



EU Network of
Independent Experts
on Social Inclusion

Investing in children:

Breaking the cycle of disadvantage

[A Study of National Policies](#)

Luxembourg

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Investing in children:

Breaking the cycle of disadvantage

A Study of National Policies

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COUNTRY REPORT – LUXEMBOURG

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Summary¹

In Luxembourg, young people are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than older people, and this rate decreases with age. The population categories most at risk of poverty and exclusion are one parent families (45.5% at risk of poverty in 2011), children (20.3% at risk of poverty in 2011) and foreigners (aged 18 year and over: 18.9% at risk of poverty in 2011).

This report assesses the degree to which Luxembourg government responds to the concerns expressed in the 2013 European Commission recommendation "Investing in children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage".

Overall approach and governance

The way in which the fight against poverty and social exclusion among children and youth is organised, is strongly influenced by the predominance of a universalist approach in social policy, completed by targeted measures. In recent years the emphasis has been on the position of one parent families, on the conciliation of work and family life and on the transition from school to working life. The latter is also the first action domain of the 2012-2014 Youth Pact.

Luxembourg has an ombuds-committee for children since 2003. It assists children and parents in realising their basic rights, both at individual and political level.

Actor involvement in social inclusion policies is improving through a more thematic consultation process. Luxembourg has a tradition of youth taking part in youth movements and leisure activities and it has an active youth parliament, expressing recently its opinion on the education reform, youth unemployment and poverty. Participation of parents is also developed in the framework of different services, but listening to the voice of children themselves could improve within public and private services and institutions.

There is no ex-ante social impact assessment system in Luxembourg, but monitoring is well developed. A first integrated report on the situation of youth has been published in 2010 and a second is under preparation for 2014. Also, a comprehensive report on child poverty has been published in 2010.

Overall, the universalist approach of Luxembourg social protection policies is consequently combined with specific measures for the most vulnerable. But a number of challenges remain important: the integration of migrants and their educational performance, the transition from school to working life (NEET) and the situation of children in one parent families. These issues could be better tackled by improving the mainstreaming instruments and integration of policies for combatting poverty and social exclusion among children and youth. Without leaving the universalist approach, a taskforce on poverty and social inclusion of children, governed by the inter-ministerial committee for youth could be such instrument. A taskforce could also elaborate a specific poverty target for children.

¹ Readers should note that the report was first drafted in September 2013 and is based on information and data available at that time. In two instances more correct information that became available subsequently has been referenced (see footnotes 33 and 41). However there has not been an opportunity to do a comprehensive screening for updates since September.

Access to adequate resources

In percentage of GDP, social protection expenditure increased with some 3 percentage points between 2000 and 2010. There was a relative larger growth in the fields of family/children and housing and other services. To support (the most vulnerable) parents' participation in the **labour market**, Luxembourg government concentrates on:

- Facilitating the conciliation of work and family life by improving the availability and affordability of early childhood education and care (ECEC)²;
- Promoting employability and job search of women, more in particular single mothers and persons depending on the minimum income scheme;
- Improvement of educational performance and prevention of early school leaving to prevent unemployment and poverty in later life;
- Improvement of accompanying services by decentralisation and more personalised accompaniment.

The ex-ante impact assessment of the increased availability of ECEC places is a good practice in the field of using evidence for policy development. The demand of ECEC places is growing fast due to a combination of increasing activity rates of women and a fast growing population. There is no evidence that Luxembourg pays great attention to other conciliation policies such as time policies. Finally, the further development of outreaching approaches by employment and social services remains a challenge in order to reach the most vulnerable.

To provide **adequate living standards**, Luxembourg has a minimum income scheme as last safety net. A reform of this scheme is under construction, in order to better respond to the needs of specific population groups and to specific (e.g. housing) situations. Also, the Luxembourg Statistical Institute studies the construction of a national poverty threshold on the basis of reference budgets, linked to the reform of the minimum income scheme. The last decade, there has been a shift from taxes to benefits in the social protection of families. And there seems to be a movement to more targeted policies, i.a. by a considerable growth of in kind benefits, which changes the balance between cash and in kind support. Child poverty is rightly seen by Luxembourg government as a problem of vulnerable households. But the answer is still too exclusively relying on the increase of labour market participation.

Access to affordable quality services

ECEC facilities in Luxembourg increased dramatically during the last decade, but the demand increased even more. Government is clearly committed to support the conciliation of work and family life. But also to increase the educational and preventive quality of ECEC services. As to efforts to make ECEC places available and affordable for low income households, here also government made great efforts (see e.g. childcare vouchers). But according to some NGOs, more efforts should be done to reach all vulnerable categories of the population.

Educational performance is seen as a very important factor in the fight against unemployment and poverty and it remains a serious challenge in Luxembourg. Special attention is given to early school leavers and to the transition from school to working life. Initiatives such as the second chance school and the voluntary orientation service are general measures for improving the educational performance of vulnerable

² In this report the term early childhood education and care or its abbreviation ECEC is used for pre-school services of child minding, unless the more classic term of childcare seemed more appropriate in its context.

population categories. In view of the very important number of immigrants among these categories, these measures touch them more particularly. The multilingual school system (Luxembourgish at primary school, French and German at secondary school) is an important factor in the school integration problems of new arriving immigrants. The 2013 SSR reminds of the continued common reflection on necessary reforms of secondary education by all relevant actors. A societal debate on the multilingual education should be part of that reflection.

Luxembourg has a strong prevention (e.g. high vaccination rate, regular school medical control), health care and health insurance system. One of the challenges however is the access for vulnerable groups such as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Language and cultural barriers have to be challenged in order to inform them about all possibilities, including the new act on the third social part payer (*le tiers payant social*).

In recent years, housing costs and housing exclusion have been among the major challenges for Luxembourg's social inclusion policies. More in particular, one parent households and households with children face housing problems. In 2012-2013 a national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion has been developed and formalised, following the "housing first" principle. The progress in combatting housing exclusion is clear, but implementation is in its early stage and current commitments will probably not be enough to respond to the rapidly growing demand. The non-existence of the formal concept of social housing is a weakness. Its introduction could perhaps be helpful to speed up the implementation of the national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion.

The development of the *Maisons Relais* has been an important step in family support and could relate also to alternative care. They are meant to provide integrated care of children and support to parents, including those with special needs. They can be a nodal point in family support if they use all their potential. Not all of them however use the possibilities offered by legislation. The number of children placed in institutional care could perhaps be reduced and their situation should improve.

Beside the importance to continue and intensify the implementation of all recent measures improving service delivery to vulnerable children and parents, two particular **areas for policy improvement** are:

- Strengthening the outreaching capacities of social and financial support services, both methodologically and in terms of staff capacity;
- The area of education, including the basic structures and the educational performance. All relevant actors consider reforms to be necessary, but there could be more sense of urgency in the light of the continuing increase of children and youth not having one of the Luxembourg languages as their mother tongue.

Child poverty and social exclusion in the European Semester

Child poverty and exclusion are regularly present in documents for the European semester. Mostly these are linked to low work intensity in vulnerable households, to education and to youth unemployment. While the universalist approach in social policy has to be considered as fruitful, it makes monitoring the implementation of the European Recommendation more complex. There is a need for better mainstreaming the fight against child poverty and social exclusion. Mainstreaming is not only a matter of political commitment, but also of adequate instruments for its realisation. A specific multi-actor taskforce on the issue could be the right instrument for a more integrated implementation of the European recommendation and its reporting in the framework of the European semester.

EU financial instruments

Except for labour market integration, the Luxembourg ESF is not targeted at poverty and social inclusion and even less at children. Somewhat more attention is given to the transition from school to working life. The 2013 NRP mentions a closer cooperation between ministries in the framework of the new ESF programme because 20% of the ESF budget will have to be allocated to the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Luxembourg is one of the countries where children consume little fruit, but it is a successful partner in the European School Milk and Fruit Schemes.

1. Assessment of overall approach and governance³

This report assesses the degree to which Luxembourg government responds to the concerns expressed in the 2013 European Commission recommendation “Investing in children – breaking the cycle of disadvantage”.⁴ It is thus an assessment of policies, not a report on child poverty and exclusion as such. The structure and content of the report follows a set of common guidelines for all EU member states.

In Luxembourg, young people are more at risk of poverty or social exclusion than older people, and this rate decreases with age. In 2011, the poverty or social exclusion rate of the 0-17 year's age group was 21.7% against 4.7% for the 65+. Also, the differences in poverty rates between household types are important. Households with children have a higher at risk of poverty rate than households without children: in 2011 17.3% against 8.6%. One parent families have by far the highest poverty risk, i.e. 45.5% in 2011. The at risk of poverty rate increases also with the number of children within the household.

These figures indicate that there is an important category of children where the risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty has to be countered. The availability and affordability of services and of possibilities for social participation are crucial elements for the prevention of poverty. Also the number of early school leavers remains a challenge in this field.

In the 2013 SSR, Luxembourg government mentions the following points as its major challenges⁵:

- Keep a high level of social protection in a context of a fragile economic situation in Europe, due to financial and economic uncertainties;
- Make sure that social protection continues to play its role and does not become a pure instrument for combatting poverty;
- Emphasise a right balance between a universal approach (the same rights and provisions for all) and a targeted approach (rights and provisions according to one's specific financial and social situation); the universal approach should remain predominant;
- Keep a constructive dialogue between all relevant actors to get out of the crisis while preserving social cohesion and solidarity between generations;
- Promote social and professional inclusion of youth, one parent families and vulnerable persons within the specific nature of the Luxembourg labour market.

