

# LUXEMBOURG, EUROPEAN CAPITAL A CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT



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## **LUXEMBOURG, EUROPEAN CAPITAL A CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT**

The roots of the European Union as we know it today go back to 9 May 1950, when Robert Schuman, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, proposed to Germany and to any other State that was willing, that they should submit their coal and steel industries to a common authority.

## **SCHUMAN, THE 'FATHER OF EUROPE'**

Robert Schuman was born in the Clausen district of Luxembourg City on 29 June 1886 to a father originally from the Lorraine region of France and a Luxembourgish mother. He grew up in a part of the city noted for its market gardens and breweries. Luxembourgish was his mother tongue, and, at primary and secondary school, he learnt German and French, languages he mastered perfectly and which were of enormous use to him later on when it came to building bridges between France and Germany.

Having passed his school leaving examinations with flying colours, he studied law in Germany and France before embarking on a career as a lawyer. At the end of the First World War, with Lorraine and Alsace returning to France, he became a French citizen. Encouraged by certain circles in Lorraine, he embarked, by obligation rather than by choice, on a political career at the parliament in Paris. At the start of the Second World War, he was arrested by the Gestapo and placed under house arrest in Germany, from where he escaped in August 1942 to join the resistance. After the War, he re-entered politics, becoming Minister for Finance in 1946 and then Prime Minister in 1947. From July 1948 to January 1953, he served as Minister for Foreign Affairs, before chairing, from 1958 to 1960, the European Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg. These were the most fruitful years of his life, allowing him to develop the cause of European unity. Robert Schuman passed away on 4 September 1963, in his home at Scy-Chazelles near Metz.

A man steeped in both French and German culture, marked by the painful experience of two world wars experienced close to the border between two traditional enemies, he assumed, at a time when the wounds were still raw, the political responsibility for what professor René Lejeune called 'the only worthwhile political idea of the 20th century'.

## PROVISIONAL PLACE OF WORK

The Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), conceived by Jean Monnet, was signed on 18 April 1951 in Paris by six States: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. It was not just an economic project but also and above all a highly political one. The primary objective was – at long last – to ensure peace in Europe by pooling strategic coal and steel resources, the basis for arms production, and to ensure the economic reconstruction of Europe after the devastating effects of the Second World War.

The new institutions of the ECSC – the High Authority, the Common Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the Court of Justice – needed headquarters. As the Foreign Ministers, even after several months, were unable to find a compromise, the Luxembourgish minister Joseph Bech, after a long night of discussions, suggested that work should start in Luxembourg. The city thus became the 'provisional place of work' of the High Authority, the Council of Ministers and the Court of Justice, de facto the first capital of Europe. In the absence of an appropriate venue, the Common Assembly held its meetings in the hemicycle of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, another highly symbolic city in terms of European unity.

The Treaty of Rome, which created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Euratom Community, was signed in 1957. Its two executive institutions, the EEC Commission and the Euratom Commission, operated in Brussels.

Other treaties were then negotiated, each time expanding the Union's fields of activity, reinforcing the powers of its institutions and altering the power relationships between them. New institutions were also created.



## **SEAT OF THE JUDICIAL AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Over the years, the institutions have been restructured, and Luxembourg has become the permanent headquarters of the European Union's judicial and financial institutions. It now houses the Secretariat-General of the European Parliament, one Directorate-General (Eurostat) and several Directorates of the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Court of Auditors, the European Investment Bank, the European Investment Fund, the Office of Publications and the European Stability Mechanism, an intergovernmental financial institution. Some 13 000 officials and other staff work for the institutions in Luxembourg.

Luxembourg shares the title of European Capital with Brussels and Strasbourg. The European Parliament holds its twelve monthly plenary sessions in Strasbourg, and additional meetings are held in Brussels; the committees and political groups meet there regularly. Brussels is the seat of the Council of Ministers, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The Heads of State and Government meet there regularly within the European Council. In the following pages, you will find information about the role and operation of the various institutions and the location of their headquarters and/or administrative buildings in Luxembourg.



## 1 The Hôtel de Ville (City Hall)

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Luxembourg's Hôtel de Ville, built between 1830 and 1838 in neo-classical style, is located on the Place Guillaume II, known as the 'Knuedler' in Luxembourgish. It was here that, on 10 August 1952, the High Authority of the ECSC, the executive institution comprising nine members from the six Member States and chaired by Jean Monnet, met for the first time. We can therefore say unequivocally that it all began in Luxembourg.

