

INTEGRATION ISSUES

Your Commune Guide



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The Luxembourgish communes have existed for many, many centuries—long before the birth of the current Grand Duchy. Whereas the Luxembourgish state in its present form has existed since the London Treaty of 1839, some communes go back as far as the early Middle Ages.

Following the latest wave of commune mergers in 2012, today there are 106 communes in Luxembourg. They are the smallest administrative division in the country. Indeed, the Grand Duchy is divided into three districts (Diekirch, Grevenmacher and Luxembourg), which are subdivided into 12 cantons which, in turn, are divided into communes. The most populated ones are Luxembourg, Esch-sur-Alzette and Differdange, followed by Dudelange, Pétange, Sanem and Hesperange.

The organization of the communes in Luxembourg is based on the principal of decentralization, enshrined in the constitution. As such, the communes have wide-ranging powers. Each one acts as an autonomous community and manages its own assets and interests through local elected representatives. The communes are also required by law to provide a large number of services and are therefore a key contact point for any resident in the Grand Duchy. In fact, there is no way you can settle down here *without* going through the communal administration.

This “Integration Issues” booklet will guide you through the most important questions concerning your commune;

however, please keep in mind this is not a comprehensive list. At the end of this booklet, you will also find a list of other places where you can seek assistance and get relevant information.

What is the Bureau de la population?

Every commune has a *Biergeramt* or *Bureau de la population* (and, if you live in Luxembourg City, a *Bierger-Center*). This is the Residents’ Registration Office, which delivers all certificates, official documents and identity papers you may need when living in the Grand Duchy. In many communes, it’s situated in the same location as the town hall and the general communal administration office. You can find the contact information of any commune in Luxembourg at www.guichet.public.lu.

Do EU nationals need a resident permit?

No. Resident permits (or *cartes de séjour*) have not been delivered since the law regarding residency and relocation of EU nationals and citizens from “assimilated countries” (Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Switzerland) came into force in 2008. However, as an EU national or person treated as such, you will need to get an *attestation d’enregistrement* (address registration certificate). This is required if you count on staying in Luxembourg for more than three months. Every family member needs one, minors included. Getting a registration certificate is free, and it’s issued immediately. This generally doesn’t take long—provided you have the right documentation with you.

Which documents are required to obtain a registration certificate?

The *attestation d'enregistrement* is available to everyone: the employed and self-employed, freelancers, the “inactive” (people possessing sufficient financial resources to avoid becoming a burden to the welfare system), dependent family members and students. However, the documents required to obtain the registration certificate, other than a valid identity document from your native country, will depend on your situation:



Employed	Signed employment contract or a signed pledge of employment issued by future employer.
Self-employed/ freelancer	Proof attesting your activity. This can be an authorization of establishment, an authorization to trade, a letter from the Ministry of Middle Class certifying that a business permit is not necessary for your activity, proof of authorization to perform a licensed profession (doctor, lawyer, architect, etc.), a freelance contract.
Inactive	Proof of sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden to the social system (e.g., retirement pension or disability benefit, bank certificate, guarantor, wages or indemnities received in another country, etc.), and health insurance certificate for you and your family.
Student	Proof of registration with an approved public or private educational institution in Luxembourg to follow main or vocational training, a guarantee of sufficient resources (e.g., guarantor, bank statements) and health insurance certificate for yourself and accompanying family members.
Family Members	Extract of marriage certificate/ registered partnership certificate/ registered family certificate or other proof of direct family relationship, plus a copy of the applicant's registration certificate.

What else is there to know about the registration certificate?

If you move to a new commune in the Grand Duchy, you need to get a new *attestation d'enregistrement* within eight days of arrival. After five years of uninterrupted legal stay in Luxembourg, you can ask for a permanent registration certificate. If your registration certificate is stolen or lost, it is important you declare it as such to the police and apply for a new certificate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in writing. Also worth noting: you cannot use the registration certificate as an identity document but you may be asked to produce it together with a valid identity document when an official body asks to see your identity papers.

