



Seul le discours prononcé fait foi

**Visite d'État
S.A.R. le Grand-Duc au Japon**

du 27 au 29 novembre 2017

**Discours de S.A.R. le Grand-Duc à l'occasion
de l'ouverture de la Luxembourg-Japan Space Conference
le mercredi 29 novembre 2017**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Luxembourg-Japan Space Conference dedicated to the new opportunities and challenges in space.

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for the warm welcome we received here in Tokyo. It is a great honor for us, having being invited by their Majesties the Emperor and the Empress to a State visit to Japan. The Imperial Family and my Family have a very special and close relationship. We also have strong diplomatic and economic relations: indeed, the number of bilateral contacts in the past prove that the ties between Japan and Luxembourg are excellent. They rely on a long relationship built on mutual respect.

I am very pleased to see so many distinguished representatives of the business communities from both our countries participate in today's conference. Your presence confirms the huge mutual interest between us.

Ladies and Gentleman,

To understand Luxembourg of today, we have to understand its past. For the Grand Duchy, reinventing itself was always a key of its success. We have often been taking the world by surprise and have repeatedly demonstrated our strong ability to adapt and to be innovative.

Before the industrial revolution in the 1860's, Luxembourg was largely a poor agricultural country. Thanks to the discovery of iron ore, an important steel industry developed becoming even of one the leaders in the world.

In the end of the sixties, we further diversified our industrial activities by attracting foreign investors from all over the world. This marked a new beginning in the country's industrial history.

During the crisis of the 1970s, Luxembourg added a financial centre and a bit later satellite technologies. Both moves paid off! Luxembourg is now the leading private banking centre in the Eurozone, the largest investment fund centre in Europe and with SES home to the largest private satellite operator in the world.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have a very close personal link to the first steps of the space related activities in Luxembourg and to SES : the "Château de Betzdorf" which is today the headquarter of SES was my birthplace and where I spent the first years of my childhood together with my parents and siblings. Recently, the government launched SpaceResources.lu, an initiative dedicated to the peaceful exploration and use of space resources. This initiative is already is a great success.

We are and we always have been open to new ideas and new opportunities.

It is not by chance that so many global corporations chose Luxembourg as their investment hub for Europe. With a share of more than 46 % foreign residents, Luxembourg is very likely the most international-minded country in Europe.

In times of political and economic uncertainty, a stable home base becomes increasingly valuable. Doing business in Luxembourg is easy. Public authorities and administrations are accessible. The open-mindedness benefits innovative companies. And the multicultural and multilingual population permits companies to develop their activities all over the EU's single market of roughly 500 million consumers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am aware that it might not always be easy to find Luxembourg on the map. Though I am pleased to emphasize that in the space sector, Luxembourg has become a major global actor.

I will conclude by wishing all of you a very successful morning. I hope that new partnerships and friendships will come out of this conference and I invite you all to come visit us.

Thank you.