

# Cover Story

## Go International



# Conquering new markets

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The globalisation of the world economy, increasing competition and the small size of the local market, in terms of geographic size and its own resources, are pushing a growing number of Luxembourg companies to go international in order to expand and diversify their markets. International expansion is a real opportunity for companies to benefit from solid and lasting competitive advantages, whatever the business sector. The rise of new technologies such as eCommerce, virtual reality and digital payment systems, makes it easier for companies to develop beyond their own borders. Today, the health crisis linked to COVID-19 poses enormous economic challenges. As times are hard, it makes it all the more important to maintain foreign trade relations, to explore new markets and to innovate.

Internationalisation and the need for free and balanced international trade is a priority for Luc Frieden, president of the Chamber of Commerce, to help face the challenges of a changing economy and to maintain national prosperity. As part of the Chamber of Commerce's CC2025 global strategy, the International Affairs team intends to continue its digital transformation started before the health crisis. Through its agility and the innovation of its products and services, it offers new ways to seize the opportunities of globalisation and assist companies throughout the value chain of their internationalisation process.

## Luxembourg: An open and internationalised economy

Luxembourg has a traditionally open economy. With a small domestic market in terms of size and resources, the Grand Duchy depends heavily on foreign markets, both for the sale of goods and services and for its local supply. Thus, the degree of openness of Luxembourg's economy is the highest in Europe and one of the highest in the world, with more than 80% of the goods and services produced being exported. The concept of openness can be measured by comparing

the total of a country's exports and imports in goods and services to its overall GDP. For Luxembourg, this ratio is 196; for Belgium, it is 80 and the United States has a ratio of 15. The degree of openness is also attested by the *Open Markets Index* developed by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC). In this ranking, Luxembourg appears in 3rd place behind Hong Kong and Singapore, but ahead of Belgium (4th).

Thanks in particular to its all-cargo international airport providing air connections to all continents, Luxembourg is one of the largest freight airports in Europe. The freight transport centre at Luxembourg airport has a capacity of one million tonnes of freight per year and offers high quality services. Reliable rail links are provided by CFL Multimodal to reach the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean Sea, Turkey, and other important European Union hubs. The first train to China set off in early 2019. Located at the intersection of the main north-south and east-west rail and motorway corridors, Luxembourg also benefits from rapid and un-congested access to the European consumer market.

## The opportunities for international expansion

In an increasingly globalised and interconnected economy, conquering new markets and finding reliable partners are among the main challenges in any company's life. The internationalisation of a company beyond the borders of its country of origin opens up a multitude of possibilities. It constitutes a real opportunity to benefit from solid and lasting competitive advantages, whatever the business sector.

Opening up to the outside world allows companies to conquer new market shares, increase their profile and influence, increase their turnover and diversify their supplies. By opening up internationally, they can gain visibility, improve their brand image and reassure their customers and their various business partners.

Whilst globalisation is no longer reserved just for large corporations, it remains a source of apprehension for SMEs and micro-enterprises and can pose many questions. *Can we really face the competition in other territories? How can we understand the market better than local businesses? What strategic positioning can we adopt to continue growing beyond our borders?*

An internationalisation strategy requires meticulous planning. The internationalisation of business should lead a company to question their choice of destination country, and their choice of the service or product to export or produce in a third country. They must adapt and consider several factors that will determine the success of their approach, in particular, technological innovation and digitalisation which by overturning traditional business models today make it possible to accelerate the process

of internationalising companies. A recent study by the International Development Observatory (ODI) shows that 91% of companies consider digital technology to be a growth driver that must be prioritised in order to implement increasingly integrated solutions and gain in efficiency and flexibility. They also believe that digital is playing an increasingly important role at levels other than those linked to the capacity to develop global offers. Thus, 88% of companies believe that going digital promotes the internationalisation of customer relations and 87.5% of them consider that it allows the implementation of strategies at the global level.

### Economic promotion of Luxembourg

The promotion of Luxembourg's economy and international prospecting are led by Luxembourg's Trade and Investment Board. Under the honorary presidency of HRH Prince Guillaume, heir to the Grand Duke, this council is chaired by the Minister of the Economy. The Chamber of Commerce and Luxinnovation work in collaboration with the Ministry of the Economy to promote innovation, fuel international growth and attract foreign investment.

The Trade and Investment Board (TIB) was launched in 2016 with the objective of strengthening Luxembourg's position on the international scene. It brings together all the players in the promotion of Luxembourg, namely the Chamber of Commerce, the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, the Ministry of State - Department of Media, Telecommunications and Digital Policy, the Ministry of Finance, the Chamber of Skilled Trades and Crafts, Luxinnovation and Fedil. Coordination efforts between these different organisations facilitate the development of Luxembourg companies in international markets.

Additionally, the TIB seeks to attract the best global companies capable of bringing added value to the Grand Duchy. In this context, the Chamber of Commerce promotes the internationalisation of Luxembourg companies, and the quality of exports and various services from Luxembourg. Within its House of Entrepreneurship, the Chamber of Commerce hosts an investor care platform, a true single point of contact for investors wishing to set up in the Grand Duchy. This platform is coordinated by the Ministry of the Economy. Luxinnovation is in charge of deploying proactive targeting,



sector prospecting, business development and market research.

Luxembourg for Finance is a public-private partnership between the Luxembourg government and the Luxembourg Financial Industry Federation (PROFIL). The agency for the development of the financial sector consolidates the efforts made by the public authorities and the main actors in the sector to ensure the development of an innovative and professional centre, thanks to a coherent and structured communication policy. Luxembourg for Finance organises seminars and participates in international fairs and congresses with a dedicated team. Luxembourg for Finance events are aimed at companies in the financial sector.

