

# LUXEMBOURG

PREVALENCE (%) OF ADULTS THAT ENGAGED IN MODERATE-  
AND VIGOROUS-INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FROM  
EUROBAROMETER, 2014

%	ADULTS	
	MODERATE-INTENSITY*	VIGOROUS-INTENSITY*
BOTH SEXES	44	17

*\*moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least  
4 days within the past 7 days*

Total population: 549 680

Median age: 39.2 years

Life expectancy at birth males: 79.8 years

Life expectancy at birth females: 83.9 years

GDP per capita: €83 400

GDP spent on health: 7.1% (1)



# Monitoring and surveillance

## Physical activity in adults

Luxembourg's national recommendations on physical activity for health (2) address young people, adults, and older adults and are based on the European Union (EU) Physical Activity Guidelines (3). The cut-off point used by Luxembourg for adults reaching the recommended physical activity levels for health are based on the recommendations of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (4) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), (5) as well as the aforementioned EU Physical Activity Guidelines.

Physical activity among adults is evaluated through the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS) (6), under the leadership of the Ministry of Health. Information gathered on physical activity includes data on the frequency, duration and intensity of physical activity, across various domains (leisure time, transport, work, household), cycling and/or walking and sedentary behaviour, with data disaggregated by age and socioeconomic status.

According to European Commission (EC) Eurobarometer data from 2014 (7), 17% of adults reported having engaged in vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 4 days within the last 7, 79% of which did so for more than 30 minutes. Moreover, 24% of adults reported that they carried out moderate-intensity physical activity on at least 4 days within the last 7, of which 74% did so for more than 30 minutes.

## Physical activity in children and adolescents

Luxembourg uses the cut-off point for adolescents and children reaching the recommended physical activity levels for health as defined in WHO's *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health* (2010) (8). However, the country does not have a specific national survey for monitoring and surveillance of physical activity in adolescents and children.

Physical activity levels in Luxembourg among children and adolescents are examined through the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study (9). According to unpublished HBSC data provided for Luxembourg, 24.7%, 19.5% and 16.1% of adolescents aged 11–13 years, 14–15 years and 16–18 years, respectively, reached the WHO recommended levels of physical activity for health.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, HBSC studies, which collected in 2005/2006 and 2009/2010, reported an increase in physical activity levels among adolescents in Luxembourg, from 14.9% to 18.5% (10, 11).

Another study with nationally representative data from 2004 (12) (Table 1), reports that boys are more active than girls, both among 14-year-olds and 18-year olds.

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<sup>1</sup> These unpublished national data derive in part from the HBSC survey.

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Table 1. Prevalence (%) of adolescents reaching the recommended physical activity levels, 2004

%	ADOLESCENTS (14 YEARS)	ADOLESCENTS (18 YEARS)
MALES	34	36
FEMALES	20	15
BOTH SEXES	27	25.5

Source: Bös et al., 2006 (12).

According to WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO) estimates from 2010 for the adolescent population of Luxembourg (defined as aged 11–17 years in relation to WHO data), 22.4% meet the recommended physical activity levels for health (26.6% for boys and 18.2% for girls) (13).

## Types of physical activity and modes of transport

A recent survey on use and forms of sustainable transport was conducted by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure in 2014 (14). Data from this survey show that 60% of residents used a bike during the last 12 months; 323 000 bikes were used in the last 12 months, compared with 363 000 registered cars in the country. Among respondents expressing a desire to cycle over using a car, the most important aspects influencing their decision were the availability of cycle paths separated from motorized vehicles, along with the need for intersections to be better adapted to the needs of cyclists. Luxembourg also has a national household survey on transport, established in 1995 and now coordinated by the Ministry of Transport.

# Policy response

## Major policy documents adopted by governmental bodies

In 2006, Luxembourg adopted a national action plan entitled Eat Healthily, Move More (*Gesond iessen, Méi bewegen*) (15). This action plan is a joint initiative by four government ministries as part of an interministerial committee (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Integration, Ministry of Sports, and Ministry of Education and Vocational Training). In 2011, an update on physical activity was launched (16).

Luxembourg has also issued a law on sports (*Loi concernant le sport*), in which it clearly states that the Government supports sports in order to contribute to the maintenance or improvement of the health of the population, alongside other objectives (17). Sports are also included Luxembourg's *Programme gouvernemental*, which addresses both competitive and informal sports for recreational purposes. Priorities highlighted include infrastructures, training of professional staff, and reaching and promoting sports among sedentary groups, including in particular young girls (18).



## Health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA) coordination mechanism

An interministerial committee chaired by the Ministry of Health coordinates action on HEPA in Luxembourg. The committee does not have an independent budget, but is included in the budgets of the participating ministries. It addresses both physical activity and diet matters, together.