Universal and targeting policies

Discussing the approach of poverty and social inclusion of children and youth with representatives of the Ministry of family and Integration⁶ made clear that the way in which the fight against poverty and social exclusion among children and youth is organised, is strongly influenced by the predominance of the universal approach as

³ Readers should note that the report was first drafted in September 2013 and is based on information and data available at that time. In two instances more correct information that became available subsequently has been referenced (see footnotes 33 and 41). However there has not been an opportunity to do a comprehensive screening for updates since September.

⁴ See: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf

⁵ Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2013). *Strategic Social Reporting 2013*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, p. 1-2 (translation by the author).

⁶ Group interview dd. 17.07.2013.

described in the SSR. As a consequence, policies for combatting child poverty have to be found within the different policy fields touching children and youth, and also within the general policies for combatting poverty and social exclusion.

Poverty and social exclusion of children and youth has been mentioned in different terms as a policy priority in subsequent national reform programmes and national strategy reports on social protection and social inclusion. Aspects such as children's well-being, early school leaving, conciliation of work and family life, youth unemployment and educational performance have been touched. In recent years the emphasis has been on the situation of children linked to the position of one parent families and to the conciliation of work and family life, and on the transition from school to working life⁷. The latter is also the first action domain of the 2012-2014 Youth Pact (see below).

Multidimensional approach – integration as a challenge

Children and youth policies in Luxembourg are split into three parts according to age groups: early childhood (0-3 year), children (4-12 year) and youth (+12). Within each of these age group policies, a multidimensional approach of child and youth well-being has been developed during the last decade and special attention has been given to the most vulnerable. Most initiatives however have been taken rather ad hoc and without an overall strategy for integrated policy development. A study on education and care for children in Luxembourg for instance presents an interesting diagram, describing the system of education and care structures, but with the remark that "the diagram suggests a containment and coherence that does not exist. The fabric of Luxembourg education and care structures is criss-crossed with rupture lines, including overlaps, apparently insurmountable divisions and contradictions. This is no wonder since this fabric was never planned but evolved historically."⁸ The same could be said of most policy fields that are of interest here.

Initiatives have been taken in the meantime or are on their way to integrate the activities of different arrangements within and among government departments and levels. Examples of these are:

- The local plans for "peri-school" accompagnement (Plan d'encadrement périscolaire – PEP). This is a new regulation on the collaboration between primary schools and social-educational services at local level, such as pre- and post-school facilities (maisons relais), childcare and day care facilities. This should serve both a better start in life for all children and better facilities for working parents. Municipalities have been asked to prepare their local plans for implementation from the school year 2013-2014 on and to revise the plan annually.⁹
- The Youth Pact (Pacte pour la Jeunesse). Following legislation from 2008, a first pact has been presented for the years 2012-2014. It follows a thematic approach, covering: the transition from school into working life; the successful entering into adult life; the well-being of youth; youth as actors; the scientific accompagnement of youth policies.¹⁰

⁷ Also the country specific recommendations insisted on the challenge of youth unemployment in Luxembourg.

⁸ Honig, M-S. & C. Haag (2012). *Education and Care for Children in Luxembourg – Taking Stock*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 13.

⁹ See: http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle_presse/actualite/2013/03-mars/15-delvaux-jacobs/

¹⁰ Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2012). *Pacte pour la jeunesse 2012-2014*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration.

Children's rights

Luxembourg has an ombuds-committee for children since 2003: the *Ombuds-Comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand* (ORK).¹¹ It assists children and parents to realise their basic rights, both at individual and political level. The ORK underlines that the situation of children's rights in Luxembourg is generally satisfying, but it also stresses some important challenges, more in particular with housing, education and integration of migrants.¹² In its annual report 2008 the ORK includes a chapter on child poverty, mentioning the fact that the children most exposed to poverty or social exclusion are children in one parent families, in asylum seeking families, in refugee families and in families with many children.¹³ In its 2012 annual report, the ORK includes a chapter on the problems of education and early school leaving, asking for a reform of the school system and better training of teachers in dealing with the changing composition of the school population.¹⁴

Actor involvement and the voice of children and youth

Actor involvement in social inclusion policies is constantly improving. In the first place through the multidimensional and more integrated approaches as demonstrated above, but also through a more thematic consultation process in the broader field of social inclusion. Several working groups of all relevant partners have been set up after a consultation meeting in 2011. More in particular the working group on housing exclusion and homelessness and the one on the minimum income scheme (RMG) have been fruitful.¹⁵ It remains nevertheless a challenge to keep the different actors interested in participating in the consultations.¹⁶ A more systematic and structural involvement of actors in the policy development cycle could possibly be useful for that.

Concerning active participation of children and youth, Luxembourg has a strong tradition of youth taking part in youth movements and leisure activities. Some 40% of youth is active in these.¹⁷ Youth organisations have one umbrella organisation: *la Conférence Générale de la Jeunesse du Luxembourg – CGJL*. In 2013 the CGJL had a meeting with the Minister of Labour about the issue of youth unemployment. They also published the outcomes of a survey among youth concerning education and the transition from school to work, including the issue of early school leavers (NEET).¹⁸ A comprehensive website informs all actors about youth issues.¹⁹ There are some sixty local youth centres (*maisons des jeunes*), mostly in the form of a non-profit association (*ASBL-association sans but lucratif*). Last but not least, Luxembourg has a good functioning youth parliament, expressing recently its opinion on the education reform and youth unemployment,²⁰ and on poverty.²¹

Participation, more in particular of parents is also developed in the framework of specific services, such as the ECEC facilities and schools. But according to the

¹¹ <http://www.ork.lu>

¹² Interview with the Ombudsman for children dd. 17-07-2013.

¹³ Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand (2009). *Rapport 2008 au Gouvernement et à la Chambre des députés*. Luxembourg: Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand, p. 15.

¹⁴ Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand (2013). *Rapport 2008 au Gouvernement et à la Chambre des députés*. Luxembourg: Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand, p. 62.

¹⁵ Cf. the development of a national strategy on homelessness and housing exclusion and the project to reform the minimum income scheme (RMG).

¹⁶ Group interview with Caritas staff dd. 24.07.2013.

¹⁷ Group interview with staff of the Ministry of Family and Integration dd. 17-07-2013.

¹⁸ See: <http://www.cgjl.lu/>

¹⁹ See: <http://www.youth.lu/>

²⁰ See: <http://www.jugendparlament.lu/category/resolutions/resolutions-20122013/>

²¹ See: <http://www.jugendparlament.lu/2011/08/la-pauvrete-au-luxembourg-un-defi-social/>

Ombudsman for children, listening to the voice of children themselves could certainly improve within public and private services and institutions.

Strong monitoring, but limited ex ante impact assessment

Monitoring the different social policy domains is well developed in Luxembourg. Also, scientific evaluation of specific fields takes place regularly. Some of these are done within the framework of observatories, such as the youth observatory. A first integrated report on the situation of youth has been published in 2010²² and a second is under preparation for 2014. The Ministry of Education publishes annually detailed reports with many educational data, including participation and outcome rates for different population groups. A comprehensive report on child poverty has been published in 2010. On the contrary, ex-ante social impact assessment is not very well developed in Luxembourg, but several measures of interest for our report have been accompanied by ex-ante evaluations of their potential impact on poverty and on social and labour market inclusion. This is the case e.g. with the (increasing) availability of ECEC services²³, with the introduction of childcare vouchers²⁴ and with the so-called child bonus²⁵.

Concluding: Luxembourg has a strong universal child well-being policy base by sustained investment in children and families, but needs improved child poverty mainstreaming and better integration of different relevant policy domains.

Overall, the universalist approach of Luxembourg social protection policies is consequently combined with specific measures for the most vulnerable. But a number of challenges linked to poverty and social exclusion of children and youth remain important. This is certainly the case for the integration of migrants and their educational performance, for the transition from school to working life (NEET) and for the situation of children in one parent families. This is partly due to the specific situation of Luxembourg's demography (fast growing population) and economic situation (incoming cross-border employment). It is probably also due to a lack of – or could be better challenged by – mainstreaming instruments and integration of policies for combatting poverty and social exclusion among children and youth. Without leaving the universalist approach, a taskforce on poverty and social inclusion, governed by the inter-ministerial committee for youth (*Comité interministériel de la jeunesse*) could be very helpful to fill this policy gap. Such taskforce could also elaborate a specific poverty target for children, in order to reduce its difference with the overall at risk of poverty rate.

²² Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2010). *Rapport national sur la situation de la jeunesse au Luxembourg*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration.

²³ Bousselin, A. (2010). *Disponibilité locale des structures collectives d'accueil de jeunes enfants. Etat des lieux et lien avec l'emploi des mères de jeunes enfants*. Differdange: CEPS Instead.

²⁴ Bousselin, A. (2010). *L'impact du chèque-service accueil sur les dépenses de garde d'enfants: Estimations par méthodes de simulation*. Differdange: CEPS Instead.

²⁵ Berger, F. (2010). *Les effets redistributifs du boni pour enfant et de l'adaptation des barèmes de l'impôt sur le revenu des personnes physiques*. Differdange: CEPS Instead.