### A panoply of services to promote in-the-field internationalisation activities

The Chamber of Commerce, through its International Affairs department, is in charge of advising and supporting Luxembourg companies in developing their business in international markets. This support takes

the form of providing a global network and organising numerous activities in the field, such as economic missions, accompanied visits, or providing collective stands representing Luxembourg (see 'National Pavilion' box, p. 50) at professional exhibitions abroad, information sessions on all aspects of international trade and even the hosting of foreign delegations in Luxembourg.

These services are aimed both at companies taking their first steps in exporting, and at those with more experience, who are exploring new markets or looking for new investors.

### State visits, official missions and economic missions

There are several formats for trade missions overseas. When either the grand-ducal couple or their heirs participate, the economic missions are presided over by HRH the Grand Duke, in the presence of HRH the Grand Duchess, or by HRH Prince Guillaume, the Grand Duke's heir, accompanied by his wife HRH Princess Stéphanie, and led by the Minister of the Economy. In the





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**01.** HM the King of Belgium and HRH the Grand Duke with (from left to right) Luc Frieden, President of the Chamber of Commerce; Étienne Schneider, former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Economy; Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Defence of Belgium; Bernard Gillot, President of the Federation of Belgian Enterprises (FEB) and Carlo Thelen, CEO/Director General of the Chamber of Commerce, who all participated in a meet & greet on the theme of Belgian and Luxembourg entrepreneurship organised at the Chamber of Commerce, as part of the state visit to Luxembourg by the King and Queen of Belgium, from 15 to 17 October 2019.

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**02.** As part of an official mission to Morocco from 23 to 26 September 2019, an MoU was signed during an economic forum in Casablanca between Mohammed Drissi Melyani, Director General of the Digital Development Agency (ADD) and Luc Frieden, president of the Chamber of Commerce, with a view to further collaboration in the ICT sector.

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event of a state visit or the participation of the Grand Ducal heirs, the Ministry of the Economy and the Chamber of Commerce establish the programme in close consultation with the Grand Ducal Court. It is up to the Ministry to develop the official part of the programme, which includes organising political and economic discussions. The Chamber of Commerce, for its part, is called upon to supervise and support the trade delegation made up of companies and other economic actors from Luxembourg. The economic promotion missions aim both to promote Luxembourg as a welcoming country for overseas companies and so attract inward investment and also to support Luxembourg exporters in conquering foreign markets. These missions are organised by the Ministry of the Economy, in close cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and Luxinnovation. The Luxembourg Trade and Investment Offices (LTIO), embassies

and consulates also play a leading role in organising and conducting missions and visits.

#### Collective stands

Fairs and exhibitions are natural business places for any company wishing to expand its market but participation in them can be expensive. Both the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of the Economy offer companies the chance to participate under advantageous conditions in collective 'turnkey' operations bringing Luxembourg exhibitors together under a single high-visibility banner.

#### Accompanied visits

The Chamber of Commerce offers accompanied visits to companies interested in visiting major international fairs. In order to

provide added value in terms of meetings between visitors and exhibitors, these visits are often supplemented by a programme of individual discussions or matchmaking events organised in advance to fulfil the needs of participating companies.

#### International cooperation fairs

Cooperation fairs offer a simple formula that allows companies to expand their business beyond their domestic and regional markets. In order to avoid having to make dozens of business trips to find the right contacts, participation in a cooperation fair allows an SME/SMI to have several individually targeted meetings with prospective partners in one place. The 'b2fair ®' concept allows companies to combine international fairs with business-to-business ('b2b') international business meeting platforms (see p. 49).



### Franz Fayot

Minister of the Economy,  
Minister for Development  
Cooperation and Humanitarian  
Affairs

**"The decision to carry out an economic mission to a country is preceded by broad consultation and depends on several factors."**

### What measures have you adopted to preserve Luxembourg's international links and forge new ones during the health crisis?

The Covid-19 crisis has upset everyone's calendar, including mine. But thanks to technological means such as videoconferencing, I have been able to keep up and even intensify exchanges with entrepreneurs and unions during the confinement. During this period, I have also continued to meet with my ministerial counterparts and the foreign ambassadors and diplomats present in the Grand Duchy about a European approach to Covid-19. Within the Ministry, my team in charge of promoting foreign trade and investments has remained in regular contact with our network abroad as well as with the teams in charge of international relations within the Chamber of Commerce and Luxinnovation. With the strengthening of digital tools, new financial aid for exports to support companies that promote their products and services internationally through digital marketing tools have proven to be appropriate.

### In normal times, how do you choose the countries to which you would send an economic mission in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce?

The decision to send an economic mission to a country is preceded by broad consultation and depends on several factors. The country must be of interest to Luxembourg companies wanting to develop their activities abroad. The choice must also result from a preliminary prospecting effort focusing on the specific economic sectors, which correspond to the Grand Duchy's economic development strategy. In addition, the country must present opportunities in terms of attracting technologies, businesses and investments to Luxembourg. To decide on the choice of destinations, the Ministry of the Economy considers the assessments of the Chamber of Commerce and Luxinnovation, but also sector specialists within the ministry and the Luxembourg Trade and Investment Offices. The LTIOs, embassies and consulates play a leading role in the organisation and smooth running of missions and visits.



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**03.** From left to right: Carlo Thelen, CEO/Director General of the Chamber of Commerce; Etienne Schneider, former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy; and Jungdong Kim, Vice President of the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) during an economic mission to South Korea from July 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2019. A business delegation made up of representatives of 40 companies accompanied the Minister to Seoul in search of partnerships with Korean players to expand their businesses abroad. The mission revolved around digital, technological innovation, cybersecurity and the space sector.  
© SIP

**04.** At the invitation of the Prime Minister, Minister of State, Xavier Bettel, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Ana Brnabić paid an official visit to Luxembourg, accompanied by a Serbian delegation. A Serbia-Luxembourg economic seminar organised at the House of Startups, in which the two Prime Ministers participated, focused on digital innovation and the startup ecosystem.  
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### Self-organised missions

Self-organised missions are an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with its global network of partners. The missions target countries chosen by the Chamber according to the needs of and potential business opportunities for its member companies. These missions are often in countries that have not yet hosted an official delegation or are follow-up missions to official missions.

