



The national symbols of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

THE NATIONAL SYMBOLS

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The national flag

The first known flag was used by Count William of Luxembourg in 1123. It was barred, i.e. horizontally striped, probably in yellow and red.

Today, the flag of Luxembourg consists of three bands in red, white and sky-blue, arranged horizontally. Even though the flags of Luxembourg and the Netherlands are very similar, the distinctive element of the Dutch flag is the band in ultramarine.

The majority of modern tricolour flags are derived to a greater or lesser degree from the tricolour of the first French Republic. Even the ancient Dutch flag was only officially defined as being in red, white and blue in 1795, under French influence, by the Batavian Republic.

Therefore, we can only guess whether the colours of Luxembourg are really national or derived from the Dutch flag after 1815. On the other hand, it is probable that the people of Luxembourg accepted the colours of the Dutch flag because they were those of their coat of arms.

The flag of Luxembourg, as well as the state coats of arms, have enjoyed legal protection only since 1972.

The red colour corresponds to the norm Pantone 032C and the blue colour to the norm Pantone 299C.

(source: Memorial A n°73 of 09.16.1993)

The national anthem

The national anthem is made up of the first and last verses of the song "Ons Heemecht" ("Our homeland") from 1859, a text by the poet Michel Lentz, set to music by Jean-Antoine Zinnen. It was played in public for the first time at a grand ceremony in Ettelbruck in 1864. Unlike the Marseillaise, which is an invitation to combat, the national anthem of Luxembourg is an ardent call for peace. This anthem expresses all the joy of a country which had finally found independence in an atmosphere of harmony and prosperity. The "Wilhelmus", the anthem of the grand-ducal family, is played when one of the members of the family arrives at or leaves a ceremony.

National Day

Since the end of the 18th century, it has been customary in Luxembourg to celebrate the sovereign's birthday. During the long reign of Grand Duchess Charlotte from 1919 to 1964, this celebration always took place in mid-winter, on 23 January, on the sovereign's birthday.

In 1961, in particular due to the weather at that time of year, it was decided to transfer the public celebration of the sovereign's birthday, and thus National Day, to the 23 June of each year. Festivities commence on the evening before. Since 23 December 1961, the National-Day celebrations have been laid down in a grand-ducal decree. The term "national festival" does not figure in the legal texts, the day being described instead as "day of the official celebration of the anniversary of the birth of the Grand Duke".



The coats of arms

The coats of arms of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg are on three scales: small, medium and large.

The origins of the coats of arms of the State of Luxembourg date back to the Middle Ages. They were established around 1235 by Count Henry V of Luxembourg. The coats of arms are essentially composed of a barruly of silver and azure in ten parts and a lion gules, armed, langued and crowned with gold, its tail forked and looped.

From 1123, Count William of Luxembourg wore a barred banner on his equestrian seal. The majority of the descendants of the first House of Luxembourg used a barrully, while the descendants of the House of Namur bore a lion.

The coats of arms have enjoyed legal protection since 1972.

The law of 17 June 1993 amended and supplemented the law of 1972.

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