2. Access to adequate resources

In Luxembourg, the groups most at risk of poverty and exclusion are:²⁶

- One parent families (45.5% at risk of poverty in 2011)
- Children (20.3% at risk of poverty in 2011)
- Foreigners (aged 18 year and over: 18.9% at risk of poverty in 2011)

For these vulnerable categories, all three poverty or social exclusion indicators show some decrease in 2011 compared to 2010, but the percentages are still very much higher than the average at risk of poverty rate standing at 13.6% in 2011. One parent families followed the overall decrease of 0.9 percentage points compared to 2010, while the at risk of poverty among children decreased somewhat more (1.1 percentage points) and among foreigners somewhat less (0.6 percentage points).

Luxembourg policy makers are convinced that the low work intensity in households is one of the most important causes of poverty and social exclusion of children and youth. The last decade, Luxembourg government concentrated its social inclusion policies on the increase of labour market participation, more in particular of women, youth and older workers. Measures to provide adequate living standards have to a large extent been seen as a necessary accompaniment of this objective.

Table 1: Social protection expenditure as percentage of GDP and per head of population – selected years and countries

		2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
LU	%	19.59	21.70	20.45	19.31	21.36	23.98	22.70
€		9,876	12,803	12,984	13,057	13,673	14,394	14,624
BE	%	25.44	27.31	27.04	26.86	28.15	30.43	29.90
€		6,267	7,195	7,219	7,292	7,573	8,050	8,025
DE	%	29.71	30.10	28.97	27.85	28.07	31.49	30.68
€		7,401	7,538	7,480	7,447	7,536	8,137	8,178
FR	%	29.50	31.52	31.26	30.94	31.29	33.63	33.77
€		6,989	7,872	7,946	8,037	8,050	8,450	8,576
EU27	%	:	27.06	26.69	26.10	26.79	29.61	29.37
€		:	5,626	5,702	5,740	5,873	6,255	6,258
Eurozone (17 countries)	%	26.69	27.66	27.31	26.87	27.57	30.41	30.36
€		5,752	6,289	6,355	6,413	6,524	6,944	6,991

Source: Eurostat database – update 14.06.2013 – extracted on 09.08.2013

In percentage of GDP, social protection expenditure increased with some 3 percentage points between 2000 and 2010. The most recent figures at European level are from 2010 (table 1). Compared to its neighbouring countries, Luxembourg shows a 6 to 11 percent lower relative expenditure throughout the selected years. In absolute terms

²⁶ Eurostat database – extracted on 09-08-2013.

however, Luxembourg spends more per head of population than any other EU country. The neighbouring countries Germany, France and Belgium spend considerably less, the difference being more than 6000 € for all three countries.

Social protection expenditure can be analysed by function to look for shifts between policy fields. This analysis shows a shift of a few percentage points from the fields of sickness, disability, old age and survivors to the field of unemployment, which can be explained by the increasing unemployment rates. But also the fields of family and children, housing and social exclusion see their share of the total social protection expenditure increased between 2000 and 2010. This reflects the growing importance given to these domains in the active inclusion policy of Luxembourg government.

The impact that can be expected from the expenditure growth is to limit the poverty and social exclusion effects of the economic and employment crisis. The relative larger growth in certain domains of social policy and more in particular in the fields of family/children and housing and other services will increase the possibilities for women to (re)enter the labour market, improve the position of children and probably also the possibilities for better social support to vulnerable people. But it is not to be expected that the expenditure growth as such will help to decrease the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate.

2.1. Support parents' participation in the labour market

Between 2010 and 2011 the at risk of poverty rate decreased from 14.5% to 13.6%. The analysis according to age groups and gender shows that young people are more exposed to poverty than other age groups, and that the poverty risk decreases with age. In 2011, among the 0-17 years old, the at risk of poverty rate was 20.3%, against "only" 4.7% among the 65+. The decrease of poverty rate in 2011 touches all age groups, except the 18-24 years age group (17.1% in 2011 against 16.5% in 2010). In 2011, the at risk of poverty rate decreased for men (from 14.6% in 2010 to 12.7% in 2011), while it remained stable for women (14.4% in 2010 – 14.5% in 2011).²⁷

Does "work pay" in Luxembourg? The overall at risk of poverty rate among workers was 9.4% in 2008 and reached 9.9% in 2011, and it is higher among women than among men. Among blue colour workers the at risk of poverty rate was 17.4% in 2011 and among workers with low education it was 17.2%. For Portuguese immigrants (many of them are low educated blue collar workers), the poverty rate among workers reached 18.7%, while for Luxembourg nationals the figure is 4.8%.²⁸ These figures show clearly that having a job decreases the chance to become poor, but also that it is not fully protecting from being at risk of poverty, more in particular for specific population categories. One specific way to make work pay and to avoid inactivity traps is to ensure that taking a job does not mean automatically losing minimum income rights. On the contrary, Luxembourg introduced the so-called "immunisation" of a part of the minimum income benefit within the household when a person takes up a job. This means that the income from work is only taken into account for as far as it exceeds 30% of the guaranteed minimum income (RMG). An example to illustrate this: a person lives together with his/her partner and two children. The RMG is calculated at 2212.09 €. But this person also has a paid job with

²⁷ Eurostat database – extracted on 09-08-2013.

²⁸ Eurostat database – extracted on 09-08-2013.

an average gross monthly income of 1874.19 €. ²⁹ The complementary allowance in this case would be: 1001.53 €. The total household income reaches 2875.72 €. ³⁰

The activity rate of women increased from 58.9% in 2007 to 62.8% in 2012. Women are increasingly active on the labour market, and they are somewhat less hit by the recent increase in unemployment rates. But analysing recent unemployment figures, one can see that there remains an important gender difference in Luxembourg: the unemployment rate among women was 1.6 times the one among men in 2011. This is the biggest difference in Europe. ³¹ Also, unemployment among young people remains high (18.1% in 2012) and increases (16.4% in 2011). Also, the activity rate among youth (15-24 years) decreased considerably since 2009 (from 32.3% in 2009 to 26.8% in 2012). ³² According to the Luxembourg statistical institute STATEC, the high unemployment rate is the result of a double movement: the raise in absolute numbers of unemployed youth and the decrease of the activity rate with youth staying longer at school. If one related the numbers of unemployed youth to the total population in the 15-24 year's age group, the unemployment rate would be 5.1%. ³³ To properly assess youth unemployment, one should look both at the activity rate and the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in 2011 was highest among non EU-residents (12.1%), for other than Luxembourgish EU-27 residents it reached 5.2%, while it was lowest for Luxembourg nationals (3.4%). Unemployment is about twice as high among persons with maximum lower secondary education (10.7% for women – 6.4% for men) than among persons with higher secondary education (5.5% for women – 3.6% for men). Long term unemployment increased rapidly since 2002 to reach 2.5% of the active population in 2011. ³⁴

Programmes to increase the employability by forms of subsidised employment play an important role in Luxembourg. People in such programmes are not counted in the unemployment figures. In 2010, the number of such persons increased with 24% compared to 2009, after an important decrease the three years before. In 2011 and 2012 the increase continued (+9.8% in 2011 and +8.8% in 2012). ³⁵

In the future, we can expect to see a rise in the number of people assigned to work on public utility tasks in return for an additional allowance. According to the law of 3 August 2010, these temporary paid occupations will be indefinite for unemployed workers over the age of 50, coming to the end of their entitlement and not eligible for any other social measure. With the continuing rise in the number of people covered by measures, the number of unemployed (unsatisfied job requests) will rise more slowly.

To interpret the employment and unemployment figures for Luxembourg, one has to be aware of the importance of cross-border employment, i.e. the number of people that are working in Luxembourg, while living in one of the neighbouring countries (Belgium, France and Germany). Their numbers increased dramatically for the last two

²⁹ The official minimum wage as from 01.01.2013. See: http://www.mss.public.lu/publications/parametres_sociaux/ps_20130101.pdf

³⁰ Retrieved from: <http://www.snas.etat.lu/> - Calcul de l'allocation complémentaire.

³¹ STATEC (2012). *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale. Cahier Economique*, nr. 114. Luxembourg: STATEC, p. 56.

³² Eurostat database – extracted on 10-05-2013.

³³ STATEC (2013). *Regards sur le chômage des jeunes*. Regards 21-November 2013. Luxembourg: STATEC, p. 1-2.

³⁴ STATEC (2012). *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale. Cahier Economique*, nr. 114. Luxembourg: STATEC, p. 57-58.