### Get2Know Your Neighbours Missions

These one- or two-day missions to or from a region close to Luxembourg (Greater Region and Benelux) are organised by the Chamber of Commerce with its network of regional partners. The objective of these missions is to gain a better understanding of the business environment, companies and economic players in the neighbouring regions and





**05.** With a 40m<sup>2</sup> national pavilion that hosted 8 start-ups, Luxembourg was able to attract many entrepreneurs interested in the country's innovation ecosystem during the VivaTechnology fair which was held in Paris from 16 to 18 May 2019.

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promote cross-border collaboration. Get2know YourNeighbors events include b2b meetings, company visits, seminars and/or networking receptions.

#### Seminars and conferences

The Chamber of Commerce regularly organises seminars and conferences to help Luxembourg companies penetrate foreign markets by publicising the opportunities offered in those markets and helping companies sell their products or services.

#### Europe within the reach of companies thanks to the Enterprise Europe Network-Luxembourg (EEN)

To offer Luxembourg business leaders a single gateway to European value-added services that aim to help SMEs, in particular, to fully exploit their potential and develop their innovation capacities in the context of the larger European market, the Enterprise Europe Network in Luxembourg grew out of a strategic partnership between the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Skilled Trades and Crafts, and Luxinnovation. Close collaboration between these

different partners ensures coverage of all economic sectors and is aimed at both seasoned international companies and innovative startups. Strongly anchored in the local fabric, the three member organisations have privileged contacts with the Luxembourg government, professional federations, public research centres and other professional partners. The Enterprise Europe Network also works with partners at the regional level, particularly its counterparts in the Greater Region, as well as with the European Commission. With 600 points of contact and 3,000 advisers, EEN is present in more than 60 countries and forms the largest European network of advice and services for businesses. The network offers concrete and efficient expertise in the form of a one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs in the 27 member countries of the European Union, the three candidate countries (Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey), the member states of the European Economic Area and in other third countries. The Enterprise Europe Network-Luxembourg keeps businesses informed about EU policies as well as integrated European services.

More information: [www.een.lu](http://www.een.lu)

#### The Institute of the Greater Region (IGR)

In its mission to work for a common future and to advance cross-border cooperation in the interest of the economic and social development of the Greater Region, IGR constitutes a platform for reflection and permanent exchanges. As a strategic think tank operating with the other institutions that drive this cross-border space, IGR brings together different strengths and combines complementarities to facilitate dialogue and exchanges between economic players.

More information : <https://institut-gr.eu/>

#### The characteristics that make a country a priority market

The Ministry of the Economy chooses the destinations for official missions, basing its decision on, among other things, the assessments of its sectoral specialists, LTIOs and the Chamber of Commerce. Market analyses by Luxinnovation also help to identify destinations of real economic and commercial interest. The choice is therefore the result of a preliminary prospecting effort focusing above all on very specific economic sectors,



**Together we make it happen!**

The promotion and prospection activities are organised mainly by the Ministry of the Economy, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Chamber of Commerce and Luxinnovation. Their coordinated work is presented under a single web platform: [www.tradeandinvest.lu](http://www.tradeandinvest.lu). Within this set-up, the Chamber of Commerce promotes the internationalisation of Luxembourg companies, the quality of the goods exported and the various services of Luxembourg origin while the Ministry of the Economy's focus is to promote Luxembourg as a prime business location for foreign companies with the help of Luxinnovation.

Moreover, the Chamber of Commerce, through its International Affairs, actively supports Luxembourg companies expanding into foreign markets. A wide range of activities and services are provided so that interested Luxembourg companies can find complete and tailor-made guidance to develop and grow their business internationally.

■ Contact: [www.cc.lu/gointernational](http://www.cc.lu/gointernational)

**06.** Over 2.500 business meetings were organised during the 15th edition of the b2fair event at the Hanover Fair, the world's largest industrial technology fair (1-5 April 2019) ...  
**07.** ... and the networking reception at the national pavilion attracted many participants who came to discover the products, services and technologies of Luxembourg exhibit

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which correspond to the economic development strategy of the Grand Duchy.

The Chamber of Commerce identifies and prioritises countries offering economic and commercial opportunities, evaluating them according to criteria determined by requests from Luxembourg companies, the interest shown by companies based on an 'annual orientation survey', the opportunities detected for companies, the complementarity of business sectors, the volume of trade in goods and services, Luxembourg's representation (or lack thereof) in the country, existing cooperation, free trade agreements or even the country's governmental strategy (see 'List of priority countries' box p. 52).

It is essential to prepare well for international missions. To this end, the International Affairs department offers a checklist (see 'Checklist' box p. 55), so that missions abroad take place in the best conditions for companies.

### **The role of bilateral chambers and their accreditation abroad**

With 30 chambers around the world, the network of accredited Belgian and Belgian-Luxembourg Chambers of Commerce abroad constitutes one of the main networks of bilateral Chambers of Commerce in the world. The main objective of the Belgo-Luxembourg Chambers of Commerce is to defend the interests of Belgian and Luxembourg companies operating abroad in order to support their international exchanges and their economic development. A guide listing the contact details of all the member chambers of this network which can help in the internationalisation process, can be found online.