On 8 September, the Council of Ministers of the ECSC, chaired by the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, met for an inaugural meeting in the same room before continuing their work the following day in the Luxembourg Parliament. In the absence of a suitable venue in Luxembourg, the Parliamentary Assembly met on 10 September, for the first time and then subsequently, in the plenary chamber of the Council of Europe, chaired by the Belgian Paul-Henri Spaak, another Founding Father of Europe.

## 2 The Cercle Cité

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The Place d'Armes, completed in 1671, known in the local parlance as the city's living room, is home to the Cercle Cité, a building built between 1904 and 1909 containing several reception rooms. The inaugural meeting of the Court of Justice was held here on 10 December 1952. For several years, the Cercle was used as a venue for public hearings of the Court, for meetings of the Council of Ministers and even for balls organised by staff of the institutions.



### **3 The former seat of the High Authority**

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The former headquarters of the Luxembourg Railway, on the Place de Metz, housed the management and departments of the High Authority of the ECSC, with Jean Monnet at its head, from August 1952 until 1967, when the executives of the three Communities – the ECSC, the European Economic Community and Euratom – were merged to form a single executive, the current European Commission, headquartered in Brussels. The loss of the High Authority was a real blow for Luxembourg, and negotiations on compensation for the country laid down the broad outlines of the current division of the seats of the EU institutions between Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.

### **4 The Villa Vauban**

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When the Luxembourg Government had to look for offices for the judges of the Court of Justice of the ECSC, their choice alighted on the Villa Vauban, an elegant stately home built on the remains of the former Fort Vauban, which bears the name of the famous marshal and engineer of Louis XIV. From 1959, the Court occupied an administrative building close to the Grand-Rue. Since 1973, it has been located on the Kirchberg plateau, close to the other EU institutions.



## 5 The Maison de l'Union européenne

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The Maison de l'Union européenne houses the Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg, the Information Office of the European Parliament and the Information Centre of the European institutions in Luxembourg.

In the heart of the city, it offers citizens direct access to information on the European Union in a wide range of forms and assists them in their research. The aim of the representations and information offices in each EU capital is to decentralise the information policy of the institutions, to listen to political, economic and social decision-makers and, in particular, citizens, and to keep their institutions up-to-date with the latest developments in the Member States.

## 6 Robert Schuman's birth house and Kirchberg

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The Bock promontory with the remains of the ancient city castle 'Lucilinburhuc' offers magnificent views down into the districts of Grund, Clausen and Pfaffenthal. At the redoute viewpoint of the Bock promontory is installed the Robert Schuman 'parlodore' which plays the voice of the "Father of Europe" in French, German and Luxembourgish.

High on the wooded Kirchberg plateau can be seen, among other monuments, the administrative buildings of the Court of Justice and the European Parliament, as well as the new Conference Centre. Below, on the right, nestling amid the greenery is Robert Schuman's birth house, a splendid 19th century villa.



After the Schuman family left, the house was occupied by various tenants before being acquired by the Luxembourg Government in 1985. In 1990, the Robert Schuman Study and Research Centre was founded there.

## **7 The Robert Schuman Monument**

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In 1966, on the day of the inauguration of the Pont Grande-Duchesse Charlotte (the 'Red Bridge'), a monument to Robert Schuman was unveiled next to the new bridge leading to the newly developed Kirchberg district. The monument consists of three steel girders ending in six points, symbolising the six founding Member States of the ECSC: Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The inscription quotes from the famous declaration of 9 May 1950: 'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' This remains true today.



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## **8 The Secretariat-General of the European Parliament**

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The European Parliament represents the 500 million citizens of the European Union. 751 members of the European Parliament, elected by direct universal suffrage every five years, represent the whole spectrum of opinion on European integration. The European Parliament is now a legislator on equal footing with the Council of Ministers in the vast majority of fields. It adopts the EU budget as an equal partner with the Council. Like any national parliament, it monitors the executive, the European Commission, with its debates and by means of parliamentary questions. No new Commission can be appointed without the assent of Parliament. By means of a motion of censure, Parliament can force the Commission to resign.

Parliament's plenary sessions are held in Strasbourg, and additional meetings in Brussels, where the parliamentary committees also meet. The Secretariat-General is based in Luxembourg.

