

**It is sometimes worth remembering that it is rare to come across someone in Luxembourg who speaks only one language, with a good grasp of four or five quite common. English is becoming increasingly important with the continuing arrival of international companies and the influx of people from the newer EU member states who use it as their "other language." But what to what extent is it a significant factor for economic competitiveness?**

Luxembourg has never had a choice about being multilingual, said the Chamber of Commerce director, Pierre Gramegna, at a recent symposium on the subject organised by the local branch of language and cultural training institute Berlitz. "Multilingualism is a necessity. When you're a small country you have no choice," he said, during his presentation. "We speak the language of our customers, both inside and outside the country.". Companies considering investing and foreigners considering working here, will find it attractive that they can speak their language, he explained. "It strikes me as a very strong competitive advantage," he said. Gramegna also praised this country's approach of starting kids on second and third languages at a young age (generally 4 or 5 years)." Most countries, he said, wait until the kids are older and it is "too late to learn foreign languages."