■ More information: <https://belgianchambers.be>

The Chamber of Commerce intends to set up an accreditation process this year for bilateral Chambers of Commerce and bilateral

Business Clubs in Luxembourg or abroad (called CCBLs) promoting the development and consolidation of a professional and homogeneous network. The accreditation programme specifies certain principles to which CCBLs must adhere in performing their tasks to achieve the status of an accredited chamber. These criteria concern the organisation and management of the CCBL, as well as its qualities as a service provider.

Once accredited, CCBLs will be able to benefit from their recognised status as partners of the Chamber of Commerce including advantages such as partner subsidies (for projects carried out in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce) and project subsidies.





*"In a context of uncertainty and instability being international is more than ever a key factor in the health of our businesses and our economy."*



### **The Chamber of Commerce's commercial and economic representation network abroad**

The Grand Duchy's main trading partners are its three closest neighbours, Germany, France and Belgium. To strengthen the excellent relations with these three countries, the Chamber of Commerce has opened permanent representative offices in Berlin, Brussels, Paris and Marseille where Economic and Commercial Attachés (ECAs) are located in the field. These offices double up as bilateral Business Clubs, which offer a privileged meeting place for entrepreneurs wishing to intensify the dynamic of exchanges between Luxembourg and the host country.

Following Brexit, the Chamber of Commerce is also planning to open a trade and economic representation in London in September 2020.

■ More information:

[www.businessclub-luxembourg.de](http://www.businessclub-luxembourg.de),  
[www.businessclub-luxembourg.fr](http://www.businessclub-luxembourg.fr),  
[www.businessclub-luxembourg.be](http://www.businessclub-luxembourg.be)

### **The Office du Ducroire (ODL): Luxembourg's export credit agency - supporting exporters with financial aid for exports and insurance against risks**

The Chamber of Commerce cooperates with the ODL to support Luxembourg companies in their export procedures by offering them partial reimbursement of costs related to promotion, training or participation in fairs. In addition, ODL offers insurance solutions against business risks associated with international transactions and investments abroad.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ODL has taken several measures to strengthen its support for Luxembourg companies:

- increase in the guaranteed portion of limits and contracts issued during the crisis within the framework of export insurance;
- collaboration with the mutual guarantee association (*Mutualité de Cautionnement*), establishing insurance for guarantees issued by the association so they can increase their capacity;

- making the 'bank credit insurance' product more flexible, which allows banks to partially reduce the risk of non-repayment of loans they grant to Luxembourg exporters to develop their international business. In this context, the ODL has also relaxed the conditions applying to this product, particularly by increasing the percentage of possible insurance and by broadening the definition of eligible bank loans;
- increasing the percentage of insurance within the framework of its bank-guarantee insurance product which is aimed at the banks of Luxembourg exporters to ensure the lines of guarantee granted by the banks and import guarantees are included in the scope of insurance;
- reducing the time taken to process claims enabling companies to be compensated more quickly in the event of a claim;
- reducing the time taken to reimburse invoices paid within the framework of financial aid.

■ More information: [www.odl.lu](http://www.odl.lu)



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**Import-export: ATA carnets and certificates of origin**

Exports require that a certificate of origin accompany the goods to prove their origin. In Luxembourg, the Chamber of Commerce's House of Entrepreneurship is responsible for authenticating certificates of origin for the benefit of companies. This certificate is therefore a standardised document which, in order to meet customs or simply commercial requirements in relations with foreign countries, makes it possible to identify the goods, and in which the body authorised to issue it expressly certifies that the goods to which the certificate refers originate from a particular country or group of countries. In the context of temporary operations, the goods remain the property of the sender and are intended to return - in an identical state - to the country of departure, without paying customs duties and taxes in the countries of temporary admission. The ATA customs pass - the acronym being a combination of the French and English words: admission temporaire/temporary admission - is a real goods passport to simplify customs operations and reduce costs. As the ATA derives from two international conventions,

08. Following Brexit, the Chamber of Commerce is also planning to open a trade and economic representation in London in September 2020.

09. The Prepare4Brexit conferences on 8 February 2019 and 9 April 2019, organised by International Affairs at the premises of the Chamber of Commerce, welcomed several hundred entrepreneurs and presented various aspects related to the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union.

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**Maxim Straus**  
Executive Vice President (EVP) and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Cargolux and President of the 'International' Commission of the Chamber of Commerce

*'Cargolux has set itself the goal of achieving success by providing flexible and reliable services, constantly adapting to changing market conditions and gaining the trust of its customers.'*

**Cargolux employs more than 2,000 people worldwide and has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. Today, your airline operates the largest fleet in its history and has one of the highest daily utilisation rates in the industry. What is behind this international success?**

Since its inception, Cargolux has set itself the goal of achieving success by providing flexible and reliable services, constantly adapting to changing market conditions and gaining the trust of its customers. Our employees are experts in their fields and demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the company and our primary mission, which is air freight. The Cargolux motto 'You name it, we fly it!' remains the philosophy of our company. Over the years, the company has made a number of bold decisions and taken giant strides to achieve its ambitions.

**You are an elected member of the Chamber of Commerce where you also chair the 'International' Commission. What motivated your involvement?**

Beyond my responsibilities as CFO, I am very involved in the development of new markets for Cargolux. Over the past few years, I have participated in many economic missions. I was able to discover the needs of the Luxembourg companies that take part in them and appreciate the work of the international department in the field. As President of the 'International' Commission, I have the ambition to share this experience with International Affairs and members of the Commission. Cindy Tereba and her team took advantage of the lockdown to review the department's strategy and continue its transformation to become a proactive service provider, in accordance with the CC2025 Strategy. The existing service offer has been extended by relying on digital tools, agile and collaborative working methods, the implementation of a centralised customer relationship management (CRM) tool and targeted marketing instruments. The COVID-19 crisis has played a catalytic role in this process, allowing the services of the Chamber of Commerce to be adapted to the current and future needs of businesses.