³⁵ ADEM (2013) *Les activités de l'agence pour le développement de l'emploi en 2012*. Luxembourg: Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, p. 41.

decades (26% in 1995) and are stabilising at around 42% of total employment since 2008.³⁶

The most recent (2012) annual report of the national employment agency (ADEM) gives an insight in the numbers of jobseekers by nationality. Overall the number of jobseekers increased by 59% from 10,009 per ultimo 2008 to 16,963 at the end of 2012. Only 27.1% of them have the Luxembourg nationality. Their share decreases year after year with a relative decrease of 3.7% since 2010. On the contrary, the share of Portuguese jobseekers continues to increase: currently they represent 36.5% of registered jobseekers (33.8% in 2010). At the end of 2012 the share of jobseekers from outside EU-27 reached 13.4% of the total.³⁷

The gender ratio in numbers of jobseekers remains more or less stable. On average, from 2008 to 2012, the percentage of women is between 43.1% and 47.2%. The years 2009 and 2010 show a small decrease (43.1% and 43.6%). In 2011 female jobseekers represent 45.2% of the total number, while their number falls to 44.8% in 2012. In December 2012 there seems to be a tendency for increase (43.1% in December 2012 against 42.6% in December 2011).³⁸

To support (the most vulnerable) parents' participation in the labour market, Luxembourg government concentrates on:

- Facilitating the conciliation of work and family life by:
 - Continuously increasing the number of ECEC places (for children from 0 up to 12 years of age);
 - Improving the affordability of ECEC places (childcare vouchers for free or very low price for low income groups);
- Promoting employability and job search of women, more in particular single mothers and persons depending on the minimum income scheme by:
 - Promoting the participation in employment measures;
 - Increasing the activation rate among minimum income beneficiaries;
 - Awareness raising about possibilities and costs of ECEC services;
- Improvement of educational performance and prevention of early school leaving to avoid unemployment and poverty in later life (see also the Youth Pact);
- Improvement of accompanying services by:
 - Reform of and more personalised accompaniment by the employment agencies (ADEM);
 - Personalised accompaniment of minimum income beneficiaries;
 - Availability of social services at local level (creation of local social offices).

Areas for policy improvement

Concluding, one can observe a lot of public investment in measures for conciliation of work and private life, with increased labour market participation as a consequence. The ex-ante impact evaluation of the increased availability of ECEC places is a good practice in the field of using evidence for policy development. But the demand of ECEC places is growing fast due to a combination of increasing activity rates of women and

³⁶ STATEC (2012). *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale. Cahier Economique*, nr. 114. Luxembourg: STATEC, p. 29.

³⁷ ADEM (2013) *Les activités de l'agence pour le développement de l'emploi en 2012*. Luxembourg: Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, p. 44.

³⁸ ADEM (2013) *Les activités de l'agence pour le développement de l'emploi en 2012*. Luxembourg: Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, p. 45.

a fast growing population. Shortages remain important. Moreover, there is no evidence that Luxembourg pays great attention to time policies (working hours, opening hours of shops and public or private services, the development of personal services...). Finally, the further development of outreaching approaches by employment and social services remains a challenge in order to reach the most vulnerable.

This means two major areas for policy improvement:

- Where possible accelerate the current policy of increasing the number of ECEC places and the outreaching capacity (both in terms of competences and numbers of staff) of accompanying services;
- Look at time policies in public and private sectors to facilitate the conciliation of work and private life.

2.2. Provide adequate living standards

In recent years, Luxembourg government commissioned a few ex-ante impact assessments of important family policy measures.

This has been the case for the socio-fiscal reform of 2008, which included a so-called "boni pour enfant" (child bonus). The study showed that the child bonus was the final step in a process of reducing the fiscal compensations for family charges and to replace these almost completely by family allowances from 2008 onwards. The study also showed (by using a micro-simulation) that the reform improves both the horizontal redistribution (from families without to those with children) and the vertical redistribution by reducing income inequalities. For low income families with children, the measure is expected to reduce the at risk of poverty of children from 18.7% before to 16.9% after the reform.³⁹

A second study of importance for this section is the ex-ante impact assessment of the childcare voucher, introduced in 2009. This assessment showed that the voucher could reduce by some 80% the ECEC costs for families with an income of less than two times the minimum wage. The reduction would be much less for higher income families. For families receiving the minimum income (RMG) it means a virtual increase of family allowance by 20 to 50%, depending on the number of children and their time spent in ECEC. Finally, the childcare voucher is an in kind benefit, but if one would nevertheless take into account its value for the calculation of the at risk of poverty rate among children, this rate would decrease with some 0.7 percentage points.⁴⁰

Also, in 2013, the Ministry of social security published a report on the current situation (dd. 13.08.2012) of minimum income (RMG) beneficiaries. The outcomes of the study in terms of figures are a mirror of the at risk of poverty situation as far as children are concerned. On average 5.06% of children between 0-19 years live in a minimum income family against 2.38% of the 65+. In 2009 (latest data available says the study), some 8% of one parent households received the minimum income, against some 5% of one person households and some 3% of households with two adults with

³⁹ Berger, F. (2010). *Les effets redistributifs du boni pour enfant et de l'adaptation des barèmes de l'impôt sur le revenu des personnes physiques*. Differdange: CEPS Instead, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Bousselin, A. (2010). *L'impact du chèque-service accueil sur les dépenses de garde d'enfants: Estimations par méthodes de simulation*. Differdange: CEPS Instead, p. 32-33.

or without children.⁴¹ An interesting part of the study is the analysis of different types of households and their income situation compared to the at risk of poverty threshold.

Table 2: Minimum income (RMG) receiving households by type – total and numbers under the at risk of poverty threshold.

Household type	total	Under the at risk of poverty threshold	
		total	%
One adult	5,086	2,256	44
Two adults	889	343	39
Three adults	24	24	100
One adult with one child	790	245	31
One adult with two children	522	152	29
One adult with three or more children	303	44	15
Two adults with one child	437	192	44
Two adults with two children	522	249	48
Two adults with three or more children	529	49	9
Three adults with children	28	28	100
total	9,130	3,582	39

Source: Rapport sur la situation actuelle au 13.8.2012 des bénéficiaires du dispositif du revenu minimum garanti (RMG) (table constructed by the author).

This table shows that the minimum income benefit has a considerable impact in terms of poverty prevention for 61% of its beneficiary households, but not for 39% of them. The most vulnerable households in this respect are the households with three adults with or without children. All of them have an income below the at risk of poverty threshold. But also single persons and the households with two adults and one or two children have a more than average chance to see their income remain below the at risk of poverty threshold.

To interpret the poverty figures, one should be aware that the Luxembourg at risk of poverty threshold is the highest in Europe. This is of course linked to the overall wealth of the country, but also to the particular structure of the Luxembourg labour market, with around 42-43 % of the labour force being cross-border workers from

⁴¹ Inspection générale de la sécurité sociale (2013). Rapport sur la situation actuelle au 13.8.2012 des bénéficiaires du dispositif du revenu minimum garanti (RMG) - Etude sur demande du Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (Version mise à jour le 9 décembre 2013). Luxembourg: Ministère de la sécurité sociale, p. 6. See also: Königs, S. (2012). The dynamics of social assistance benefit receipt in Luxembourg – a descriptive analysis. Working paper. Oxford: Institute for New Economic Thinking at the Oxford Martin School.

France, Germany and Belgium. According to a study on child poverty⁴², they occupy a specific place in the income distribution, which influences the poverty threshold. Linked to child poverty, this situation is reflected by a high at risk of poverty rate (20.3% in 2011, i.e. almost the European average of 20.5%) and a very low percentage of children living in severe deprivation (1.2% against 10.0% EU-27 average in 2011).⁴³

The exclusive use of the EU poverty threshold to measure poverty is under discussion in Luxembourg for several years. A national poverty indicator, based on reference budgets is under construction by the National Statistical Institute (STATEC) as part of a reform of the minimum income scheme. As already mentioned under the previous chapter, a working group including representatives from the National Statistical Institute (STATEC), the Ministry for Family and Integration, CEPS-INSTEAD, the General Inspectorate and civil society organisations has developed proposals for this reform. One of the proposals would be to split the minimum income benefit in different parts, one of these being the real cost of housing. Since the latter is a major social challenge in Luxembourg, more in particular for one parent families and families with more children, it could have a positive effect on poverty and exclusion of children.

Luxembourg government, in its NRP and NSR, insists regularly also on the fact that there are many in kind benefits in Luxembourg, which have an influence on the real levels of poverty.

According to government representatives a number of measures play a role in this respect. They help assuring a balance between universal and targeted policies. This is the case for the already mentioned childcare vouchers and the child bonus, as well as measures such as free of charge public transport, the tax credit for one parent families, social shops, the cultural passport, subsidies for children attending secondary school, the allowance for "expensive life" (*allocation de vie chère*), the third social part payer of healthcare costs and the 2013 act on over-indebtedness. The recently launched national strategy on homelessness and housing exclusion promises a more integrated approach of the housing problem, for which the social real estate agency (*Agence Immobilière Sociale*) is already functioning, while a rent subsidy is on its way. Moreover, a number of institutions improved their personalised approach in order to better reach specific target groups, such as the local social offices, the employment agencies and the national service for social assistance (SNAS) for the accompaniment within the minimum income scheme.

At the same time, NGOs mention the fact that the most vulnerable people are those who "fall through the safety net", such as e.g. young people below the age of 25 with no minimum income rights. Also, newly arriving migrants/asylum seekers with no status yet are in such situation. As far as NGOs are present to help people finding their way into the system, they can find support. The outreach of public services still needs a lot of improvement, is the NGOs' opinion.⁴⁴

Overall there has been a shift from taxes to benefits in the social protection of families. And there seems to be a movement to more targeted policies, i.a. by a considerable growth of in kind benefits, which changes the balance between cash and in kind support. Child poverty is rightly seen by Luxembourg government as a problem

⁴² Berger, F. et al. (2010). *La pauvreté des enfants au Luxembourg*. Differdange: CEPS/Instead.

