

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Publication of the triennial report “Perinatal Health Surveillance in Luxembourg 2020-2022”

*The national Directorate of Health and the Luxembourg Institute of Health (LIH) have published the triennial report entitled “[Perinatal Health Surveillance in Luxembourg: 2020–2022](#)”. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the health of mothers and newborns in Luxembourg.*

The report was prepared thanks to the valuable collaboration with the country’s four maternity hospitals and independent midwives regarding the collection of high-quality data on births, as well as the active participation of the neonatal services in Luxembourg for data on newborn hospitalisations after birth.

#### A public health priority

The health of mothers and children during the perinatal period is a major issue. Quality care during this period can have a lasting impact on an individual’s health throughout their entire life. Regular surveillance of perinatal health encourages positive developments and helps detect problems that require informed decisions. To this end, this report is based on established indicators that are comparable at both national and international levels, as well as recommendations from the World Health Organisation and targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals initiative.

#### Trends in births

Between 2020 and 2022, the number of births continued to increase, although a slight decline was observed in 2022 (-0.9% compared to 2021). However, this trend does not reflect the country’s demographic growth: the birth rate fell from 11.6 ‰ in 2018 to 10.5 ‰ in 2021, a trend similar to that of neighbouring countries.

Two phenomena are specific to Luxembourg:

- The growing proportion of births among non-resident women. This figure rose from 14.7% in 2019 to 17.2% in 2022.
- The steadily increasing proportion of foreign-national women giving birth (65.3% over the 3 years studied), with a notable increase in women from non-EU countries (19.6% for the years 2020-2022 compared to 18.7% for 2017-2019).

#### Care and monitoring during pregnancy

99.5% of pregnant women receive follow-ups from a healthcare professional during their pregnancy, and 92.6% have their first consultation in the first trimester. This early monitoring plays a key role in screening for potential pathologies and identifying risk factors. Among these risk behaviours:

- 8.5% of women report smoking daily or occasionally during the first trimester of pregnancy,
- 15.9% are exposed to passive smoking, and
- 2.0% consume alcohol.

### **Caesarean sections and episiotomies**

For the first time since 2011, the overall caesarean section rate observed in Luxembourg over the 3 years studied fell below the 30% threshold. This development reflects long-standing efforts in the country to reduce unnecessary obstetric procedures. However, a slight increase above 30% was observed in 2022, and a potential influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on practices cannot be excluded.

The figures relating to the practice of episiotomy, meanwhile, continue their marked decline and fell below 10% in 2022, in line with international recommendations.

### **Recommendations for the future**

The report proposes several recommendations for healthcare professionals, institutions and families to strengthen the surveillance system and continue improving the quality of perinatal care.

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