### The 'Made in Luxembourg' label: showing the roots of your know-how

To promote Luxembourg products on foreign markets, the Chamber of Commerce together with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Chamber of Skilled Trades and Crafts, created the 'Made in Luxembourg' label to identify the Luxembourgish origin of products and services. This label allows local consumers to be identify Luxembourgish products and to increase awareness of national products abroad. Companies wanting to obtain the label can apply online at: [www.made-in-luxembourg.lu](http://www.made-in-luxembourg.lu)



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it is the Grand Duchy's Customs and Excise Agency's role to apply this customs convention. However, the Chamber of Commerce is the 'issuing association' for the Grand Duchy on the basis of an authorisation issued by the Luxembourg customs authorities. The Chamber of Commerce is moreover a 'guaranteeing association' in the sense that it has established a surety towards the Luxembourg customs administration, for security and recovery of any customs duty that may be due following the issuance of an ATA carnet.

### Business Partnership Facility

The Business Partnership Facility (BPF) is a financing facility aimed at encouraging the Luxembourg and European private sector to join forces with partners in developing countries to set up sustainable business projects. Co-financing takes the form of a donation that can reach up to 50% of the total budget of a project, up to a threshold of EUR 200,000. It contributes to development and job creation in developing countries as well as technology transfer.

Several sectors are eligible: Cleantech, eco-innovation and circular economy; Space; FinTech; Healthtech; Mobility and logistics; Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

■ For more information, go to [www.bpf.lu](http://www.bpf.lu) or contact the International Affairs team at : [bpf@cc.lu](mailto:bpf@cc.lu)

As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, Luxembourg – and the governments of virtually every other country in the world – have taken a series of measures that have had a serious impact on travel, traditional exchanges and international development plans, with significant consequences for global economic activity. Another result of the current crisis has seen digital technology play the role of accelerator of international development and this has been supported by a digital offer put in place in recent months by the Chamber of Commerce's International Affairs team under the direction of its new director, Cindy Tereba, who arrived in September 2019.

### Digitalisation as a response to the health and economic crisis

Independently of the current health crisis – which has proven to be a catalyst for digitalisation for businesses and industries – the Chamber of Commerce's International Affairs Team has continued a digital transformation process that began before the crisis. Several digital tools have been developed to deal with the current health and economic crisis and to better understand the challenges of internationalisation.

When times are difficult, it is all the more important to maintain trade relations abroad, and to explore new markets differently. The Chamber of Commerce's International Affairs team is innovating and strengthening its support for companies to facilitate the development of their international business. In addition to existing activities and services, such as economic missions, trade shows and fairs, international B2fair partnership events, hosting of foreign delegations, conferences, cross-border forums, country seminars, thematic workshops, the



*"The new offer will continue to grow and will include the entire international network of the International Affairs team, namely the Luxembourg embassies, the Luxembourg Trade and Investment Offices (LTIO) and all Belgian commercial attachés around the world - all of which will soon be just a click away!"*



Made in Luxembourg label (see the Made in Luxembourg label box p. 48) or the watch service for public procurement tenders, International Affairs now offers a variety of digital products. Thus, a new range of fully digital services now completes the offer of the Chamber of Commerce: personalised consultations by videoconferences, webinars, online B2B platforms, etc. This offer will continue to grow and will include the entire international network of the International Affairs team, namely the Luxembourg embassies, the Luxembourg Trade and Investment Offices (LTIO) and all Belgian commercial attachés around the world - which will soon all be just a click away!

**Evolution of the b2fair international matchmaking concept**

Launched as part of a European project in 2004, the b2fair international matchmaking concept occupies an important place in the International Affairs of the Chamber of Commerce. By pursuing the objective of promoting the development of commercial relations in foreign markets and stimulating economic diversification, it provides a unique system with 'turnkey' supervision in order to create sustainable business partnerships and maximise their profitability.

**10.** During the economic mission to Russia from 21 to 25 October 2019, the business delegation enjoyed an accompanied visit to the Skolkovo Open Innovations Forum, the leading Russian platform for technology, entrepreneurs and business.

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**11.** Presentation of Made in Luxembourg labels on 14 March 2019 during the Spring Break organised at Luxexpo The Box in the Chamber of Commerce's pavilion.

© Laurent Antonelli, Agence Blitz

**12.** On 28 February 2020, the Minister of the Economy and Minister for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs, Franz Fayot, and Carlo Thelen, CEO/Director General of the Chamber of Commerce launched the 5th edition of the Business Partnership Facility (BPF) of Luxembourgish Cooperation. 'BPF intelligently combines the tools of the Cooperation Directorate with the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of the Economy in promoting internationalisation', said Carlo Thelen.

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**Axel Gränitz**

President of the Board of Directors of the Luxembourg Business Club in Germany, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Polygon Group, Honorary Consul of Luxembourg in Bavaria

*'On the basis of exchange and trust, we grow together as a network and are thus an ideal springboard to access the relevant market.'*

**Which companies is the Business Club Luxembourg aimed at?**

We are aimed at companies wanting to extend or develop their commercial relations with Luxembourg or Germany. We want to pass on tips and advice that can be useful to companies in their contacts in both countries and in networking with local business partners. The club is aimed at small, medium and large companies from various industries who wish to exchange knowledge and experiences, as well as to establish and maintain contacts.

**What are the club's areas of activity?**

We mainly organise conferences, delegation trips and workshops, mostly with partners from Germany and Luxembourg - such as industry associations. We see ourselves as a platform that promotes exchange between the two countries and, therefore, we also offer typical networking events. The themes of our events are economic in nature and concern a wide range of industries, from logistics, private equity and even digitalisation in the space sector. In addition, the Business Club Luxembourg offers a platform for meeting high-level economic and political decision-makers that our members can then meet directly in a small committee.