As a third-country citizen, do I ask the commune for a resident permit?

No, but during the procedure to obtain it, you will need to make two trips to your commune's Residents' Registration Office. As a non-EU citizen, you are not allowed to take up residency in the Grand Duchy without having requested a temporary authorization to stay prior to your arrival. The application needs to be submitted to the Immigration Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and favorably advised before entry on Luxembourg territory. The procedures to follow according to your situation are detailed on www.mae.lu.

Once you have obtained this *autorisation de séjour temporaire*, you must, upon arrival (within three working days), submit a declaration of arrival (*déclaration d'arrivée*) at your commune. This will allow you to proceed to the next steps towards obtaining a residence permit. As soon as you have taken your medical examination, applied for and

obtained your resident permit from the Immigration Directorate (again, all details are available on www.mae.lu), you have to return to your Residents' Registration Office to obtain your residence certificate (*certificat de résidence*).

What if a third-country citizen is a family member of an EU national?

If you are the family member of an EU national (or person treated as such) who fulfills the conditions to reside in Luxembourg for more than three months, you have the right to join or accompany him or her. Within three months of your arrival, go to your commune's Residents' Registration Office and request a residence card for family members of EU citizens or persons treated as such (*carte de séjour pour membre de famille d'un citoyen de l'Union*). The form to complete is not long, but you will be asked to produce identity photos and documents proving your identity and relation to the person you are accompanying. You are considered a family member if you are married, have a civil partnership, are the child (under 21 years) of the person or a relative who is dependent on him or her. Partners who are not married or have a civil partnership can also apply for the residence card for family members but must be able to prove that the relationship is lasting. For this, you will need to request a statement of fact of a long-lasting relationship (*demande de constatation d'une relation durable*) via the Immigration Directorate. More information and the form to download can be found on www.mae.lu.

Do animals need to register with the commune?

The question isn't as silly as it may sound! If you have a dog, it must be registered with the commune within one month of arrival (or upon acquisition, if it's a new dog). To do this you must have your pet's vaccination card, its electronic ID (as issued by an authorized vet) and its insurance policy valid in Luxembourg. Once your dog is registered, the commune will send the invoice for your dog licence fee. If you are the owner of a breed considered potentially dangerous (Rottweiler, Staffordshire Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier, Tosa or similar mixed breeds), more specific rules apply. Both you and your dog must for example complete a dog-training course and your dog has to wear a muzzle in public.

Is it possible to obtain a resident parking permit?

For restricted or controlled parking areas, communes often offer special conditions for their residents, meaning they can park in those spaces for free or for longer periods of time than non-residents. The rules vary from commune to commune, as does the possible fee (in Luxembourg City, for example, the first permit is free, but you will pay 60 EUR if you have a second car). In any case, it is of course a good idea to apply for a resident parking permit. The first time, this should be done at the communal administration office. In most communes, yearly renewal is then done automatically.

Why are birth names used for women who have taken their husband's surname?

For many people moving to Luxembourg, seeing their birth name appear on official letters or invoices may seem a bit unusual if they haven't used it themselves for many years. It is, however, standard practice in the Grand Duchy to use the birth name on all official correspondence. So even if you've adopted your spouse's surname, it is a good idea to include your name of birth on the mailbox to ensure you receive all important letters, namely from the commune.

Are all administrative formalities done at the Resident's Registration Office?

Not all. Social security, car registration and family benefits, for example, aren't. However, the commune issues just about every other official document that can be required by Luxembourg authorities. This includes documents like the *certificat de composition de ménage* (household composition certificate) and the *certificat de vie* (life certificate). In many communes though, it is now also possible to apply for this type of document online.

What is macommune.lu?

It's an Internet portal, currently used by just over 70 of Luxembourg's communes. If your commune is one of them, www.macommune.lu enables you to complete a number of administrative formalities online. To use the service you need a security TAN card, issued by the commune. You can make an online application via the website or ask for it in person at your communal office. The list of communes offering this service is available on www.commune.lu (scroll down and click on "member communes").