⁴³ Eurostat database – extracted on 14-8-2013. See also: Frazer, H. & Marlier, E. (2012). *Current situation in relation to child poverty and child well-being: EU policy context, key challenges ahead and ways forward*. Differdange: CEPS Instead, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Cf. i.a. group interview with Caritas staff on 24-07-2013.

of vulnerable households. But the answer is still too exclusively relying on the increase of labour market participation (work intensity in households).

Areas for policy improvement

While in recent years Luxembourg government has put most emphasis on labour market participation as the way out of poverty, with the reform of the minimum income scheme under discussion and with the study of a poverty indicator based on reference budgets, the balance with separate **attention for the income** of vulnerable people seems to improve. This area would merit some acceleration.

As mentioned under the former heading, the **outreach of public (social) services** in order to reach the most vulnerable people is here also an area for policy improvement.

3. Access to affordable quality services

To get an impression of the overall availability and affordability of quality services, the well-being of children can give a first indication. The most recent Innocenti report card 11 by UNICEF⁴⁵ ranks 29 developed countries according to a number of indicators in five dimensions of child well-being. With all possible reservations concerning international comparability (of data), it gives an image of child well-being. Luxembourg reaches an overall ranking at the 7th place, after the Netherlands, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Germany. Except for education, Luxembourg scores within the top ten of all 29 countries involved in the study. The Luxembourg ranking on the five dimensions is as follows:

Material well-being: 6th

A relatively high monetary poverty rate is compensated by a low child poverty gap, a low material deprivation rate and low percentage of children reporting low family affluence.

Health and safety: 4th

Luxembourg scores well on all dimensions

Education: 22nd

This ranking is essentially due to the participation in further education and even more to the low ranking for educational achievement.

Behaviours and risks: 9th

For most of the sub-indicators here, Luxembourg is to be found in the middle range of countries (between 10th and 20th)

Housing and environment: 5th

This good score is more due to the environment than to the indicators on housing. The report notes that Belgium and Luxembourg are the only two countries in Western Europe in which more than 5% of households with children report multiple housing problems.

The following sections describe and assess Luxembourg policies in five domains of child and youth well-being that are crucial for the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

⁴⁵ UNICEF Office of Research (2013). 'Child Well-being in Rich Countries: A comparative overview', *Innocenti Report Card 11*. Florence: UNICEF Office of Research.

3.1. Early childhood education and care

In Luxembourg, compulsory preschool starts at the age of four. Up to the age of three, parents have the choice between different forms of private and public ECEC. Between three and four, there is also the possibility of preschool education. An important development has been the introduction of the so-called *Maisons Relais pour Enfants* (children's houses), integrating all types of care structures from birth to the age of 18. They are meant to provide working parents with flexible care arrangements that can be booked by the hour. The *Maisons Relais* are supposed to serve in particular the so-called educationally disadvantaged population, whose children are less present in institutional ECEC facilities. For this reason they have to provide educational quality on their own with a combination of non-formal and informal learning programmes. Finally they provide access to leisure, sport and cultural activities offered by the local community.⁴⁶

When the *Maisons Relais* started in 2005, there were a total of 8,000 places available, including 64 places for children up to the age of three. In 2010, there were 1,959 places for children up to three and 21,759 places for the 4-12 years old: in five years, the total number of places tripled from 8000 to almost 24,000. Moreover, the number of places is not equal to the number of children attended, because one place can be used by more than one child. Furthermore, the number of places for the 0-3 years old is not even 10% of the total, reflecting the fact that gradually a number of other provisions (*foyers de jour*) for the 4-12 years old have been transformed into *Maisons Relais*. While all places in *Maisons Relais* and almost all in *Foyers de jour* are provided in non-profit facilities, more than half of the places in crèches are in the commercial sector. Finally, there are also some 2,100 places provided by parental assistants (private persons providing ECEC places in their home, approved by the Ministry).⁴⁷ The most actual information can be found in the annual activity report of the Ministry of Family and Integration. By the end of 2012 the number of places in *Maisons Relais* reached 30,007 (2,952 for 0-3 year old children and 27,055 for 4-12 year old children).⁴⁸

As already mentioned, for low income households there is the possibility of free of charge ECEC places via the childcare vouchers. The budget for this provision continues to increase. The 2013 SSR mentions the fact that the budget for free of charge ECEC places in 2013 exceeds by 33% the budget for 2012. In top of that, some 22 million euros are budgeted for participation in the creation of the necessary infrastructures. This policy is encouraged by studies showing that the availability and accessibility (e.g. priority rules) of ECEC facilities play an important role in the labour market participation of women.⁴⁹ NGOs who also play a role as service providers still consider the number of places available as insufficient.⁵⁰ The use of childcare vouchers increases every year. The total population of children up to 12 years old is estimated at 78,847. For some 66.6% of this population parents subscribed to the childcare

⁴⁶ Honig, M-S. & C. Haag (2012). *Education and Care for Children in Luxembourg – Taking Stock*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 16.

⁴⁷ Honig, M-S. & C. Haag (2012). *Education and Care for Children in Luxembourg – Taking Stock*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 16-18.

⁴⁸ Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2012). *Rapport d'activité 2012*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 136.

⁴⁹ See e.g. Bousselin, A. (2010). *Disponibilité locale des structures collectives d'accueil de jeunes enfants. Etat des lieux et lien avec l'emploi des mères de jeunes enfants*. Differdange: CEPS Instead.

⁵⁰ See e.g. group interview with Caritas collaborators on 24.07-2013.

vouchers at 01.01.2013: an increase of about 10 percentage points since 2009.⁵¹ Within this group, 1,937 children get free of charge services: 1,521 children live in a minimum income beneficiary household; 416 children are otherwise considered at risk of poverty. This is an increase of 267 children since 2009.⁵²

In the 2013 NRP and SSR, child poverty is mentioned mostly in relation to vulnerable households, not as an issue in itself. Strong attention is given to vulnerable households, such as one parent families and low income households with children. In that framework, several initiatives are taken to improve the possibilities (accessibility and affordability) for ECEC before and outside compulsory school. Special attention goes to the educational quality of these forms of ECEC services. Therefore, collaboration is stimulated/demanded between local authorities, NGOs and the educational sector. In view of the specific linguistic situation of Luxembourg (with three languages), great attention is given to language skills of children before going to school.

ECEC facilities in Luxembourg increased dramatically during the last decade, but the demand increased even more. Government is clearly committed to support the conciliation of work and family life. But also to increase the educational and preventive quality of ECEC services. As to efforts to make ECEC places available and affordable for low income households, here also government made great efforts (see e.g. childcare vouchers). But according to some NGOs, more efforts should be done to reach all vulnerable categories of the population.

3.2. Education

Educational performance is seen as a very important factor in the fight against unemployment and poverty. Special attention is given to early school leavers and to the transition from school to working life. Initiatives such as the second chance school, the voluntary orientation service etc. are general measures for improving the educational performance of vulnerable population categories. In view of the very important number of immigrants among these categories, these measures touch them more particularly.

Important are the relationships between the world of education and broader society.

At primary school level, the collaboration between school and socio-educational services should give a better start in life for all children and deliver better facilities for working parents. It consists of an obligation for the municipalities to present annually, together with the school(s), a plan for local "peri-school" accompaniment (*Plan d'encadrement périscolaire – PEP*). This plan has to include following activities and services:

- Activities to give children access to a library, to musical animation and initiation, to sports animation and initiation;
- Activities in the fields of social, affective, cognitive, linguistic and psycho-motorial development;
- Collective study facilities to offer children a possibility to do their homework in an autonomous way;
- Accompaniment of the actual homework if children cannot do this alone;

⁵¹ As already mentioned, these are not only used for ECEC services, but also for leisure, sport and cultural activities.

⁵² Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2012). *Rapport d'activité 2012*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 129-130.

- Providing meals for the children;
- Accompaniment of children before and after school hours.⁵³

In the field of transition from school to working life, many new initiatives have been taken in recent years. The 2013 NRP mentions that the "Orientation House" (*Maison de l'orientation*) started in September 2012. A close cooperation between different ministries and services (including the service for reception of new arriving immigrants) should ensure a holistic approach of the transition from school to work and a personalised accompaniment of each young person leaving school.

More in particular, according to the 2010 national report on the situation of youth⁵⁴, the participation of migrant youth in education and their educational attainment is a matter of concern for experts in Luxembourg. Reasons for this low educational performance are sought in the overall lack of resources of migrant youth and in the particular linguistic situation (with three national languages) often causing a weak start for migrants. This phenomenon also shows through the numbers of early school leavers, which are particularly high for youth with Portuguese, Italian and Cape Verdean nationality. But with the generations the situation is clearly improving. Between the first and the second generation of Portuguese immigrants for instance the difference of educational attainment is striking.⁵⁵ In the first generation, the number of persons with only primary school level is between 84% and 93%; in the second generation it decreased to 32%. The number of persons with tertiary education level increased from 0 to 3% in the first generation to 10% in the second. Nevertheless, Luxembourg nationals still have by far the highest percentage of pupils at the end of secondary school (78%), while they represent not more than 59% of the 18-21 years old in the population. The Portuguese represent 19% of the population in this age group, but only 11% at the end of secondary school. The 4.3% of youth with other non EU nationalities are represented by only 0.9% in the end of secondary school population. Other EU nationalities (14.9% of the 18-21 age cohorts) count for 7.3% in the school population at the end of secondary school. Only the group of ex-Yugoslavia is with 2.9% in this school population more or less proportional to its population number of 3.1%.