**In retrospect, how would you assess the Business Club Luxembourg since its creation in 2012?**

Since its creation, the Business Club Luxembourg network has grown from 15 to 100 members. Today, the club is very diverse, with representatives from companies of different sizes and from different sectors running the network and putting exciting topics on the agenda. On the basis of exchange and trust, we grow together as a network and we are an ideal springboard to the relevant market. This is, in particular, thanks to the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce and the Luxembourg Embassy in Germany, who have actively supported us from day one.



## Why a national pavilion?

The national pavilion is based on the principle that there is strength in unity. Thus, with a view to promoting Luxembourg companies abroad and highlighting Luxembourg as a country of exports, the Chamber of Commerce, either by itself or with the Ministry of the Economy, has set up collective stands or national pavilions at overseas trade shows. Arranged in general by a collective of the exhibitors, it is made up of several modular stands which are grouped together under the Luxembourg banner and in the national colours. The advantages of the national pavilion are numerous for the participants: it represents a moderate cost and benefits from increased visibility, both to the public and to professionals. Finally, in the context of dedicated exhibitions, the collective stands bring together exhibitors from the same sector or working on the same theme and make it possible to have a group impact.

A unifying concept for the international development of SMEs, micro-enterprises and innovative startups, the success of the concept is attributable to its philosophy which translates into 360° entrepreneurial support, at all levels and throughout the value chain of the internationalisation process. As a true 'Made in Luxembourg' product, the b2fair® brand is protected internationally and now belongs to the Chamber of Commerce.

With its motto "Think Global - Act Local", the concept also makes it possible to set up international operations with high added value on the domestic market, with the arrival of numerous foreign delegations in Luxembourg. Indeed, the b2fair concept draws its dynamic action from fostering privileged professional relationships with a network of contacts and strategic partners active in international trade on a European and global scale. By playing on the international network effect, the International Affairs team of the Chamber of Commerce now have, thanks to this concept, an enormous professional network which it works with systematically in the implementation of its actions. For VSEs and SMEs who have neither the time nor the financial resources to develop their international contacts, the implementation of these local measures is precious.

Also, the ambition of the b2fair concept is to gradually change the way business dialogues will be conducted in the future; virtual meetings, *digital mingling*, interactive chats, 'phygital' events, etc., through the integration of the latest digital advances in the service of human encounters, a new generation of *matchmaking* will aim to bring innovative components to tomorrow's b2b events and reach other horizons by exploring new avenues of development in the collective interest of companies.



## A map of measures related to COVID-19

A map by country allows people to stay informed on the evolution of measures and restrictions related to COVID-19 implemented by different countries. To get an overview of the various measures and possible restrictions, for example in terms of travel rights or the export and import of goods to or from different countries, consult the following site: [www.cc.lu/covid19/go-international/](http://www.cc.lu/covid19/go-international/) which links, among other things, to the Country Policy Tracker set up by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and to updated information connected to trade, particularly with regard to relevant notifications from members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and even real-time information on borders, means of transport, and tourist services available in European Union Member States.

## Online consultations via a video platform

Businesses wanting to explore new markets or with specific questions on how to do business in a foreign country or on community and international themes, can consult an International Affairs advisor from the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce. International Affairs has set up an online video



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**13.** From January to April 2020, Luxembourg's total exports and imports of commercial goods fell by around a third, according to the Eurostat barometer published in June 2020.

**14.** A new range of fully digital services now completes the offer of the Chamber of Commerce: personalised consultations by videoconferences, webinars, online B2B platforms, etc.



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consultation platform on the Chamber of Commerce website to help companies develop their business abroad.

**A digital programme of activities to keep informed differently**

A programme of international activities is available digitally and is regularly updated. It is possible to consult the economic events and missions related to the different geographic markets, as well as the events offered by third-party organisations and International Affairs' partners on the Chamber of Commerce website.

**Virtual international business meetings**

The health crisis has impacted physical business meetings usually organised as part of trade fairs and specialised congresses in Europe and around the world. However, this has not stopped the International Affairs team from setting up numerous initiatives to continue supporting the development of companies internationally. The EEN unit within International Affairs can offer companies access to international events with individual business meetings held virtually.

■ More information: [www.cc.lu/gointernational](http://www.cc.lu/gointernational) or [www.tradeandinvest.lu](http://www.tradeandinvest.lu)

**A practical guide dedicated to the internationalisation of companies**

A practical guide has just been published online by International Affairs and its partners in the Trade & Invest network. It looks at ideas for how companies can integrate the latest innovations in digital marketing into their internationalisation strategy and set up useful tools to boost their international growth.

■ More information: [www.digitalguide.tradeandinvest.lu](http://www.digitalguide.tradeandinvest.lu)

**Partnership Opportunity Database (POD): A platform to find partners around the world**

International Affairs offers free consultation of the cooperation profiles of foreign companies likely to be of interest to local companies, thanks to the POD - Partnership Opportunity Database. This allows companies to search for partners on a European and international scale. Set up and updated daily by the European Commission's Enterprise Europe Network, this electronic platform can be consulted at: <https://een.ec.europa.eu/partners>

■ More information: [een-pod@cc.lu](mailto:een-pod@cc.lu)

*"The International Affairs team of the Chamber of Commerce has continued its digital transformation, that began before the start of the crisis, to fully exploit and adopt digital technology."*



### Lists of priority countries in areas of interest to Luxembourg

#### Europe

- Belgium
- Denmark
- France
- Hungary
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Sweden
- Ukraine
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Germany
- Italy
- Poland
- Russia
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

#### Middle East

- Israel
- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates

#### Asia

- China
- Indonesia
- Kazakhstan
- Singapore
- Taiwan
- Uzbekistan
- India
- Japan
- Malaysia
- South Korea
- Thailand
- Vietnam

