



## Luxembourg 2011 Crime and Safety Report

Riots/Civil Unrest; Crime; Terrorism

Europe > Luxembourg

2/28/2011

Luxembourg 2011 OSAC Crime and Safety Report

### **Overall Crime and Safety**

#### *Crime*

Luxembourg is a relatively safe and modern European country with effective law enforcement and security services. Local and Federal Police maintain a low profile and are generally reactive. Although violent crime is less prevalent in Luxembourg cities than in similarly sized American cities, property crimes still occur. Thieves are often guided by the victim's lack of security awareness or perceived affluence, not their nationality.

Pickpockets are a problem on buses and in Luxembourg's train station. The Luxembourg Gare (main train station) that services the high-speed trains to and from Paris can be a problem. Laptop computers, wallets, and passports have been stolen when the traveler is pre-occupied. Visitors must be aware of their immediate surroundings, maintain direct control of their bags, and avoid displaying high value items.

Residential crime is also a concern, especially during the traditional vacation periods in August and around Christmas.

#### *Safety*

Highways and larger Luxembourg roads are well lit and maintained. Secondary and/or rural roads can be narrow, poorly maintained, and unlit. Travelers should carry a blank copy of an accident report (available thru Luxembourg Insurance companies and pre-positioned at the embassy, on the embassy website, and in the embassy "welcome kit") in the glove box of their personal vehicle in the event of a minor accident not involving injury. Note: Police will normally not respond to an accident if there are no injuries. This document is completed by both parties and submitted to their respective insurance companies. In the event of injuries or serious

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damage, police must be notified and the drivers must remain on the scene until the police complete their report.

### **Political violence**

#### *Historical Perspective*

Luxembourg is a peaceful democratic nation composed of federal, regional, and municipal governments. Luxembourg shares a very close relationship with the United States (who they still recognize as their “liberators” from Nazi occupation). Local Luxembourg groups, as well as other European groups, will hold demonstrations in Luxembourg to bring attention to their cause. Many of these demonstrations are directed at offices of the European Union (which are permanently based in Luxembourg), rather than at the Government of Luxembourg.

Farmers and truck drivers have staged large, but generally peaceful demonstrations. The main effect of these demonstrations is to bring intercity traffic to a stand-still.

#### *Regional Terrorism and Organized Crime*

There are several anarchist and action oriented special interest groups operating in Luxembourg. However, for the most part, they have remained fairly quiet and only demonstrate on rare occasions.

Organized crime exists in Luxembourg, as in any other country. Most organized criminal activity will be centered around Luxembourg city. Many of the gangs are immigrants from Eastern Europe.

#### *International/Transnational Terrorism*

International terrorism has traditionally been viewed as the primary security threat to Luxembourg, with the European Union Supreme Court and European World Bank in Luxembourg. As a signatory to the Schengen Agreement, Luxembourg has no border controls on land routes into the country, and border controls at the airports have sometimes proven less than fully effective.

#### *Civil Unrest*

Protests and demonstrations by various political, labor, and social groups are infrequent occurrences throughout Luxembourg. These gatherings are usually peaceful, though traffic is often disrupted in busy city centers. Americans are advised to steer clear of demonstrations; police action, or crowd movements that could endanger or trap the unwary observer.

### **Post Specific Concerns**

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Luxembourg hosts an extremely large number of international visitors and is often the location of multi-lateral conferences and meetings. Although not traditional tourist destinations, the EU, banking, and a large number of multi-national corporations are headquartered in Luxembourg and the surrounding area.

### **Police Response**

Luxembourg law enforcement services are under the federal Minister of the Interior. The local (city) police are responsible for the day-to-day local law enforcement activities such as traffic, patrolling, and incident response. The police enforce federal laws and control specialized units such as the highway patrol, crowd and riot control, SWAT, homicide units, and organized crime units.

Judiciare (the equivalent of national level detectives) Police often provide a supporting role for local police during major investigations or other actions. Luxembourg police are professional and should be viewed as an asset to a visitor in need. Many speak English. Any victim of crime should report the incident to the nearest police station and fill out a complaint. In the event there is a significant loss, the police report will often be required by the victim's insurance company as evidence of a loss. In the event your bank or credit cards are stolen, immediately block them with the issuer, as they will likely be used within the first hour. The local emergency police telephone number is 112.

Luxembourg law allows police to detain foreign nationals for a maximum of 24 hours without an arrest warrant. During this detention, the subject is permitted to contact an attorney, embassy or consular official. U.S. citizens in need should contact the U.S. Embassy; the twenty-four hour number is (+352) 46-01-23.

### **Medical Emergencies**

Health care in Luxembourg is comparable to that in the U.S., with adequate ambulances, hospitals, and clinics found throughout the country. Persons requiring emergency medical treatment should call the medical emergency number 112 from any fixed or mobile telephone.

### **Travel Precautions**

Luxembourg has an extensive public transportation network consisting of buses and trains. Tickets are required, but access is based on the honor system. However, police do conduct random checks, and a large fine will be assessed to passengers without a valid ticket. Crowded transportation hubs, such as the Luxembourg Gare, are sites known for

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pickpockets. Restaurants and bars around tourist sites, such as the City Center, are also popular with pickpockets. Visitors should be particularly alert when in these transportation hubs or tourist sites and maintain direct control over luggage or other property. Be alert to individuals blocking your movement by dropping objects and then clumsily trying to pick them up, standing in a metro door, or stopping on a stairway. Such actions could be a prelude to someone else bumping into you from behind and stealing a wallet or purse. When in restaurants, bags and purses should not be hung over a chair behind the occupant, instead place it under the table between your feet. Similarly, at check-counters or cashiers, never set bags or purses on the ground while conducting business. It is advisable not to carry large amounts of cash. When using ATM machines, visitors should be cautious. Users must be careful to ensure that "shoulder surfers" are not peering at the keypad when entering pin numbers. A new twist to ATM theft is the surface mounted scanner, a card reader disguised as part of the legitimate card slot. It retrieves card related information that can then be duplicated for further unauthorized withdrawals. If an ATM machine retains your card, immediately call the issuer to put a stop on the card.

Credit and bank cards are accepted in most restaurants, stores, and gas stations. To avoid credit card theft or duplicate billing, it is important to maintain control of the card. This type of fraud is becoming more common as portable credit/debit card machines come into more frequent use.

### **Contact Information**

Country code: 352

U.S. Embassy telephone operator: (352) 46-01-23

Regional Security Office: (352) 46-01-23 x2247

Marine Post One: (352) 46-01-23 x2221

U.S. Consulate - American Citizen Services: (352) 46-01-23 x2227

Office of Political Affairs: (352) 46-01-23 x2121

### **OSAC Country Council**

The OSAC Country Council is currently inactive. Persons interested in participating in a Luxembourg OSAC Country Council should contact Regional Security Officer Kirby Rosenbluth or RSO Office Manager Maho Fischer at (352) 46-01-23 for more information.

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