



FAQ

Free public transport from 1 March 2020: The social icing on the cake of the innovative multimodal transport strategy in Luxembourg

How did the measure come about?

Free public transport for everyone featured in the electoral programme of all three coalition parties that formed the new government in October 2018. So the measure was included in the government programme and was then implemented.

What were the motives behind the project?

The project is primarily a dual social measure, which on the one hand means more money in the wallets of low-income earners and on the other hand, the burden is shouldered by those who are wealthier because it is funded by taxpayers' money. Furthermore, it is an important lever to draw attention to our multimodal strategy [Modu 2.0](#).

What additional expenditure is there for the Government as a result of its loss of revenue?

The annual revenue from ticket sales in Luxembourg was 41 million euros. That was around 8 % of the annual costs, which were then over 500 million euros. This income stopped in March 2020. Considering the money that is being invested in other areas such as infrastructure, this amount is rather minimal and made it easier for Luxembourg to implement the measure than it might be for other countries. The loss of revenue has been taken into account in the national budget and, like all other services, is being financed by general taxes.

Does Luxembourg have the means to afford such a measure more than other countries because of its small size?

Luxembourg is certainly more like a large conurbation in terms of its geographical size. That makes the decision process in terms of distributing funds a bit easier.

Is this a permanent measure or will it be called into question?

It is a permanent measure. Of course, the operating expenses of public transport must be financed; general tax payments will cover them.

How is the measure affecting cross-border commuters?

With regard to the effects of this measure on cross-border transport, fares were reduced after discussions with the neighbouring transport networks SNCB, DB and SNCF. The same occurred to "RegioZone" on the RGTR bus network. Therefore, cross-border commuters also benefit from the new measure as well as tourists and residents.

How will a possible increase in passenger numbers be measured?

Passengers are already being counted electronically on a daily/monthly basis on the trams. At the moment, this is not the case nationwide on buses or trains, but new rolling stock and vehicles will be digitally equipped to make it possible to count passengers over the next few years. Snapshots (for instance 8 a.m. yesterday compared to 8 a.m. today)

are unreliable as a multitude of different factors plays a role: weather, traffic jams, cancelled trains coming in from abroad, etc.

What are the passenger figures regarding public transport since free mobility was introduced?

The first Covid-case was detected in Luxembourg the evening before the introduction of free mobility. Ever since, we live a very particular life not only in terms of mobility (alternating lock down, teleworking, light lock down, ...), that does not allow any reliable statements. Nevertheless, regarding motorized traffic in the capital, we are proud to announce that 1,900 busses traveling through the city centre before 1 March were now replaced by the next step of the tramline. The tram, one of the flagship projects of our mobility strategy, thus considerably contributes to decongestion of our capital and the well-being of its citizens. Since last summer, cycling is becoming more and more popular too. Annual global monitoring is planned (next scheduled for March 2022).

Once the Covid crisis is over, what will happen when more users come on board of public transport?

We anticipate that mobility needs will increase by 20 % by 2025. We should be able to cope with this increase by continuously expanding public transport. For example, since December 2020, the tram crosses the city centre and goes as far as the central train station; the regional bus network will be completely reformed by 2022 and will be the densest in Europe. Luxembourg's railway network is being extended and modernized. All of these improvements will eventually motivate people to switch to public transport.

Why weren't stops and stations in France, Germany and Belgium that are close to the border included in the national fare zone?

Since free travel applies to Luxembourg's public transport network, the RegioZone fare is payable from the border crossing point since 1 March 2020, even if the border point is only a very short distance away from Luxembourg. But this "extreme" would always exist regardless of where a (more or less arbitrary) artificial boundary might be drawn. An extension to stops in the border area was ruled out in principle.

Won't cross-border commuters fill border villages up with their parked cars in order to be able to continue their journeys from there for free?

We have been monitoring the situation closely and have not noticed any particular changes in users' behaviour. The local authorities also took dissuasive measures such as residents' parking spaces. Furthermore, fares in Luxembourg were already very low before the introduction of free mobility.

What duties are train staff performing since they no longer have to check tickets?

The duties of train attendants and conductors have been adjusted and extended with respect to order and safety on trains, trams and buses to guarantee better service and flow of information. This also applies to staff who were involved with sales. Tickets are still being sold at the CFL counters at the central station in Luxembourg City and Belval-Université. Eight smaller train ticket offices were closed. Thanks to the new organisation, staff will be able to provide better service and information to all passengers, be it on board the trains or at railway stations.

Why was first-class accommodation kept on the trains?

The different classes (first class and second class) on the trains were kept. The aim is to continue offering the majority of first-class passengers the level of service that they want. First-class travel will continue to be charged (the current annual fare is €660, or €75 a month) and the infrastructure, i.e. the different carriages, will be maintained. This also applies to cross-border season tickets.

What happened to the ticket machines?

The ticket machines/ticket stamping machines remain at the train stations and their offer is expanded. The machines installed on the tram route were dismantled after mid-March 2020.

What is mKaat being used for after 1 March 2020?

It is still possible to pay for first-class tickets and train and bus journeys in the border area using mKaat. There are also other transport services such as access to Belval-Université P+R and all of the other future P+R facilities, mBox (secure bicycle boxes) and Chargy/SuperChargy charging points for electric cars. Furthermore, mKaat is also used for the Flex car sharing service, and the Vël'OK bike hire scheme in the south of the country.

Were unused tickets refunded?

There were no plans to refund unused tickets.

How was respect for the rolling stock and vehicles (buses, trains and trams) ensured once transport was free of charge? Was any misbehaviour observed?

The Ministry of Mobility and Public Works has reviewed the legislation for the appropriate behaviour of users on public transport and adapted it (terms and conditions of public transport, penalties, etc.). The rules concerning order and safety on public transport serve, in particular, to ban unlawful users from accessing or using public transport in order to counteract abuse. Every passenger must be able to produce a valid personal ID card or passport and may be banned from public transport at any time. Furthermore, the number of train staff was not reduced, but increased; the absence of ticket control procedures allows better service and passenger information. Operators have not noticed any significant changes in behaviour towards rolling stock and vehicles.

Did any other cities or even countries show interest in the measure and perhaps feel inspired to do the same?

In fact, a number of mid- and large size cities from all over the world did show a huge interest in our measure.

There was a large interest from media worldwide along with numerous interview requests.

Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Mobility and Public Works, François Bausch, is receiving a large number of invitations to act as a keynote speaker or panelist at Mobility conferences and congresses. In his speeches, he always takes the opportunity to draw the attention to his mobility strategy, Modu 2.0. Since all the projects featured in Modu 2.0 will be in place by 2023, the minister intends to present his next "National Mobility Plan 2035" in 2022 in order to anticipate Luxembourg's needs in mobility for the generations.



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