



OUTCAN Guide | Life in Luxembourg

LOCATION

Country: Luxembourg

Town: Luxembourg City (Capital city)

Base: NATO Support and Procurement Agency

Info to Consider:

- Family (non-dependents) can visit and stay 90 days **without a visa**.

POPULATION

Size: Luxembourg city: 120,000. The entire country: 600,000.

Ethnicity: Luxembourgers (50%), Portuguese (18%), French (13%), Germany (10%), Other (8%). Multi-ethnic population, large international work force.

LANGUAGE(S)

Official language: Luxembourgish, French and German

Prevalence of French or English speaking: You can easily get by with English as it is the shared/common language of the international workforce. Luxembourgish and French courses are easily available on the economy. Everyday life and conversations, depending on where you are, can range from Luxembourgish, French or English. Most people are willing to communicate and have tri-lingual conversations to accommodate.

COST OF LIVING

Currency & Exchange rate to consider: Euro. 1 EUR = 1.47652 CAD (March 2024)

QUALITY OF LIFE

Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:

- The winters are mild but very rainy and covered. Luxembourg is located further north compared to Ottawa, the days in summer are long and short in winter. With up to approximately 16 hours, the longest days happen in June. On the other hand, the longest and darkest nights are in winter. In December, a night in Luxembourg lasts almost 16 hours.
- There are usually flood warnings in the spring and very high winds during the winter months. There is a wind warning system in place for such occurrences. These are regularly communicated.

Laws and Culture:

- Drivers **NEED** to switch to a Luxembourgish drivers' licence **WITHIN ONE YEAR** as remote Luxembourg postings are **NOT** part of the SOFA agreement to have our drivers' licences recognized. After this time, you will be required to take drivers ed and testing. It is encouraged to start the process as soon as possible.
- Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Public intoxication and disorderly conduct are illegal.

- If you are a Canadian citizen, but also a citizen of Luxembourg, our ability to offer you consular services may be limited while you're there.
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.02 percent for a commercial and learner drivers and 0.05 percent for others. If a police officer suspects you of drinking and driving, they could confiscate your driver's license on the spot. If you're convicted, you can expect heavy fines.
- You should carry an international driving permit.

Safety and Security:

- While it is a safe city, look out for pickpockets as in any European city.
- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Terrorist attacks have occurred in a number of European cities. There is a potential for other violent incidents.

Level of isolation:

- Language challenges can cause a high level of isolation, particularly among spouses. There are ample opportunities to join English or French clubs within Luxembourg. Luxembourg is an expat country and there are many social events to meet others who speak English or French. If you have school aged children, there are many events and opportunities to form close connections.
- Only 1 Canadian family in this location.

HOUSING

- If you want to live close to or in the City of Luxembourg, it most probably has to be in an apartment.
- Most apartments will not allow pets, especially dogs.
- When choosing a house one must take into consideration that the traffic coming into Luxemburg City in the morning (from Belgium, France, Germany) and out at night is extremely heavy.
- As you move further out into Luxembourg, the more isolated you will be from English/French speaking neighbours. Luxembourg is more prevalent in outlying areas. This should be taken into consideration. The best communes (neighbourhoods) are Belair, Merl, Strassen and Howland but are more expensive.

EMPLOYMENT

Are there employment opportunities for spouses?

- Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment in the economy is not an option.
- Employment is extremely limited. Families should plan to be a single-income family for the duration of the posting. **CFMWS | MFS | OUTCAN Europe | CFMWS**
- Language abilities in French would be a condition for employment.

Op Tempo: Varies depending on place of work and position.

HEALTH CARE

Access:

- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP. **PSHCP Member Portal (pshcp-msh.ca)**

Special needs:

- Yes, depending on the language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and/or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

Consideration for pregnancy/birth:

- Health care for pregnancy and birth is available in the economy.

Dental:

- Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay upfront, and you can then claim your expenses.

SCHOOLING

- For an approved list of schools, please contact Children’s Education Management at: [**CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca**](mailto:CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca)
- [**Children's Education Management - Canada.ca**](http://Children's Education Management - Canada.ca)
- [**Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca**](http://Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca)

Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:

- The curriculum varies depending on the choice of school.
- Canadian history or geography is not offered at any school.

Resources for special need children:

- Access to special needs services depends on the choice of school, there may be language requirements, area of specialization and degree of support needed, so it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and the school before making any commitments.

CHILDCARE

- Largely available on the economy.
- Depending on the school, there are integrated stay-and-play (aid) programs available.
- Depending on the school and on the age of the child, many afterschool programs are run directly at the schools. Creche (nursery) programs are mostly in French or Luxembourgish and have waitlists. Enquire soonest.

TRANSPORTATION

- Luxembourg airport is easy to access from Belgium (less than 30kms), Germany (less than 45km) and France (less than 65km).
- Excellent and free public transport.
- Good biking to work and walk everywhere.
- Buying a used car is expensive in Luxembourg.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?

- No physical centre. Families in Luxembourg are supported by the Remote Team: [**MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com**](mailto:MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com)

Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:

- Not at post, MFS(E) Social Workers, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for members are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in Casteau, Belgium (SHAPE).

Communications:

- Cell phone and internet plans are very affordable and reliable in Luxembourg. Examples of companies are Post, Orange, Tango and Luxembourg online.

ACTIVITIES

Access to sports or other leisure activities:

- Depends on the area, but most do offer a wide variety. English might be limited.

Availability of playgrounds:

- Yes. Many parks in residential areas also have walking parks.

RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

Are common law relationships recognized? Yes.

Are same sex couples recognized? Yes.

Medications that are illegal in the country:

- Cannabis is illegal but decriminalised.

Other Considerations:

- Some dog breeds are banned Staffordshire Terrier, American Staffordshire Terrier (Pitbull Terrier), Japanese Tosa Inu. They are considered 'dangerous breeds' and must be muzzled and always leashed. Luxembourg notes a training behavioural course to access the dog's behaviour. Speak to your local vet to determine need and other regulations you will need to follow.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **European Commission Country Reports (2023)**
- https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports_en
- **Canadian Travel Advisories**
<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/luxembourg>
- CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from the US)
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/luxembourg>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/luxembourg>

For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below

- MFS(E) Social Worker: MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com
- CAF Social Worker: GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca
- MFS(E) Team: MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451 717 173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com