

## **Discours de Son Altesse Royale le Grand-Duc**

### **A l'occasion de la Fête nationale**

**Philharmonie, 23 juin 2026**

***\*English translation\****

Mr President of the Chamber,

Mr Prime Minister,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

And this morning, especially, dear young people,

National Day is a moment of celebration.

National Day is also a moment of transmission.

A nation lives through its institutions, its history, its symbols and traditions. But above all, a nation lives through its people and through what is passed on from generation to generation: its values, a sense of responsibility towards our country and our fellow citizens, and trust in a shared future.

This ensures continuity between those who came before us and those who will come after us.

The same is true for me.

Today, I stand before you for the first time at this National Day ceremony. Yet the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June has always been a day on which a Grand Duke or a Grand Duchess has addressed the nation and reached out to its people.

The faces have changed, but not what they stand for: the unity and independence of our country, the upholding of the values enshrined in our Constitution, especially on a day such as today.

Yet continuity does not sustain itself. It depends on what is passed on from one generation to the next. And it was precisely this continuity that we celebrated at the

accession ceremony on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October last year. A moment that highlighted the stability of our Monarchy and the continuity of our State.

On the day I took the oath of office as Head of State in the Chamber of Deputies before our national representatives, I spoke about several themes which I would like to highlight.

Today, I would like to return to one of them. For when we speak about the future of Luxembourg, when we speak of continuity, we usually think of our young people. They are an essential part of what is passed on from generation to generation and are, therefore, the future of our nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, I said that our world and our societies are undergoing profound and rapid change that affects us all, for better or worse.

Artificial intelligence, digital technologies and the ever-faster flow of information are changing not only the way we work, but also the way we think, communicate and participate in public life.

We live in a world where digital platforms influence friendships, opinions, identities and, increasingly, even democratic debate. This reality raises a fundamental question for us: how can we preserve our democratic principles and values at a time when everything moves ever faster, when emotions can spread rapidly through information whose origin is often unclear, and when truth can often seem uncertain?

The answer to that question is not an easy one. However, we do know that democracy thrives through its citizens.

Through people who listen before they judge.

Through people who think critically and who have the courage and determination to question what they see on their smartphone screens.

Through citizens who seek dialogue, even when they disagree and hold different views.

**Because democracy does not thrive through the individual, but through people coming together.**

And it will soon be your turn, the younger generation, to take on this responsibility. Young people are guided first and foremost by the example we set. But they must also use critical thinking to find their own path, one that is suited to the needs of their time.

In an increasingly digital world, there is a risk that we remain constantly connected without ever truly meeting one another.

I would therefore like to reflect on some of the symbols of our National Day. They carry meaning and tell us something about who we are as a nation. And I am convinced that they still have something important to say to us today. This morning, I would like to focus on three of these symbols in particular.

Last night, the traditional **torchlight procession** wound its way through the streets of our city. Different generations, different nationalities, different associations, all walking together along a shared path.

In every hand, a flame.

Each flame depends on the one beside it.

Alone, they are vulnerable; together, they illuminate an entire city.

The torchlight procession reminds us that democracy cannot be sustained by its institutions alone. It thrives through engagement, trust and solidarity. **It depends on citizens who feel connected to one another and who recognise that they share responsibility for a common future.**

And that is one of the finest examples we can set for our young people.

Democracy is the courage to reach out to others.

Democracy is listening, debating and finding common ground.

**Democracy is a shared journey.**

That is why I am also proud that, at the beginning of this month, the social partners came together to revive the Luxembourg model of dialogue and willingness to compromise.

Another important moment today is the **military parade**.

When our army, our police and our civil services march down the *Nei Avenue* – aptly named *Avenue de la Liberté* – they remind us that our freedom is not a foregone conclusion.

Our democracy and the freedom our society enjoys today do not appear out of nowhere. They exist because the generations before us took on the responsibility of defending and preserving them.

Yes, democracy gives us rights. But it also comes with responsibilities and obligations. That is also an important message I want to share with our young people today. Not because they would do a worse job, but because every generation should have the

opportunity to do better than the one before, without forgetting the foundations on which it builds.

Because democracy, our country, Europe, and our shared values are not defended by words alone. They are protected through political engagement, through volunteering, through a sense of responsibility in everyday life, and through solidarity with one another.

And unfortunately, they still need to be physically protected today. Without security, there can be no freedom, and without freedom, the rule of law cannot exist.

That is why I would like to thank the women and men who serve our country every day: our soldiers, police officers, emergency services, and all those who, despite the sweltering heat, are marching down the *Avenue de la Liberté* today or who are on duty in their daily work. They all contribute to protecting our democracy and our freedom.

At a time when war has once again returned to our continent, we can no longer take peace in our part of Europe for granted. Peace must be defended through solidarity and through tireless commitment to our democratic values.

**Our freedom today already begins in Ukraine!**

Ladies and gentlemen,

An important part of National Day is also this **ceremony**.

You represent our country's institutions; the embassies accredited to Luxembourg; and the media. You have chosen to be here this morning, or you are involved in the organisation or the music we are hearing, thereby contributing to the success of this ceremony.

And I would like to ask you a question.

Why are you here this morning? Why have you chosen to spend part of a public holiday listening to speeches and sharing this moment of celebration together?

Everyone will probably have their own answer to that question. And that is precisely what gives this ceremony its meaning.

Because this ceremony is more than just an annual part of the National Day programme. It is a symbol: a symbol of a country built on dialogue; a symbol of a society where different generations, professions, and cultures meet; where people of different beliefs and faith communities come together to celebrate not what distinguishes them, but what unites them.

**We are here today not in spite of our differences, but because of them.**

**And that is the essence of our democracy.**

For our young people in particular, this moment carries great symbolic significance, because it fosters a sense of belonging.

We must tell our children that, even amid the uncertainties of our time, they are not alone. That they are part of a society that believes in them, listens to them and entrusts them with responsibility for their future.

A nation must not be content merely to educate its young people.

It must involve them.

It must encourage them.

And above all, it must honour their trust.

For democracy is not sustained by one generation alone. It is passed on. It lives through older generations passing on their experience and values, and through younger generations embracing them, questioning them and adapting them to their own time.

**This is how continuity is created: not through stagnation, but through trust between the generations.**

This morning, the symbols of our National Day remind us of that responsibility:

The torches remind us that democracy is carried forward together.

The military and civilian parade reminds us that freedom requires the commitment of every one of us.

This ceremony reminds us that values are passed from one generation to the next when we are willing to take on our responsibilities.

That is the message I want to leave with you today, in that spirit of continuity, on my first National Day as Head of State.

Long live Luxembourg!

Long live Europe!