#### Africa

- Algeria
- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- South Africa
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ghana
- Morocco
- Senegal
- Tunisia

#### Americas

- Argentina
- Canada
- Colombia
- Peru
- Uruguay
- Brazil
- Chile
- Mexico
- United States

#### Oceania

- Australia



### Free access to European and regional public procurement so as not to miss any business opportunity!

During a health crisis, public procurement can represent a real lever for the development of cross-border and international business. As such, the Chamber of Commerce's International Affairs EEN unit is making available its digital watch service for public contracts free of charge until the end of December 2020. This service provides regular access to calls for tenders from the European Union and the Greater Region by means of alerts concerning contract notices to which companies can respond. Thanks to personalised profile management, only submissions relevant to a business' activity are selected.

More information: [een-veille@cc.lu](mailto:een-veille@cc.lu)

### Expo 2020 Dubai: Stimulate post-crisis economic recovery

Due to the global health crisis, Expo 2020 Dubai has been postponed for a year to ensure the safety of the 40,000 workers on site and the expected 25 million

visitors, 70% of whom are projected to come from abroad. This also makes it possible to better prepare for this event, which could become a unique opportunity to revive the economy. The next World Expo will therefore take place in Dubai, from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, while retaining the name Expo 2020 Dubai. Luxembourg is participating in this 24th Expo with a pavilion designed by the architectural firm Metaform, and scenography is provided by The Space Factory from Lyon. Visitors will be able to follow a path over different floors discovering general information about the country, our different economic sectors, daily life and a space dedicated to new technologies where space mining will be in the spotlight. The path will end at a shop and the 'Schengen Lounge' restaurant.

The Chamber of Commerce will set up a large economic programme for Luxembourg companies wanting to participate in the Dubai World Expo. The various activities, organised during the six months of the exhibition, will aim to highlight the participating companies and the various sectors of the Luxembourg economy. This diversified

*"International Affairs offers free consultation of the cooperation profiles of foreign companies likely to be of interest to local companies, thanks to the POD - Partnership Opportunity Database. This allows companies to search for partners on a European and international scale".*



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and varied programme will cover future technologies, construction, the food sector, digitalisation, mobility and the circular economy.

More information: [www.cc2020.lu/](http://www.cc2020.lu/)  
[www.luxembourgexpo2020dubai.lu](http://www.luxembourgexpo2020dubai.lu)

### Practical advice for the continuity of international business

From January to April 2020, Luxembourg's total exports and imports of commercial goods fell by around a third, according to the Eurostat barometer published in June 2020. The effect of lockdown and border closures caused by the health crisis was a general downturn across the EU. According to the latest estimates released by Eurostat, total exports have fallen by a staggering 34% compared to the same period in 2019, the worst score among the 27 Member States of the European Union. At the same time, the Grand Duchy experienced a 29% drop in imports, the second largest decrease in the Union, behind Malta.

In the current phase of deconfinement and economic recovery, the International Affairs

15. Economic mission to the United Arab Emirates from 27 to 29 January 2020.

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16. Visit of the site of the Luxembourg pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai in the presence of the Minister of Finance, Pierre Gramegna, as part of the economic mission to the United Arab Emirates, chaired by HRH Prince Guillaume and headed by the former Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Economy, Étienne Schneider, in January 2020. Luxembourg's participation in this event in 2021-2022 will show the whole world how Luxembourg has managed to constantly reinvent itself, and how this transformation has benefited all its partners.

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**Grégoire Yakan**  
CEO, Koosmik

*'Very intensive, this economic mission allowed us to quickly meet partners and investors, while exploring potential new markets!'*

**Koosmik is a fintech that offers payment and mobile wallet solutions to populations still underbanked in West Africa. Why did you decide to take part in the economic mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana at the end of 2018?**

This economic mission organised by the Chamber of Commerce was a big first for us. We were very well supported by several official representatives (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs) as well as other entrepreneurs. It was an honour and a great chance for us to be able to present our company and to be part of this delegation. Very intensive, this economic mission allowed us to quickly meet partners and investors, while exploring potential new markets, as we were already established in Togo.

**What benefits did you get from your participation?**

Within the Luxembourg delegation, we were able to exchange views and forge strong links with other entrepreneurs, managers, advisers and investors. By the end of this trip, we had connected with a very large number of participants. Discussions during the economic mission materialised and ultimately resulted in contracts with our investors and members of our board of directors.

In the midst of a fundraising period, we have gained visibility and especially credibility in the eyes of our partners and future investors. It would have been more complicated to secure our fundraising without this economic mission.

**Koosmik has set up in Togo, the first pilot country for the development of your company. How did this choice come about?**

On the last day of the economic mission, when the delegation returned to Luxembourg, we continued to Lomé (Togo) by car. Moments as unpredictable as they are unforgettable, especially crossing the border at night.

Unlike other startups which often focus on Nigeria, Kenya or South Africa, we wanted to target West Africa, a less competitive market. Togo is a politically stable country within the West African Monetary Union (WAMU). It also has the critical mass, with its 8 million inhabitants, to experiment with a first version of the product. This is a humble and patient approach that aims to progress internally to improve the product, before considering a larger replication.



## Internationalisation in figures

2019 was characterised by the following activities:

**9** economic missions (including 2 official missions)

**19** foreign delegations hosted

**37** country seminars

**12** collective stands

**14** guided tours

**46** business opportunity days

**6** b2fair international contact exchanges, as well as a wide range of consulting and information services for companies and numerous seminars and conferences.