## Guidelines and goals

Luxembourg has national recommendations for physical activity in line with WHO's recommendations (8) and the EU Physical Activity Guidelines (4). The guidelines, which are set out in the national action (*Plan national alimentation saine et activite physique*), address adults, children, adolescents and sedentary groups separately, and provide references for the level and intensity of activity (2).

Table 2 presents a summary of the key measures in place to monitor and address physical activity in Luxembourg.

Table 2. Summary of key physical activity initiatives in Luxembourg

HEALTH	SPORTS	EDUCATION	TRANSPORT	MONITORING	GUIDELINES
Counselling on physical activity as part of primary health care services	Existence of a national Sports for All policy(ies)	Mandatory physical activity in primary and secondary schools	National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school and/or workplace	Physical activity included in the national health monitoring system or separate routine survey	Existence of a national recommendation on physical activity
NO*	YES	YES	NO**	YES	YES

\* Some counselling is included in the health check that forms part of the school medical surveillance system. \*\* Active travel to school schemes are operating in some communities, but no national scheme exists.

## Additional information on action in key areas

### Public awareness campaign

In the context of the national action plan Eat Healthily, Move More (16), and as part of the European Week of Sport, the Government launched a public awareness campaign to promote regular physical activity and sports among the population, entitled Lëtz Move (19). The website provides information about the importance of physical activity for health, describes various types of physical activity and highlights links to opportunities and/or venues for physical activity.

### Promoting physical activity in schools

Provision of physical education classes is mandatory in Luxembourg, but no number of lessons is specified. The amount of physical education varies across the country. It is provided from the first grade onwards, with on average 3 hours per week for the first 4 years of schooling and then 2 hours per week for the last 2 years of primary education. Three hours per week are provided in the first year of secondary education, followed by 2 hours per week for next 5 years. This is then lowered to 1 hour per week for the last 2 or 3 years of secondary education.

The Luxembourg Government has drafted a policy for physical activity in schools entitled "School is moving" (*École en mouvement/Bewegte Schule*) (20). Active breaks during school hours have also been piloted in primary schools during 2014; after positive evaluation of this initiative it is anticipated that by 2016 more primary schools will be involved, with a view to achieving nationwide implementation in primary education. Walking buses currently run in eight communities. A competency-oriented test for basic motor skills has also been developed for 8-year-old children (21).

Box 1 describes some physical activity promotion initiatives in Luxembourg schools.

### Box 1. Health checks in schools

Through the medical school surveillance system in Luxembourg, 99% of all school-aged children receive a health check, which includes health promotion advice (every 2 years for healthy children and every year for children with existing health conditions or special needs). Moreover, individual counselling on physical activity is offered when required. For primary school-aged children, regular educational sessions are organized by the school medical teams to promote physical activity (22).

## Promoting physical activity among older adults

"Club Senior" is a network of meeting centres for older people (aged 50 years or over) offering a variety of activities (23). They aim to provide opportunities for older people to lead an active social life and many activities have a physical activity focus, including walking, dancing and sports games. Information about health is also available to the community.

## Physical activity in the transport and environment sector

The Luxembourg Government has adopted an interministerial strategy on sustainable development (*Stratégie globale pour une mobilité durable*), with a view to promoting public transport and ensuring that built environments support a more sustainable way of life (24). An overarching objective of the strategy is to promote the concept of "short-distance towns and cities", a mixed-function model encompassing work, accommodation and leisure, all close at hand in high-density living spaces. Another objective is to reduce traffic, by incentivizing the use of public transport and providing alternative modes of transport to discourage the use of cars. In this context, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure leads a special working group on sustainable transport.

# Successful approaches

## European Week of Sport

Luxembourg is participating in the European Week of Sport, planning a national agenda and schedule and giving organizers of all sporting events the possibility to join the agenda. A special focus is being placed on the national awareness-raising campaign "Lëtz move" (19).

## Wibbel an Dribbel

Since 1991 all Grade 4 pupils in Luxembourg are invited to come for one day to the national sports centre "d'Coque" to attend the well-known Wibbel an Dribbel event, at which 14 different sports federations offer the children the opportunity to try out their sports. Across five days, 3000 pupils are the guests of the Ministry of Sports and the sports federations. More than 65 000 pupils have participated in Wibbel an Dribbel since 1991 (25).

## Lëtz Move

The Ministry of Sports launched an awareness campaign in 2012 addressing all citizens, aiming to encourage them to be more regularly physically active. Citizens have the opportunity to open a personal account on the Lëtz Move website (19), to report their daily, weekly and monthly physical activity. Information is also provided about the benefits of physical activity, allowing users to compare their weekly activity levels to the guidelines for HEPA.

## Comité Olympique et Sportif Luxembourgeois (COSL) SPILLFEST

The Luxembourg National Olympic Committee (COSL) organizes an annual event (SPILLFEST) each spring for young people and families. About 40 sports federations offer workshops in order to provide demonstrations of their sports, adapted to the age and the skills or experience levels of the participants. The COSL SPILLFEST sports festival has been running for several decades (26).

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