Since 1998, the measures to promote the integration of foreign pupils are coordinated by a special division of the ministry of education, who also monitors the actual situation.⁵⁶

The average number of pupils with foreign nationality in public schools in Luxembourg reaches 42.6% and continues to increase (e.g. 36.4 % in the school year 2003-2004).⁵⁷ The numbers in different school levels are as follows:

53

http://www.men.public.lu/actualites/2013/03/130315_plan_encadrement_periscolaire/index.html?highlight=PEP

See also: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration & Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (2013). Plan d'encadrement périscolaire – Leitfaden und Empfehlungen zur Umsetzung des PEP. Luxembourg: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Formation professionnelle.

⁵⁴ Willems, H. et al. (2010). "Zentrale Aspekte zur aktuellen Lebenssituation der Jugendlichen in Luxemburg", in *Rapport national sur la situation de la jeunesse au Luxembourg*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 149-150.

⁵⁵ Berger, F. (2008). Zoom sur les primo-arrivants portugais et leurs descendants. *Vivre au Luxembourg. Chroniques de l'enquête PSELL-3/2006*, (49), 1-2.
Service de la scolarisation des enfants étrangers. See:
http://www.men.public.lu/sys_edu/scol_enfants_etrangers/index.html

- Voluntary preschool (3-4 year): 44.2%;
- compulsory preschool (4-5 year): 47.5%;
- primary school: 49.4%;
- secondary vocation school: 43.2%;
- general secondary education: 19.1%.

There is a small decrease of "foreign" children in the lower end of the school system. This decrease seems essentially due to the recognition of the double nationality. If one looks at the first language spoken at home, the number of foreign language speaking pupils is still increasing.

The number of new arriving pupils remains high and increased considerably for the school year 2011-2012. The number of pupils between 12 and 18 year participating in special classes for newly immigrated persons (CASNA) for the last three years is as follows:

- 15-09-2009 to 14-09-2010: 489
- 15-09-2010 to 14-09-2011: 608
- 15-09-2011 to 14-09-2012: 827

In terms of most important nationalities:

Table 3: Pupils from selected nationalities as percentage of all pupils in special classes for new immigrants in recent school years.

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Portuguese	40.66%	40.90%	42.60%	40.99%
Serbian	0.19%	0.20%	9.05%	7.74%
Luxembourgish ⁵⁸	9.25%	9.41%	7.89%	6.29%
Cape Verdean	8.09%	7.77%	5.59%	5.20%

Source: Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la Formation professionnelle (2013). Rapport d'Activité 2012.

The following points can be made related to these numbers of pupils:

- Immigration from Serbia remains important;
- The important number of Portuguese speaking pupils (from Portugal, Cape Verde, Brazil) results here and there in classes where many pupils speak Portuguese among each other;
- The majority of newly arriving pupils in public schools are from socially modest origin, with often very low educated parents.

In primary school, newly arriving pupils are attached to a class corresponding at their age and former education. Language courses are given in a separate setting.

In secondary and vocational schools the majority of newly arrived pupils do not master any of the languages used in Luxembourg and can therefore not integrate

⁵⁷ These and following figures come from: Ministère de l'Education nationale et de la Formation professionnelle (2013). Rapport d'Activité 2012. Luxembourg: Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

⁵⁸ These are pupils having been at school previously in a neighbouring country (mostly Belgium).

directly in a regular class. During the school year 2011-2012, 30 special classes have been organised for them.

The educational system has four types of special classes for immigrant pupils: reception classes (373 pupils at the 1st trimester 2012-2013); integration classes (1,116 pupils at the 1st trimester 2012-2013); classes with a specific language regime (not limited at newly arrived pupils; 560 pupils at the start of 2012-2013); ALLET classes for pupils with insufficient knowledge of German (175 pupils at the start of 2012-2013). The number of pupils in these special classes increased considerably during the last 5 years.

Educational performance remains a serious challenge in Luxembourg. Even if the number of early school leavers has been reduced under 10%, field youth workers have the impression that vulnerable young people just remain within the education system but without obtaining a serious qualification.⁵⁹ They also mention the fact that there is a continuing arrival of young Portuguese speaking immigrants, partly due to the economic crisis in Portugal. They have great difficulties to integrate in the educational system. They rely on special classes organised by NGOs. Also the national umbrella organisation for youth (CGJL) underlines the issue, while the Ombudsman for children fears a worsening of the situation if the appropriate educational measures would not be intensified.

The 2013 SSR reminds of the continued common reflection on necessary reforms of secondary education by all relevant actors. Several interlocutors thought that a societal debate on the multilingual education (Luxembourgish at primary school, French and German at secondary school) should be part of that reflection.

3.3 Health

In health issues for children and youth, as in the other domains, Luxembourg government follows a universal approach, completed where considered necessary by policies targeted to the most vulnerable. In its 2012-2014 Youth Pact, government mentions explicitly as such: mentally and physically handicapped youth, and youth from migrant and deprived families. Government follows here the conclusions from the 2010 youth report.⁶⁰ The youth pact has a large chapter (*champ d'action*) on well-being, within which seven out of nine objectives are about health issues:

Obj. 2: Prevention of problematic drug use;

Obj. 3: Promotion of affective and sexual health;

Obj. 5: Implementation of the national strategy for mental health of children and youth;

Obj. 6: Support and protect youth in problem situations;

Obj. 7: Promote balanced eating and physical and sport activity;

Obj. 8: Reduce morbidity and death of youth through prevention of violence and accidents;

Obj. 9: Promote the integration of children and youth with specific needs.

From a poverty and social exclusion point of view, the most important targeted measure in recent years is the introduction of the third social part payer (*tiers payant*

⁵⁹ Group interview with Caritas staff on 24-07-2013.

⁶⁰ Willems, H. et al. (2010). "Zentrale Aspekte zur aktuellen Lebenssituation der Jugendlichen in Luxemburg", in Rapport national sur la situation de la jeunesse au Luxembourg. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 261-262.

social) for health care costs, which means that the costs are directly paid by the health insurance if a person cannot afford paying.

Luxembourg has a strong prevention (e.g. high vaccination rate, regular school medical control), health care and health insurance system. One of the challenges however is the access for vulnerable groups such as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Language and cultural barriers have to be challenged in order to inform them about all possibilities, including the new act on the third social part payer. As in other issues, the outreaching capacity of social workers is crucial. Here remains a challenge for Luxembourg.

3.4. Housing and living environment

In recent years, housing costs and housing exclusion have been among the major challenges for Luxembourg's social inclusion policies. More in particular, one parent households and households with children face housing problems. In 2011, one parent households had the highest housing cost burden in relation to the net disposable household income: 26% against e.g. 17.2% for single persons and 9.1% for couples without children.⁶¹ Also, as mentioned before, the Innocenti report shows that Belgium and Luxembourg are the only two countries in Western Europe in which more than 5% of households with children report multiple housing problems.

The Luxembourg government recognises the issue and has taken (or planned) several measures to improve the situation. Affordable and accessible housing for vulnerable groups has been the reason for developing a social real estate agency (agence immobilière sociale – AIS). Also in view of the population growth, a covenant has been signed with some 103 municipalities, in order to build 48,000 houses within 10 years' time, which would enable a population increase of 15% in these municipalities.

Over all, social partners and NGOs mostly support the headlines of the housing policies and measures taken by the government. But they all regret the relative slow implementation of measures, apparently due to budget limits and bureaucracy.⁶² According to many stakeholders, access to (quality) housing is one of the most important challenges for the government. As stated by a workers chamber representative, only 2-3% of the housing stock is social housing, while the at risk of poverty rate turns around 14%. Also, a representative of Caritas mentions the limits in the functioning of the newly created social housing agency (AIS - Agence Immobilière Sociale): "with more staff, this agency could manage some 500 housing units". Government representatives from their side stress the importance to create synergies between the AIS and for example social offices to alleviate the administrative burden and to optimise human resources. All stakeholders insist on complementary measures to alleviate the housing cost burden and to improve the quality of housing: subsidies for renters and for owners, better control of the housing market, increasing the (social) housing stock.

Important progress has been made in 2012-2013. A national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion has been developed and formalised, following the

⁶¹ STATEC (2012). *Rapport travail et cohésion sociale. Cahier Economique*, nr. 114. Luxembourg: STATEC, p. 146.

⁶² See: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2011). *Rapport de la réunion du 20 octobre 2011 - Consultation de la société civile en vue de la prochaine réunion du Comité de Coordination Tripartite*. (not published).

“housing first” principle.⁶³ The strategy brings together already existing policies and measures in a more comprehensive and coordinated way. A link is also made to sustainable development issues. This all should lead to more, better and affordable housing for vulnerable population categories.

The progress in combatting housing exclusion is clear, but it is still a progress on paper. Implementation is in its early stage. NGOs estimate that even the commitment of 48,000 new houses (the construction of which seems to take off rather slowly) will not be enough to respond to the demand, estimated at some 60,000. The non-existence in Luxembourg legislation and policies of the formal concept of social housing is a weakness. Its introduction could perhaps be helpful to speed up the implementation of the national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion.