Other communes, which are not members, also offer the possibility of taking care of administrative formalities online. That is, for example, the case of Luxembourg City (via www.vdl.lu). You can see on the individual websites of each commune if it is possible to access this service.

Does the commune deliver income tax cards?

No, not anymore. In the recent past, if you were new to the country, you had to apply for an income tax card at the Resident's Registration Office. As of the tax year 2013, the competent RTS tax office automatically establishes tax cards for resident employees and pensioners and sends it by post at the beginning of the year. If you have not received it by March 1, however, you should contact your RTS tax office. You can see which one at www.impotsdirects.public.lu/profil/organigramme/rts.

How is a customs certificate obtained?

People who move to Luxembourg from a country outside the EU and want to take furniture or other belongings with them by air freight, sea container, etc., need a customs certificate to do so. The Resident's Registration Office is the place to apply for one. Remember to bring valid identification with you.

What is a parental authorization?

If your child comes home with a list of things to pack for the upcoming school trip over the border and you are asked to provide an autorisation parentale, it's time to head down to the Resident's Registration Office again. Minors leaving the country without their parents need an official parental authorization stating

where the child is traveling, with whom he or she is traveling and when they will be back in Luxembourg. The Resident's Registration Office will issue this certificate for you.

How do you register a birth?

In Luxembourg the birth of a child must be registered within five days in the commune in which the child has been born, regardless of where the parents live. For children born in a hospital or clinic within the City of Luxembourg, the registration must take place at the city town hall (Hôtel de Ville, 42, Place Guillaume II, L-2090 Luxembourg). Once a birth certificate is issued, you can register your newborn at your commune's Resident's Registration Office.

Where are the bins?

Waste disposal in Luxembourg follows certain rules, some of which are specific for every commune. The *service technique* at your communal administration office will be able to give you all the details. If you live in a house, it is your responsibility to request a bin which will then be supplied by the commune. You can also purchase refuse sacks for the times where you have more rubbish than room in your bin; get free sacks for recycling of plastic bottles, tin, etc.; obtain information or baskets for collection of waste glass; and find out how to dispose of waste paper and organic waste. Collection of bins and different types of waste follows a calendar, also available at the communal office.

Can the commune intervene in people's gardens?

Yes. If you're a very bad gardener, the commune (as well as your neighbors) can report you to the police. You are supposed to mow your lawn in the summer and, although it is up to you how frequently you do so, if weeds overtake the place and annoy the neighbors, you can get into trouble with the authorities. Worth noting too: it is prohibited to mow on Sundays and public holidays.

How do communal politics work?

Communal councilors are elected every six years in Luxembourg on the second Sunday of October. The next election will take place in 2017. Communes with more than 3,000 inhabitants use the proportional representation electoral system, while the simple majority voting system is applied in communes with less than 3,000 inhabitants. The number of councilors elected also depends on the number of inhabitants. It is the elected members of the Communal Council who elect the mayor and his or her aldermen and alderwomen. Each commune also has several advisory committees involved in various areas. These include members of all political parties but also citizens who are not politically affiliated.

Can foreigners vote in local elections?

Yes, every person aged 18 years and over who has been living in Luxembourg for at least five years can vote in the communal elections, no matter what his or her nationality is. You must, however, register first. You can do this at the Resident's Registration Office, but you must do so at least 86 days before the elections take place in which you want to vote. Once you are on the election roll, and unless you ask to be taken off, voting becomes compulsory.

For More Information

OLAI (Office Luxembourgeoise de l'Accueil et de l'intégration)

Luxembourg Reception and Integration Agency

www.olai.public.lu

ASTI (Association de Soutien aux Travailleurs Immigrés)

Support Association for Immigrant Workers

www.asti.lu

www.bienvenue.lu

Guichet.lu

Administrative Guide to the Luxembourg State

www.guichet.lu

Direction de l'Immigration

Immigration Directorate

www.mae.lu



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