

National Day 2026

Speech by the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Claude Wiseler

Your Royal Highnesses, Prime Minister, dear guests of honour, dear fellow citizens,

For many years, I have been visiting schools and universities to talk with young people about their concerns, about democracy and politics. I really enjoy these encounters, as they help me to keep my feet firmly on the ground and understand what young people are concerned about.

I have noticed that the questions they have been asking me recently are very different to those of a few decades ago.

They are often about foreign policy, which was never the case before. They are about war and peace. They are about democracy and security. About truth and manipulation. About the future of the world of work and the role of young people in our society.

We no longer feel the unwavering optimism of youth. Young people are asking themselves questions about their future, to which they cannot find answers today.

I have several friends who were interested in politics throughout their lives, who were active in civil society and who tell me that they no longer want to watch the news or read a newspaper today because it would be too worrying, because it would make them too nervous.

This scares me, but I understand. And I am concerned to see these skills disappear, skills which I believe are very valuable for our society.

In order to move forward, we must not lie to ourselves nor tell ourselves fairy tales.

We must recognise our weaknesses. And above all, we must identify and build on our strengths – because we have many of them.

In recent years we have relied on others too often. It was easier and less expensive. But this is a weakness, because now we are realising that we are partly dependent on them and that we may need to cope on our own in an emergency. This is why we must position ourselves differently.

Are we capable of doing so?

I don't know for sure, but I believe that we can change our positioning, and I will do everything in my power to support this.

But this will only work if we concentrate on our strengths. What are – or let us say it this way – what have been our strengths?

We are a free country. “As children, we received from You the spirit of freedom,” according to our national anthem.

Yes, we have this spirit of freedom. We often forget how rare this is, and to what extent this is becoming increasingly rare. And yet this is precisely one of our strengths.

We are a country which, for over 100 years, has managed to remain open and welcome people, because we needed labour and talent. We were able to welcome them and integrate them into our society, making diversity a strength.

We are a society guided by values, founded on values. Values such as respect for human rights, democracy, equality between women and men, respect for the individual, the primacy of the common good, values such as tolerance, solidarity and justice, values such as freedom of expression, freedom of movement, freedom of religion, values which form the foundations of our identity.

Even though – or precisely because – our society is so diverse, this common ground of values is fundamental to the identity of our society and is undeniably part of what defines us.

We often disagree, but when we are attacked from outside, when we are challenged or someone criticizes our country, we stand together. Automatically, as a reflex. In politics as in society. It has always been this way, and I hope that it will remain so.

This cohesion has always been a strength. And it can still be one in the future, if we want it to be.

We are a country that relies on consensus.

We know that we need one another: employee, entrepreneur, freelancer, civil servant. One cannot do without the other. We even know – if we’re honest – that politicians have their uses too.

This way of working forged the social cohesion of our society. It is one of our country’s great strengths. A strength that we must preserve, even when it gets complicated.

We are a small country surrounded by big and powerful neighbours. We have been through a lot in our long history. And this is precisely why we are aware of the fragile nature of independence and democracy.

It is precisely for this reason that, thanks to our commitment and our willingness to take on responsibilities on the international stage, we have gradually established ourselves as a country that punches well above its weight. We are a founding member of the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN, NATO, the OSCE, the WHO, the WTO and many other international organisations. Our commitment to multilateralism lends us more credibility and influence than our demographic weight alone would allow.

Preceding generations showed us the way. We are capable of reinventing ourselves again and again, to mobilise, to reposition ourselves and innovate.

As we often say, this is the only way that we can remain what we are.

Many years ago, the steel industry was our strength. Then it was the finance sector. Then services. Then communications and media, then space and satellites.

Our country diversified because we made choices. Because we had the courage to make decisions. Because we were ready to take risks. Therein lay our strength.

Are we still ready to take such risks today? Are we still brave enough? Do we have the leadership needed to reinvent ourselves, to map out new paths?

Because this also implies changing our habits, sometimes giving up what we have, getting used to new things and persevering even in difficult times.

This is why I address these words to you here, and to those listening to us who want our country to move forward. Today, it is no longer enough to be mere spectators of our destiny.

Luxembourg, our country, needs everyone's contribution.

Today our country needs leadership, commitment and goodwill. And it needs confidence. And it needs a willingness to commit to what really matters. A willingness to leave our comfort zone, because our values are worth it.

Our democracy is not just a political system. It's much more than that. It's also an attitude, a state of mind, a way of acting.

It relies on mutual respect, a willingness to listen and a commitment to finding common solutions even when opinions differ, without affecting the dignity of others.

It is fostered by a society where everyone can excel themselves.

Not only is this our strength, but it is also our identity, and we must not let anyone or anything tear it away from us.

Throughout its history, Luxembourg has shown its ability to turn challenges into opportunities.

Today we write the history of tomorrow. It will not write itself. Let us make sure it is not written for us by others, but that we write it ourselves.

We can do it. But only if we really want to.

With a head of state who embodies the cohesion of our society so well.

Viv de Grand-Duc, viv d'Grande-Duchesse,

viv eis Demokratie, viv eist Land!

Vive notre pays! Long live our country! Es lebe unser Land! Viva il nostro paese! Viva o nosso país! ¡ Viva nuestro país !

...Long live Luxembourg and Europe, in all the languages spoken in this country.