3.5. Family support and alternative care

A national service for assistance to parents and children with psycho-social problems has been created in 2008: *The Office National de l'Enfance* (ONE). This service has both a preventive and curative task. It takes care of:

- Support to children, young adults and families with psycho-social problems;
- Giving mandate to ambulatory services and institutions for individual support;
- Supervising the reception of children, placed by their parents or by the youth court.⁶⁴

In Luxembourg, the *Maisons Relais* are supposed to combine a function of providing services to parents, a care and educational function for children and a delinquency prevention function. Combatting poverty and promoting social inclusion, for example by giving language support, and even health promotion are explicitly included in the range of functions. Therefore it is logic that social and educational assistance for disadvantaged children and children with impaired development are to be integrated into the structures for education and care for children up to the age of twelve. Poverty is seen as a development risk for children.⁶⁵

The sector of prevention work with children before and outside school in Luxembourg is preschool assistance. Its services are targeted to physically and mentally handicapped children, but especially children with retarded development and behavioural problems. There are no statistics showing how many children receive medical-therapeutic preschool assistance. For endangered children the system provides semi-ambulatory and permanent forms of placement in foster families up to and including placement in institutional care. It is a challenge for the regular system of care and education – available for *all* children – to open up educational opportunities for these particularly vulnerable children.⁶⁶

According to the 2012 annual report of the ombuds-committee (ORK), 1,301 children are placed day and night in institutional care or with foster families.⁶⁷ The ORK also mentions several interventions with institutions in order to ask for better respecting

⁶³ Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2013). *Stratégie nationale contre le sans-abrisme et l'exclusion liée au logement 2013-2020*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

⁶⁴ See: <http://www.mfi.public.lu/administrations/ONE/>

⁶⁵ Honig, M-S. & C. Haag (2012). *Education and Care for Children in Luxembourg – Taking Stock*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration, p. 19.

⁶⁶ Id., *ibid*.

⁶⁷ Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand (2013). *Rapport 2012 au Gouvernement et à la Chambre des députés*. Luxembourg: Ombuds-comité fir d'Rechter vum Kand, p. 29.

the right of contact between parents and children placed in institutional care. According to the Luxembourg UNICEF committee, Luxembourg has one of the highest numbers of children placed in welfare institutions.⁶⁸

Objective 9 within the well-being chapter of the 2012-2014 Youth Pact refers to a new Act of 2011, giving opportunities for adaptations in order to facilitate the access and participation in regular secondary education for pupils with a chronic disease or a handicap.

The development of the *Maisons Relais* is a strong element for more integrated care of children and support to parents, including those with special needs. They can be a nodal point in family support if they use all their potential. Not all of them however use the possibilities offered by legislation. The number of children placed in institutional care could perhaps be reduced and – according to children’s rights agents – their situation should improve.

3.6. Important areas for policy improvement

In general, a number of important measures have been taken, or are on their way, to improve the situation of vulnerable children and youth, more in particular in the fields of ECEC facilities, education, transition from school to work and work intensity in households. It is crucial that these initiatives continue and receive sufficient means (also staff) for their delivery. **Sustained action** and accelerating the implementation of measures in some domains such as housing and the creation of ECEC places are important.

A first general field for improvement would be the quality and **reach out of social and financial support services**. A lot has been done already in this domain, for instance the introduction of the local social offices, the reform of the employment development agency (ADEM) and several initiatives for closer cooperation among actors such as schools and local socio-educational services, the cooperation platform on youth, etc. But according to several public and private interlocutors, improvements are still necessary, because too many vulnerable children and youth are not using the support possibilities because they are not reached yet. More outreaching will be a matter of professional culture and routines, but also a matter of sufficient staff.

A major field for improvement remains **education**, including the basic structures and the educational performance. There seems to be no doubt among all relevant actors that reforms are necessary to improve educational quality and performance in Luxembourg, but there could be more sense of urgency in the light of the continuing increase of children and youth not having one of the Luxembourg languages as their mother tongue. Some stakeholders suggest to give pupils the choice between German and French as basic language at secondary school, while others stress the importance of French as the administrative and legislative language. Therefore, several stakeholders and experts underline the need for a debate about the place and use of the different national languages (Luxembourgish, French and German) at school. This is the case for primary as well as secondary school levels. The debate should take place both within the educational system and in society as a whole. It is clear that **the language issue** is a very important aspect of the educational system to resolve, certainly in view of a majority of foreign children at primary school age. In the meantime, extra attention and priority should be given to all existing **accompanying measures and structures** supporting the link between school, family and society; to improve educational performance and prevent early school leaving; to deal with a smooth transition from school into working life. Finally, the intermediate evaluation of

⁶⁸ See: <http://www.humanium.org/en/luxembourg/>

secondary school reforms reveals the need for **better and timely communication** with teachers and school leaders as well as more flexibility in implementation to get more active support and collaboration in the field.

4. Addressing child poverty and social exclusion in the European Semester

Child poverty has been on the policy agenda in Luxembourg since a number of years. A few examples of its presence in national documents for the European OMC are the following.

Both the NAP Inclusion 2006 and the National Strategy Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSRSPSI) 2008-2010 mention child poverty as a policy priority. The latter mentions combatting child poverty together with objectives such as the increase of labour market participation of youth and older workers, the modernisation of social support and access to housing. The NRP 2010 deals with child poverty under the heading of employment measures and more in particular the availability and affordability of ECEC places for vulnerable population categories. Also early school leaving and youth unemployment is on the agenda.

The 2011 NRP mentions child poverty essentially as a problem of low work intensity in households, not as a separate issue. Youth unemployment and educational performance remain high on the agenda.

The Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) were taken as starting point of the 2012 NRP. One of these recommendations was important for child poverty, namely the reduction of youth unemployment. In the 2012 NRP, more attention was also given to poverty among one parent families, more in particular from the perspective of work intensity in households.

The implementation of several measures to improve the educational performance, the employability and the labour market position of youth were announced to be continued and extended, including the increase of staff to do the actual field work among young people. Indeed, at the end of 2009 a number of temporary measures have been introduced by law to alleviate the crisis impact on youth employment (*Loi du 11 novembre 2009* 1). This law creates special contracts for initiating young people to employment and to help them obtain work experience (*Contrats d'initiation à l'emploi - expérience pratique-CIE-EP*). This possibility is offered more in particular to young people who got recently their diploma. The measures are supported by a web portal and a web site.⁶⁹ At the same time it was announced that the voluntary orientation service (*Service Volontaire d'Orientation - SVO*) of the national youth service (*Service National de la Jeunesse*) would intensify the promotion of its different measures in order to improve the transition from school to professional life and to motivate early school leavers to reintegrate education. Furthermore, in 2010 it was agreed to improve the coordination between the national service for social assistance (*Service National de l'Action Sociale - SNAS*) and the national youth service (*Service National de la Jeunesse*) in order to avoid double use of measures. Young people between 16 and 30 years of age, who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and who have to be available for minimum income (*revenue minimum garanti - RMG*) activation measures, will e.g. not be allowed to participate in a voluntary orientation service (*Service Volontaire d'Orientation - SVO*) activity. One initiative in this context has been taken by the national youth service (SNJ – *Service National de la Jeunesse*) and consists of regional meetings for youth not at school or in

⁶⁹ Web portal: www.anelo.lu and web site: www.cie-ep.anelo.lu

employment (NEET). These meetings are held in collaboration with local youth organisations and the employment agency in order to discuss possibilities to become active. An evaluation study of the activities of the voluntary orientation service for youth (SVO - *Service Volontaire d'Orientation*) showed good results of the measure, as well as the support of both professionals and young people.⁷⁰

The cost of housing and housing exclusion being one of the major challenges in the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Luxembourg, we suggested that a CSR in this domain could be appropriate. Although the Luxembourg government recognised the issue and had taken (or planned) several measures to improve the situation, it seemed that housing exclusion would merit a more central place in social inclusion policies. The first annual report on the activities of the newly established social offices mentioned housing as the most important financial support item: almost 24% of financial support from the social offices was for housing costs, and another 11.45% went to support for energy costs. These amounts were complementary to the regular support mechanisms. Also, the civil society organisations in the field of poverty and social inclusion represented in EAPN Luxembourg, witnessed a continuing precarious housing situation for low income groups. Moreover, they had the impression that a lack of staff in the relevant institutions was hindering the smooth implementation of recent measures to tackle the problem.⁷¹

The 2013 Luxembourg NRP was a clear follow up of the NRP in 2012. As in 2012, the CSRs were taken as a starting point. The CSRs were mostly the same as in the previous year, including the reduction of youth unemployment. The NRP underlined the continuity of efforts in this field by measures for a better transition from school to work. More in particular, the government presented an Action Plan to promote youth employment. It includes a "youth guarantee" which should ensure a personalised accompaniment for each young unemployed person towards a job, a job integration measure, and a training or education opportunity. These measures are included in the 2012-2014 Youth Pact.

In the education chapter of the 2013 NRP, the government mentioned the fact that the target of less than 10% early school leavers had been reached, but it was aware that efforts should be maintained to keep this figure as low as it is. Therefore, structural reforms in the field of education are prepared. The particular linguistic situation of Luxembourg, with three official languages and a very important number of immigrants plays a crucial role in this. The efforts in this field are seen both as measures to fight against youth unemployment and as long term poverty prevention measures.

