includes a
POSTER

MUNICIPALITIES IN LUXEMBOURG

SYVICOL
Syndicat des Villes et
Communes Luxembourgeoises

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Made up in most cases of one or more towns or villages, a municipality runs local communities and represents the interests of its citizens.

Municipalities have the following tasks:
- **Mandatory tasks:** the administration of the municipality, spatial planning, housing, public order, waste collection, water and power supplies, traffic policy, environmental policy, primary schools, social assistance, ...
- **Optional tasks:** leisure offer, tourism, offer for youth and children as well as senior citizens, social housing, environmental campaigns, ...
- **Activities performed on behalf of the government:** citizen registration, registry office, ...

Many municipalities find it difficult to shoulder certain tasks alone. In such cases, municipalities often work together, thereby reducing the financial and administrative burden (e.g. waste disposal and recycling, water supplies, public transport, ...). The resulting associations are also known as *syndicats* (in French) or associations.

To stay informed about what is happening in a municipality, citizens can attend public municipal council meetings and information events or can read the information made available by the municipality in brochures *(Gemengebuet)*, on its website or possibly on a municipal app.

The citizens can also play an active role, contributing to the local community's public life and helping shape municipal policy, for example by:
- voting for their municipal council representatives or standing themselves as candidates in municipal elections,
- taking part in referenda, signing or submitting petitions (*pétitions*),
- contributing to advisory committees,
- speaking up for the interests of young citizens in children's and youth councils,
- actively participating in political parties,
- creating an interest group,
- playing an active role in local clubs,
- participating in surveys, workshops, discussions, ... in the context of new community development projects.

Municipal representatives in Luxembourg are for the most part not full-time politicians. However, they receive a certain financial compensation or attendance fees for their work. To reconcile their job with their municipal work, they can be released from their job for a certain number of hours. This can be considered as a form of political leave *(congé politique)*, whereby the employer receives compensation for the employee's absence.
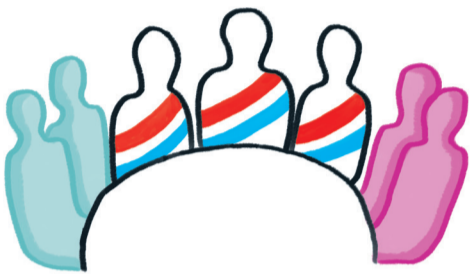
The poster shows the situation in simplified form. Nevertheless, the diagram does help readers better understand how they can participate and the relationships between a municipality's key players, possibly leading them to ask further questions or look for further information.

Ways to participate in the municipality: ▬ ▬ ▬ ▬

THE DIFFERENT PLAYERS

MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYORS

Following an election, the members of the municipal council elect the mayor and his/her deputies on the basis of political majorities and coalitions.

The mayor assumes the political leadership of the municipality: i.e., together with the deputy mayors, he/she works to achieve policy goals and realise certain projects during the term of office. He/She leads the municipal council and the board of mayor and deputy mayors.

The deputy mayors support the mayor in administering the municipality.

The board of mayor and deputy mayors is the executive and has the following tasks:
- managing the municipality's finances,
- implementing state legislation and municipal council resolutions,
- coordinating municipal activities and services,
- convening the municipal council.

CITIZENS

Citizens in Luxembourg live in a municipality. All citizens entitled to vote elect their representatives to the municipal council. These elections take place once every six years.

Voting: Luxembourgers aged 18 or older are automatically registered to vote in the municipality in which they reside. Non-Luxembourgers aged 18 or older can register to vote, if they have resided in Luxembourg for at least 5 years. Citizens registered to vote are obliged to vote in municipal elections.

Standing as a candidate: Citizens entitled to vote can stand as candidates in municipal elections, insofar as they have resided in the municipality for at least 6 months.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

The municipal council is made up of directly elected representatives of the municipality. Its size is dependent on the size of the municipality's population. Resolutions are passed by majority vote.

The municipal council
- issues regulations for the municipality,
- votes on financial matters,
- makes decisions regarding municipal taxes and municipal property,
- decides on questions related to human resources in the municipal administration.

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

The municipal administration is responsible for implementing municipal and national decisions and regulations. It is the point of contact for citizens for local offers (e.g. leisure offer, care services, …) and services (e.g. the issuing of ID cards, the maintenance of municipal streets, …). The administration is made up of a secretariat and various administrative and technical services (Biergerzenter, finance departments, forestry, waste disposal, water supplies, …).

CONSULTATIVE REFERENDUM

In matters of local interest, the municipal council can call for a referendum to consult the local population on a specific political issue and gain an insight into reigning opinion. The outcome of a referendum in Luxembourg is not binding, i.e. the municipal council can take a decision after a referendum which does not reflect the local population's opinion. The initiative for a referendum may also come from the citizens themselves if a minimum number of the eligible population make an application to the municipal council, with the questions to be voted on.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The committees provide the municipal council and board of mayors and deputy mayors with advice. Furthermore, they can organise their own events or start initiatives. Citizens can participate in their work. A distinction is made between mandatory committees (e.g. for integration and schools) and optional committees (e.g. for culture, building matters, the environment, equal opportunities, …).

INTEREST GROUPS

Citizens may create an interest group if they feel that a problem is not being solved in their favour and they want to draw public attention to it. These groups are usually limited in time and are used to exert pressure on the local council and influence a political decision.

SYVICOL

SYVICOL means *Syndicat des Villes et Communes luxembourgeoise*s, the national association of Luxembourg municipalities. It is made up of representatives from municipalities, an executive bureau, a committee and consultative commissions. Promoting cooperation between municipalities in Luxembourg and abroad, it also supports municipal council members in their work and represents municipalities vis-à-vis the state, in European and international organisations.
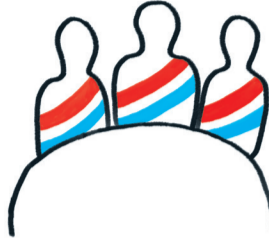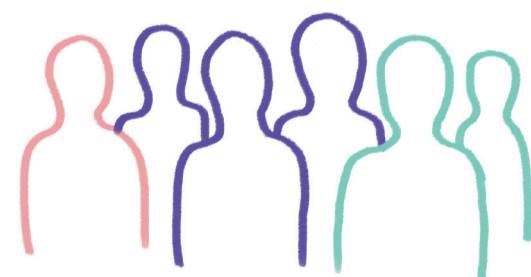

CHILDREN AND YOUTH COUNCIL

A children and youth council is made up of children and/or young people willing to speak up for the interests and needs of their peers in the municipality (e.g. playgrounds, sports facilities, environmental projects, events, …). They draw up recommendations which are then passed on to the municipal council. This work helps them better understand local politics. However, municipalities are not obliged to establish a children and youth council.

PARTIES

Parties are political groups made up of people with similar political ideas and goals. Parties contribute to forming a political opinion. In municipalities with more than 3,000 inhabitants, candidates are organised in lists for the respective parties (list-based voting with proportional representation). In municipalities with less than 3,000 candidates are not listed by party (majority system).

ASSOCIATIONS

Citizens can join a local association to pursue a specific goal: e.g. playing football, making music, helping people in need, promoting culture, … Members are volunteers and contribute to an active village, neighborhood or city life.