

# ESCE

Electoral System Change in Europe since 1945



## Electoral System Change in Europe since 1945: Luxembourg

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With thanks to:





## Section 1: Overview of Luxembourg's Electoral System Changes since 1990

The electoral system used in Luxembourg has been very stable from 1945 to the present day. Members of the Chamber of Deputies are elected in four districts by proportional representation (since 1919), according to the Hagenbach-Bischoff method. The law allows voters to choose very freely among candidates by using preferential voting and panachage without restrictions.

The most significant changes in the period studied are variation in the size of the assembly, and in the allocation of seats among the four districts (North, East, South and Centre). Until 1988, seats were reallocated among districts every 10 years in accordance with the population living each district. Since 1988 (laws of 20 December 1988) a fixed number of MPs per district has been set.

## Section 2: Relevant Electoral System changes in Luxembourg since 1945

**Table 1. Summary of Luxembourg's Electoral Laws and Amendments since 1945**

Constitution of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg		17 octobre 1868	Department of State - Central Service of Legislation
Law of 31 July 1924		31 July 1924	Mémorial du Grand-Duché du Luxembourg, 5 septembre 1924
Law of 31 July 1924		31 July 1924	<i>Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg</i> , 7 October 1963, p. 909
Law of 20 December 1988, amending article 51, al. 3 of the Constitution	20 December 1988 (assembly size)		<i>Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg</i> , 21 December 1988, p. 19
Law of 20 December 1988, setting the number of deputies to be elected in each electoral district		20 December 1988 (seats per district)	<i>Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg</i> , 21 December 1988, p. 19
Electoral Law of 18 February 2003			<i>Journal Officiel du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg</i> , 21 février 2003



## **Section 3: Details of previous electoral systems and electoral system changes.**

### ***3.1 The 1945 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* 51 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 20 seats, the Centre with 15 seats, the North with 10 seats and the East with 6 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* Voters can use preferential voting and panachage. A voter can vote for a list, in which case the list is considered to have received a number of votes equal to the number of votes that the voter was entitled to cast, or vote for candidates of his choice within one single list, or on different lists. Voters are allowed to give up to two votes to the candidate they support. Voters casting preference votes are allowed to cast as many preference votes as the number of MPs to be elected in the district. Each party list is given as many seats as the electoral quotient is contained in the number of votes cast for it (list votes and votes for candidates of the list).

*Party threshold:* There is no electoral threshold.

*Allocation of seats:* seats are allocated by proportional representation according to the method of Hagenbach-Bischoff: the remaining seats are allocated to lists with the highest average after the second count.

*Compulsory voting:* voting is compulsory for people under 70 years old

*Voting age:* 21 years old

### ***3.2 The 1951 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* 52 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 20 seats, the Centre with 16 seats, the North with 10 seats and the East with 6 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.



*Allocation of seats:* No change.

### ***3.3 The 1964 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* 56 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 23 seats, the Centre with 18 seats, the North with 9 seats and the East with 6 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.

### ***3.4 The 1972 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* no change.

*Districts and magnitude:* no change.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.

*Voting age:* lowered from 21 to 18 years old.

### ***3.5 The 1974 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* 59 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 24 seats, the Centre with 20 seats, the North with 9 seats and the East with 6 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.



### ***3.6 The 1984 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* 64 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 25 seats, the Centre with 23 seats, the North with 9 seats and the East with 7 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.

### ***3.7 The 1989 electoral system***

The Constitution was amended in 1988 (20 December 1988) in order to set a fixed number of members of the Chamber of Deputies (60 members) and to abandon the mechanism of adaptation of the allocation of seats among district on basis of changes in the population living in each of the four districts. The main motivation was that seats were allocated among districts taking into account the population living in each of the districts, meaning eligible voters but also Luxemburg citizens non eligible to vote as well as foreign residents. With the growing number of foreign residents, it was a source of political debate.

*Assembly size:* 60 members.

*Districts and magnitude:* 4 districts, the South with 23 seats, the Centre with 21 seats, the North with 9 seats and the East with 7 seats. The number of seats in each district is fixed by considering the population in the district.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.

**Table 2: Allocation of seats among districts in Luxembourg 1945-2009**

Election year	South	Center	North	East	TOTAL
1945	20	15	10	6	51
1948	20	15	10	6	51
1951	20	16	10	6	52
1954	20	16	10	6	52
1959	20	16	10	6	52
1964	23	18	9	6	56
1968	23	18	9	6	56
1974	24	20	9	6	59
1979	24	20	9	6	59
1984	25	23	9	7	64
1989	23	21	9	7	60
1994	23	21	9	7	60
1999	23	21	9	7	60
2004	23	21	9	7	60
2009	23	21	9	7	60

### ***3.8 The 2001 electoral system***

*Assembly size:* no change.

*Districts and magnitude:* no change.

*Nature of the votes that can be cast:* No change.

*Party threshold:* No change.

*Allocation of seats:* No change.

*Compulsory voting:* voting is compulsory for people under 75 years old

### **References**

Dumont, Patrick, and Lieven De Winter (2003). "Luxembourg: A Case of More 'Direct' Delegation and Accountability". In Kaare Strøm, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Torbjörn Bergman (eds), *Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 474-97.

### **Project funding provisions**

The ESCE project team wishes to acknowledge that this research was made possible due to the financial support that the project has received from: the FRS-FNRS, the McDougall Trust and the Nuffield Foundation.