The particular vulnerable situation of one parent families was once more emphasised, closely linked to the issue of low work intensity in households and female employment. Measures to support female employment are continued:

- Increase of socio-educational facilities for children;
- Awareness raising of possibilities for free of charge ECEC services for low income households;
- Increase of the activation rate in the framework of the minimum income scheme.

⁷⁰ Service National de la Jeunesse (2011). *Service volontaire pour jeunes 2008-2010 - Evaluation intermédiaire à l'attention de la Chambre des Députés*. Luxembourg: Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration.

⁷¹ Notes taken at EAPN Luxembourg's 7th participatory meeting for social inclusion – April, 19 2012.

These measures aim at increasing female employment, but also at combatting child poverty and giving children a better start in life.

The development of local social offices continues and their activities, including specific financial support, are closely monitored. Of the total financial support during the year 2012, 26.61% was used for the cost of housing and another 8.98% for energy costs. This clearly reflects the importance of the housing cost burden for vulnerable households in Luxembourg.

In the field of health care, the introduction of the direct payment of medical services by the health insurance for specific vulnerable population categories since January 2013 is an important new development.

Finally, in January 2013, the Luxembourg government adopted a national strategy against homelessness and housing exclusion.⁷² As a result of national consultation for the NRP 2011, a cooperation platform (ministerial departments, municipalities and their organisation, NGOs) on homelessness and housing exclusion has been created. The national strategy builds on a study published by that platform in October 2011.⁷³ The strategy follows the "housing first" principle and uses a holistic approach of the homeless person.

The NRPs, as well as the 2012 National Social Report (NSR) show a strong policy continuity in Luxembourg, which also means that some challenges remain unanswered. The 2013 NRP still pays limited attention to the income situation as such of people depending on the minimum income scheme or in very low paid jobs, including children at risk of poverty, one parent families and specific categories of migrants. Their situation continues to be seen (almost) only as a problem of joblessness.

The 2013 Strategic Social Reporting (SSR) completes the NRP by describing its five social inclusion priorities and giving a few extra details, not yet mentioned in the NRP.

Two important new elements in the NRP and the SSR can be considered as being the result of dialogue and consultation with social partners and the broader civil society (including EAPN Luxembourg and other NGOs): the housing issue seems to climb higher on the social priority agenda in a concrete way by the presentation of a national strategy with clear objectives. Moreover, within the housing issue, a link is made with sustainability issues. Second, the discussion about the appropriateness of the current minimum income scheme seems to be really opened. One will have to see whether this debate will result in a more "separate" attention for the income issue.

Concluding, child poverty and exclusion are regularly present in documents for the European semester. Mostly these are linked to low work intensity in vulnerable households, to education and youth unemployment.

The 2012-2014 Youth Pact is a way to realise more integrated youth policies. Also, the national report on the situation of youth is a way to bring together information and knowledge from different sources (annual reports, studies, administrative files...), which makes it a good monitoring instrument to be used by the Youth Observatory. An observatory on childhood is under preparation.⁷⁴ These initiatives are important,

⁷² Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2013). *Stratégie nationale contre le sans-abrisme et l'exclusion liée au logement 2013-2020*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

⁷³ Ministère de la Famille et de l'Intégration (2011). *Exclusion sociale liée au logement et au sans-abrisme. D'un état des lieux vers une stratégie nationale*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

⁷⁴ Interview with staff of the Ministry of Family and Integration dd. 17-07-2013.

because they integrate the already existing practices of monitoring by the different actors and instances separately.

Key ways to integrate the implementation of the Recommendation into the European semester

As already stressed, Luxembourg government follows essentially a universalist approach in its social policies, completed by targeted measures when considered necessary. This means that child poverty and exclusion policies are to be found within policies for child and youth well-being. While this has to be considered as a fruitful approach, it makes monitoring the implementation of the European Recommendation more complex. There is a need for better mainstreaming the fight against child poverty and social exclusion. Mainstreaming is not only a matter of political commitment, but also of adequate instruments for its realisation. Also in view of the specific challenges in the field of child poverty and exclusion, a specific multi-actor taskforce on the issue could be the right instrument for a more integrated implementation of the European recommendation and of course the reporting in the framework of the European semester.

5. Mobilising relevant EU financial instruments

The current ESF operational programme includes the increase of female employment as one of its priorities. In this framework it supports also the improvement and enlargement of ECEC facilities, more in particular for the most deprived families.⁷⁵ The efforts for children at risk of poverty and exclusion are limited to this priority.

The ESF-OP puts great emphasis on the improvement of educational performance and labour market integration of youth.⁷⁶ It underlines, that the first priority is not to increase the employment rate of youth between the age of 16 and 24, but to increase their participation in secondary and further education, and more in particular to decrease the numbers of early school leavers (without qualifications).⁷⁷ Special attention is given to labour integration of those furthest from the labour market through special programmes and social enterprises. Personalised approaches, increase of employability, competence building are mentioned as methods to promote, and young delinquents and drug addicts are among the target populations to reach.

Looking into the participation of young people, the age groups used in the 2011 ESF report are: -15 and 15-24. Children and youth are most present in projects under a few objectives. The numbers of young participants since the start of the current OP under these objectives are as follows:

⁷⁵ Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi (2007). *Programme Opérationnel de l'intervention du Fonds Social Européen au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg au titre de l'objectif compétitivité régionale et emploi – période de programmation 2007-2013*. ESF operational programme 2007-2013. Luxembourg, p. 25. Available at: http://www.fse.public.lu/documentation/Documents_officiels_2007/2013/Document_officiel/po.pdf

⁷⁶ id., *ibid.*, p. 13

⁷⁷ Id., *ibid.*, p. 22.

Table 4: Cumulative numbers of young participants in ESF projects under selected objectives

Objective	-15	15-24	Total number of participants
1.3 Labour market integration of youth	520	2,806	3,464
1.4 Labour market integration of those furthest from the labour market	0	116	578
3.3 Actions of social partners	0	258	3,682
Total	520	3,180	7,724

Source: 2011 implementation report ESF⁷⁸ - table constructed by the author.

For the objective on labour market integration of youth it is interesting also to see that 322 out of the 3,464 are minimum income beneficiaries, 2,557 are still at school, 293 are participating in an employment measure and 2,569 are inactive. Only 71 belong to the migrant population and 259 are referred to as "other vulnerable persons".

Among the operations subsidised by the current ESF-OP, the following are to be mentioned in the framework of this report.

- Targeting youth:
 - ANELO, the online information platform for youth, which concentrates on the transition from school into working life. Budget: € 1,516,685;⁷⁹
 - YOUTH 4 WORK, a project for re-orienting early school leavers. Budget: € 376,000;⁸⁰
 - YOUTH&CO, a project promoting jobs in the building sector with pupils and their parents. Budget: 582,590;⁸¹
- Targeting parents:
 - Study about the position of men and women on the labour market (including the impact of ECEC facilities). Budget: € 36,806;⁸²

Except for labour market integration, the Luxembourg ESF is not targeted at poverty and social inclusion and even less at children. Somewhat more attention is given to the transition from school to working life. The 2013 NRP mentions a closer cooperation between ministries in the framework of the new ESF programme because 20% of the ESF budget will have to be allocated to the fight against poverty and social exclusion.⁸³

⁷⁸ Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2012). *Fonds Social Européen 2007-2013 – Programme Opérationnel au titre de l'objectif Compétitivité Régionale et Emploi – Rapport d'Exécution 2011*. Luxembourg: Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi.

⁷⁹ <http://www.fse.public.lu/projets/Operations20072013/2012-2013/SNJ.html>

⁸⁰ http://www.fse.public.lu/projets/Operations20072013/2012-2013/SI_Reidener_Kanton.html

⁸¹ http://www.fse.public.lu/projets/Operations20072013/2009_2010/IFSB_Youth-Co.html

⁸² http://www.fse.public.lu/projets/Operations20072013/2010/MEGA_Marche.html

⁸³ Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (2013). *Plan national pour une croissance intelligente, durable et inclusive - Luxembourg 2020 - Programme national de réforme du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le cadre du semestre européen 2013*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg.

Luxembourg is one of the countries where children consume little fruit, but it is a successful partner in the European School Milk and Fruit Schemes. According to the 2012 European evaluation report, some 71% of all children participated in the School Fruit Scheme. The report also states that "While Estonia and Luxembourg still spend a share of their budget on Accompanying Measures, they can be rated as Member States with the most efficient use of their budget."⁸⁴ "The schemes of Estonia, Luxembourg and Latvia reach a relatively high level of distribution efficiency as these Member States reach the highest fruit and vegetables distribution and at the same time the highest coverage of their target group related to the money spent."⁸⁵

The government budget for fruit and vegetables distribution in schools increased considerably the last couple of years. In 2010 it was some € 65,000, in 2011 it increased to more than € 167,000 to reach almost € 213,000 in 2012.⁸⁶

As for milk distribution, during the school year 2011-2012, 69 schools with a total of 29,800 pupils participated in the programme. The state subsidy was about € 32,500.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Elles, A. et al. (2012) *Evaluation of the European School Fruit Scheme - Final Report*. Bonn, Luxembourg: AFC/Co concept, European Commission, p. 89.

⁸⁵ Id. *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁸⁶ Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Viticulture et du Développement rural (2013). *Rapport d'activité 2012*. Luxembourg: Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, p. V-3.

⁸⁷ Id., *ibid.*, p. IV-14

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