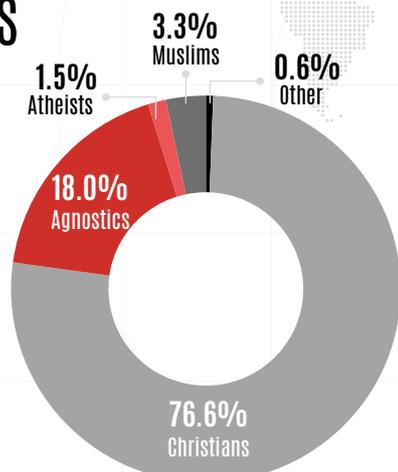




LUXEMBOURG

RELIGIONS



Population

603,944

GDP per capita

94,278 US\$

Area

2,586 Km²

GINI INDEX*

34.9

*Economic Inequality

LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND ACTUAL APPLICATION

The Constitution of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg guarantees freedom of religion, provided no crimes are committed in its exercise and expression (Article 19).¹ Article 20 of the constitution bans forcing people to take part in any religious practices, while the Penal Code prohibits forcing or preventing someone from practising a religion, attending religious services, or celebrating religious holidays (Article 142).² Freedom of assembly is protected, but open-air religious or other meetings are subject to laws and police regulations (Article 25).

While there is no official state religion, a 2015 law formally approved conventions between religious communities and the state.³ Official recognition was granted to six religious communities: the Catholic Church, the Jewish community, the Protestant Church, the Muslim community, the Anglican Church and the Orthodox Church. The law commits the government to providing religious groups with annual financial support with amounts depending on the number of members.⁴

To sign a convention with the state, a religious community must be from a world-recognised religion, be well-established in Luxembourg, and be supported by a sufficiently large com-

munity.⁵ The law abolishes religious education in public primary and secondary schools and replaces it with an ethics course entitled “Life and Society”, but religious communities must be regularly consulted with respect to this course.⁶

The Penal Code prohibits preventing, delaying or interrupting religious ceremonies, showing disrespect to religious objects (Article 144), and insulting or assaulting religious leaders during religious services (Articles 145 and 146).

In May 2018, Article 563 of the Penal Code was amended to prohibit the use of face coverings in certain public spaces, including schools, educational establishments, hospitals, nursing homes, public institutions and public transit.⁷

In April 2019, the Administrative Court annulled a 2016 regulation prohibiting the wearing of a headscarf in a driving licence photo.⁸

INCIDENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Hate crime data collected by the police, prosecutors, and the Ministry of Justice are not publicly available.⁹

The Observatory of Islamophobia in Luxembourg (OIL) was created in January 2018 and formally constituted as an association in March 2019.¹⁰ According to a 2018 OIL poll of 340

randomly chosen Muslims, 82% felt that Muslims are socially well integrated in Luxembourg.¹¹ The poll results indicate a general decrease by 12% in the number of acts perceived as Islamophobic among the participants between 2017 (38.2%) and 2018 (26.2%).¹² The number of incidents reported decreased by 3.8% between 2017 (25%) and 2018 (21.2%).¹³

OIL expressed concern that the authorities did not take preventive actions to protect the Muslim community after the attacks on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, and Brest, France in June 2019, but steps were taken after the December 2018 attack on a Christmas Market in Strasbourg, France.¹⁴

According to RIAL, an anti-Semitism research organisation,¹⁵ there were more anti-Semitic incidents reported in the first half of 2019 than in all of 2018.¹⁶ In 2017, the organisation recorded 12 anti-Semitic incidents, 26 in 2018 and 47 last year. In 2019, incidents included Stars of David tagged in front of a store, a hostile sticker stuck on the letterbox of the rabbi of Esch-sur-Alzette, and Holocaust denying remarks on social media.¹⁷ RIAL president Bernard Gottlieb said “Luxembourg

is not anti-Semitic, but like everywhere we must not relax our vigilance.”¹⁸

Restrictions on public religious gatherings due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 resulted in the suspension of religious services. Luxembourg’s approach was described as ‘high’ (compared to ‘very high’, ‘moderate’, or ‘low’) because public religious gatherings were suspended but places of worship were open for private prayer.¹⁹

Christians have no faith-oriented structure nor research organisation like OIL or RIAL. In September 2019, Pope Francis announced that Archbishop Höllerich, SJ, of Luxembourg would be one of thirteen new cardinals. He is the first cardinal from Luxembourg.²⁰

PROSPECTS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

There were no significant new or increased governmental restrictions on religious freedom during the period under review. The rise in anti-Semitic incidents is of concern, but overall, the situation seems to be stable.

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