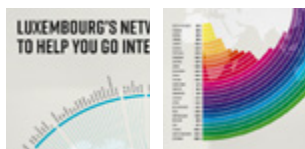
**107** companies took part in economic missions organised solely by the Chamber of Commerce

**85** companies took part in official missions organised in close cooperation with government authorities

**102** companies participated as exhibitors in the various collective stands organised by the Chamber of Commerce

**360** business representatives participated in the 14 accompanied visits to exhibitions organised by the Chamber of Commerce

**1.500** participants in conferences with a European connotation offered by the Enterprise Europe Network-Luxembourg.



## Luxembourg goes international

Find our detachable poster at the end of the magazine.



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team is available to companies to help them relaunch their business and adapt their strategy.

Here are some practical, simple and effective tips for this time of crisis:

- Make an appointment with an International Affairs market specialist to help rethink your internationalisation strategy;
- Reconsider cross-border markets and exploit the economic potential of the Greater Region online;
- Focus on local markets with the help of AECs in Germany, Belgium, and France, which can inform you about the measures taken in these neighbouring countries that could affect your company;
- Look for alternative partners (suppliers, transport, distributors, etc.) to reduce the risk of dependency, with the support of the Enterprise Europe Network and its online exchange platform for international business opportunities (POD);
- Become familiar with public procurement procedures and consult regional and European calls for tenders through the 'Digital watch service - Public procurement' offered by the Enterprise Europe

Network-Luxembourg which is free of charge until the end of 2020;

- Take advantage of this period to train yourself in digital marketing techniques by following the training offered online by the House of Training or by attending the free workshops offered by the Go Digital program of the House of Entrepreneurship.
- Consult the practical guide published by International Affairs and its partners in the Trade & Invest network on [www.digitalguide.tradeandinvest.lu](http://www.digitalguide.tradeandinvest.lu).

## Internationalisation and digitalisation: More than ever, two major challenges for economic recovery

Since the birth of the Internet in 1990, the volume of international trade has exploded, from USD 5,000 billion, equivalent to 24% of the GDP in 2014, to USD 30,000 billion, or 39% of the GDP, according to a study by McKinsey. In the midst of a global pandemic, preparing for recovery is essential and global markets are a strategic lever for recovery. While the costs linked to the



**17.** At the end of January 2020, in the immense Dubai World Trade Center, the Luxembourg pavilion of the Arab Health exhibition found an enviable place and the six companies present on the stand set up by the Ministry of the Economy and the Chamber of Commerce were not left indifferent. Arab Health is the gateway to the Middle Eastern and Eastern markets, with more than 4,250 exhibitors from 159 countries. Most of the companies present scheduled appointments six months in advance.

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traditional internationalisation strategies of large companies - with physical installation or acquisition in the target country - are simply prohibitive, and the current health crisis is forcing us to rethink mobility, the economy and work, digital technology makes it possible to capture new foreign markets at a lower cost. These accessible tools and technologies have broken down geographic barriers and make it possible to reach a catchment area without borders.

The pandemic does not spell the end of internationalisation, quite the contrary. The international market is more than ever a key factor in the health of our businesses and our economy in the context of obvious uncertainty and instability. This is an incredible opportunity for those who will be able to capture new markets, understand the new behaviours and needs of consumers and reinvent their strategy in a digital world. ■

## A checklist for economic missions

It is essential to prepare well for an international mission and to take the time to make sure that you have everything in hand to succeed. The International Affairs team offers a checklist, so that missions abroad are carried out in the best conditions for companies. This checklist is not exhaustive, but it does point out some important things to consider before, during and after an economic mission.

### Before

- Subscribe to the Chamber of Commerce's International Affairs mailing list and/or follow the Chamber of Commerce on social media to be informed of planned economic missions.
- Get in touch with the advisors in charge of the markets that concern you.
- Register on time for the economic missions that interest you.
- Book your flight and hotel on time, following our instructions and recommendations.
- If the destination of the mission requires a visa, check with the Chamber of Commerce on how to obtain one.
- Learn about the culture of the market in question. The advisor in charge is at your entire disposal on this matter.
- Attend the information seminar on the market concerned by the economic mission. This is usually organised in the weeks leading up to the trip.
- Express your wishes for B2B or B2G meetings as soon as possible so that we can organise your business meetings in the best possible way.
- Do not forget to bring business cards, presentations, brochures, samples, etc.
- Carefully analyse the programme of the economic mission and the information provided by the Chamber of Commerce (timetables, planned transport, dress code, etc.).
- Inform your clients or partners of your visit to the target country and invite them to the various events on offer (economic forum, official reception, etc.).
- Find out beforehand about the companies you are going to meet during the business meetings organised for you by the Chamber of Commerce.
- If possible, provide a video presentation of your business or a promotional pitch.
- Arrange an interpreter and/or translate your documentation into the language of the target country.

### During

- Actively participate in organised events: economic forum, receptions, visits to local businesses, workshops, trade fair visits, tailor-made business meetings, etc.
- Carefully adhere to the schedule of business meetings organised for your company.
- Consider the travel time between each appointment.
- In consultation with the advisor in charge of the mission, integrate your own business meetings into the meeting schedule that we have prepared for you.
- Take the opportunity to speak at an economic forum as part of the business testimonials sessions.
- Respect and adapt to the local business culture.
- Keep in touch with the staff of the Chamber of Commerce and keep them informed of your programme changes, your needs or any problems.

### After

- Share your impressions, positive or negative, and the outcome of business meetings.
- Take stock of your business meetings with the advisor in charge.
- Stay connected with targeted partners/customers and follow up on your exchanges.
- Stay connected with the other members of the delegation.
- Stay tuned to events related to the country concerned, including those organised in Luxembourg.
- If there is a positive outcome from your meetings, inform the Chamber of Commerce
- Ask the Chamber of Commerce to support you in monitoring the mission and continue to develop your activities in the target market.