultural richness of our country as a collective, a *National Day for the Luxembourgish Language and Culture* will be introduced. Whether it's music, literature, theatre or film, all interested people shall be made aware of the diversity in those areas on that day.

### **39. A national award for merits in the field of Luxembourgish language**

Initiatives in various areas can make a sustainable contribution to the promotion of the Luxembourgish language and language awareness. To encourage such contributions, an award is created which, every two to three years, will be awarded to a person – an author, an editor, a scientist, a musician, etc. – for their merits in the Luxembourgish language.

### **40. The role of cultural institutes in the promotion of Luxembourgish as cultural heritage**

The cultural institutes, created by the Law of 2004, play an important role in preserving, valorising and archiving our heritage, including the Luxembourgish language. They are encouraged to expand the showcasing of this heritage and to make it accessible to the public and to schools in particular, through publication projects in Luxembourgish, which will be disseminated via schools and public libraries. Work on teaching materials for schools will also continue, for instance in the field of literature (based on the anthology *Literaresch Welten*) or music (*De Litty* by CEDOM (BNL)).