

*Translated from the Luxembourgish speech*

## **Christmas speech 2023 of HRH the Grand Duke**

*Dear fellow citizens,*

*Faster, higher, stronger - together, that is the Olympic Committee's motto.*

*It is also the common thread that runs through these past 12 months, for better or for worse.*

*The war in the middle of Europe and in the Middle East, the worsening of climate change, the explosion in the number of migrants - all these upheavals have become worse and bigger.*

*Many of us feel bewildered by these developments. Prices are rising, penalising those who are already economically exposed, the economy is slowing down and weighing on our businesses and the labour market. Job insecurity is spreading. For all these reasons, we must show solidarity and do our best to ensure that no-one loses their place in our society. Added to this is the progress of artificial intelligence, which will make our lives easier, but will also present us with many challenges.*

*When things go wrong, we look for a scapegoat. This is nothing new. We've seen how, in the past, similar circumstances have been used to spread hatred and intolerance, and we've seen what that has led to.*

*The trend is there and it's on the rise. If we don't react, we run the risk of it gaining the upper hand and endangering our society, which is based on respect and tolerance.*

*Let's remain on the alert and show courage to prevent our values from being trampled.*

*Dear fellow citizens,*

*All these issues, and many more, were raised during this year's election campaigns. Everyone was able to form an opinion and vote.*

*Today more than ever, we must remain aware of the indescribable privilege we have of living in an open democracy that guarantees freedom of thought. Because our rule of law and our democratic and humanist values can never be taken for granted.*

*Dear fellow citizens,*

*Yes, the world in which we live is complex. There are many problems, most of which have no simple, quick solutions. We will only find these solutions if we manage to pool our efforts and work together, without selfishness or ulterior motives.*

*For my part, I'm happy to live in a country that welcomes people from 180 countries, from every corner of the globe. Of course, we have our own identity, marked by our history, and of course we are going to want to preserve it.*

*But isn't part of the heritage that has been passed on to us the openness we show towards what happens beyond our borders, our refusal to surround Luxembourg with walls? This has brought us a great deal to date and will remain relevant tomorrow. We need to strengthen our ability to live together while respecting our values.*

*So, allow me at this point to express my sincere gratitude for the contribution made by all those who cross the border every day to come and work in the Grand Duchy.*

*During the many visits I have been able to make across the country with the Grand Duchess over the past twelve months, we have noted that the vast majority of our fellow citizens share this desire to make our diversity a strength. The Grand Duchess has made a particular commitment to the most vulnerable among us, both here and abroad. They are part of us.*

*The realisation that our salvation lies in our ability to join forces was also apparent to me at the recent COP28 in Dubai, during the many discussions I had with other Heads of State and with the community of climate experts. That said, I do not underestimate the difficulty of bringing 180 countries together around a consensus.*

*Technological progress will undoubtedly help us, but it is also up to each and every one of us to make our contribution to a sustainable future that guarantees future generations a life of peace and dignity.*

*Dear fellow citizens,*

*2024 will be an Olympic year. I therefore hope that the Olympic truce will become a reality, and that dialogue, solidarity, mutual respect and tolerance will once again prevail.*

*Dear all,*

*Today we are celebrating Christmas, the festival of love and peace. This is what I would like to wish you from the bottom of my heart, together with the Grand Duchess, Prince Guillaume, Princess Stéphanie and all our children.*

*Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année !*

*Schéi Chrëschtdeeg an all Guddes fir d'neit Joer!*

*Schöne Weihnachten und ein frohes neues Jahr!*

*Bom natal e feliz anno nuovo!*

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*