## **9 Meetings of the Council**

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The Council of Ministers of the EU usually meets in Brussels; nevertheless, during three months of the year (April, June and October), ministers meet in Luxembourg at the new Conference Centre. There are various configurations of ministers, depending on the subject being discussed: for example the "General Affairs" Council and the "Foreign Affairs" Council, bringing together the ministers for foreign affairs, the "Agriculture" Council, bringing together ministers for agriculture, and so on. The Council of



Ministers, jointly with the European Parliament, adopts legislation in the form of regulations or directives, and the EU budget. It also develops foreign and security policy, under the supervision of Parliament.

The outlines of EU policy are defined by the Heads of State or Government in the European Council, which usually meets twice every six months in Brussels.

The European Council and the Council of the EU must not be confused with the Council of Europe, which is based in Strasbourg and has 47 Member States. The goal of the Council of Europe, which was founded in 1949 and is not part of the European Union, is to defend human rights, multiparty democracy and the rule of law, in particular by way of the European Convention on Human Rights.

## **10 The European Commission**

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The European Commission, an institution independent of the Member States, is the driving force behind European integration. The 28 Members of the Commission, from the 28 Member States, serve the EU as a whole, not their country of origin.

The Commission has a quasi-monopoly on the proposal of European laws, programmes and political action. As the executive, it implements the budget and decisions made by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

It ensures the smooth operation of the single market, respect for EU law and the competition rules, jointly with the Court of Justice of the European Union.



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Representing the European Union at international level, it negotiates international agreements, mainly in the areas of trade and cooperation.

It employs more than 38 000 officials, of which 4 000 are stationed in Luxembourg. The main Commission building in Luxembourg, housing a large part of the translation service and the technical directorates, is named after Jean Monnet, one of the Founding Fathers of Europe. The building will be reconstructed.

## 11 The Court of Justice of the European Union

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The Court of Justice of the European Union, comprising three jurisdictions, ensures that EU law is interpreted and applied uniformly in all the Member States. Any court or tribunal of a Member state, in the application of EU law, may and the supreme courts shall turn to the Court to request to give a ruling on an EU provision. National courts are bound by the Court of Justice's judgments. Following a referral from the European Commission, the Court of Justice also examines whether Member States have failed to fulfil their obligations.

The Court of Justice is competent to rule on requests for preliminary rulings, the General Court on, among other things, appeals in the area of competition law, and the Civil Service Tribunal on disputes between the EU institutions and their staff.

The 28 judges and nine advocates-general of the Court of Justice, like the 28 judges in the General Court and the seven judges in the Civil Service Tribunal, are appointed by joint agreement of the governments of the Member States for a six-year



renewable mandate.

The number of judges of the General Court will be doubled progressively until 2019. The seven posts of the judges of the Civil Servants Tribunal and the cases pending will be transferred to the Tribunal.

The main Court building, entirely renovated, has been extended with an annex linking it to the two towers housing the translators' offices.

## **12 The Court of Auditors**

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The Court of Auditors comprises 28 members, one per Member State, appointed for six years by the Council. The Court of Auditors examines the legality and regularity of the EU's income and expenditure and ensures good financial management, with resources having to be used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Court of Auditors can make inspection visits to the institutions and bodies of the EU, national authorities managing EU funds, third countries benefiting from EU aid, and individuals and companies benefiting from payments from the EU budget. Once a year, it publishes its annual report, detailing its inspection activities. At any time it can draw up special reports on specific activities.

## **13 The European Investment Bank**

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Opposite the Court of Justice is the headquarters of the European Investment Bank (EIB), created in 1957 by the Treaty esta-



blishing the European Economic Community. As the European Union's banking establishment, it grants loans and long-term guarantees to fund investments intended to encourage regional development, improve the competitiveness of European industry, in particular SMEs, promote the extension of trans-European networks, and promote safe, sustainable and renewable energies. It also supports investment in environmental protection, health and education.

The EIB obtains the funds it lends essentially from bond issues on the capital markets. It is considered one of the main lenders on the international markets, and its excellent credit rating allows project promoters to benefit from advantageous conditions.

It must not be confused with the European Central Bank, which has its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main in Germany.

#### **14 Eurostat**

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Eurostat is the Statistical Office of the European Union, based in Luxembourg. Eurostat was created in 1953 to meet the needs of the ECSC. Over the years, its mission grew and, when the European Economic Community was set up in 1958, Eurostat became a directorate-general (DG) of the European Commission.

Eurostat's role is to draw up and publish comparable statistical information at European level and to provide a statistical 'language' common to all the Member States so that they compare like with like. The basic data is collected by the national statistical institutions and then consolidated by Eurostat, which ensures their comparability. Reliable and objective statistics are vital to



the EU institutions, governments and economic and social decision-makers to define, implement and analyse European and national policies and to monitor the development of economic and monetary union.

Entire series of statistics are available free of charge on the Eurostat website.

## **15 The Publications Office of the European Union**

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The Publications Office is the publishing house of the institutions, agencies and bodies of the European Union. In order to facilitate the distribution of publications, the Office is located not on the Kirchberg plateau but opposite Luxembourg's central railway station and close to the post office.

The Office produces the Official Journal of the European Union daily, in 24 languages, a unique phenomenon in the publishing world. This publication contains all new EU legislation, opinions and information from the institutions. The Office publishes or co-publishes publications in the context of the institutions' communication activities.

The Publications Office also offers several on-line services, providing free access to the treaties, legislation in force and the case law of the Court of Justice (EUR-Lex), information on EU publications (EU Bookshop), tenders (TED) and research and development activities (Cordis).



## 16 The European School

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The first European School was founded in Luxembourg in October 1953. Since then, another 14 have been set up in seven EU Member States, including a second in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. The European School in Luxembourg City remains one of the largest.

The mission of the European Schools is to provide a multilingual, multicultural and multi-confessional education to some 21 000 preschool, primary and secondary pupils.

Not only children of EU officials but also children whose parents work, for example, in diplomatic representations or international companies attend the European School.



## THE EUROPEAN UNION IN LUXEMBOURG

### Secretariat-General of the European Parliament

2, rue Alcide De Gasperi  
L-2929 Luxembourg  
[europarl.europa.eu](http://europarl.europa.eu)

### Council

Meetings in April, June and October  
4, Place de l'Europe  
L-1499 Luxembourg  
[consilium.europa.eu/en/home](http://consilium.europa.eu/en/home)

### European Commission

[ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)

### Eurostat

Bâtiment Joseph Bech  
5, rue Alphonse Weicker  
L-2920 Luxembourg  
[ec.europa.eu/eurostat/help/new-eurostat-website](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/help/new-eurostat-website)

### Various directorates:

Translation, finances, health, IT,  
administration and others  
Bâtiment Jean Monnet (will be rebuilt)  
Rue Albert Wehrer  
L-2920 Luxembourg

### Court of Justice of the European Union

45, boulevard Konrad Adenauer  
L-2925 Luxembourg  
[curia.europa.eu](http://curia.europa.eu)

### Court of Auditors

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi  
L-1615 Luxembourg  
[eca.europa.eu](http://eca.europa.eu)

### **European Investment Bank**

98-100 Boulevard Konrad Adenauer  
L-2950 Luxembourg  
[eib.org](http://eib.org)

### **European Investment Fund**

37B, avenue J.F. Kennedy  
L-2968 Luxembourg  
[eif.org](http://eif.org)

### **Publications Office of the European Union**

2, rue Mercier  
L-2985 Luxembourg  
[publications.europa.eu/en](http://publications.europa.eu/en)

### **Maison de l'Union européenne**

7, rue du Marché-aux-Herbes  
L-2920 Luxembourg  
[ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/index\\_fr.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/luxembourg/index_fr.htm)

### **European Stability Mechanism**

Intergovernmental financial institution  
6A, boulevard de la Foire internationale  
L-1347 Luxembourg  
[esm.europa.eu](http://esm.europa.eu)

### **European School**

23, boulevard Konrad Adenauer  
L-1115 Luxembourg  
[euroschoollu](http://euroschoollu)



Weimerskirch

Limpertsberg

Centre

Kirchber

Pfaffenthal

Grund

Gare

Bonney





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## VISIT LUXEMBOURG, EUROPEAN CAPITAL

### SELF-GUIDED TOURS

Using the plan and the brochure, visitors can get their bearings and plan their own tour.

### GUIDED TOURS WITH AN OFFICIAL GUIDE FROM THE LUXEMBOURG CITY TOURIST OFFICE

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#### Reservations:

Luxembourg City Tourist Office  
30, place Guillaume II, L-1648 Luxembourg  
Tel.: (+352) 47 96 27 09  
guides@lcto.lu  
www.lcto.lu

#### Price:

Infos on [www.lcto.lu](http://www.lcto.lu)

For more information about the architecture of the various buildings on the Kirchberg plateau, please ask at the Luxembourg City Tourist Office for the free brochure "Architecture and art in public space in Kirchberg, Luxembourg".

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