

**AMCHAM NEWSLETTER 15TH OCTOBER 2020**

Dear Amcham Members & Friends,

Welcome to the October issue of the AMCHAM Newsletter! The AMCHAM teams sends all of our respect to you, your family and friends with all our best wishes for your success, good health and continued happiness. While we continue to face challenges, there are slow and steady signs of renewal and rebirth... for both people and for the economy. We are confident we all will continue to make positive progress and we, in the AMCHAM team, commit to staying diligent and dedicated to doing all we can to help.

Next Month, on 12 November, we will have our AGM via ZOOM conference. Please mark the date and join us so we can share our summary of what we have been doing to serve and promote your interests...and our plans for the year ahead. Open to members only.

Our special focus for the moment is the relaunching of the economy to ensure a smart, orderly return to prosperity. We consider the health phase of the crisis is waning, credit the aggressive free public testing strategy of the government for successfully identifying the risk hotspot and are particularly complimentary of the Luxembourg medical system that has ensured such a very low rate of mortality.

We acknowledge the significant amount of money which has been spent ensuring the safety and economic support of residents and economic enterprises and firmly believe that our future prosperity can best be achieved by staying the course and avoiding new taxes which will impede our recovery, stall external and local investment or discourage a return to business and consumer spending. Be assured we are proactively working with government authorities to develop smart solutions to ensure the much-needed return to economic prosperity.

This issue of our Newsletter highlights the very beneficial activities of the US Embassy and our very dedicated American Ambassador, J Randolph Evans. We

are lucky to have Ambassador and his team working so hard to serve the interests of Luxembourg in Space and via bilateral economic relations.

We hope you enjoy this Newsletter and encourage you to forward it to your colleagues and friends. If you like what we are doing, please encourage those you know to join the AMCHAM family so we can build an even stronger organization fighting for our common best interests.

As ways, we encourage you to send your comments, ideas, criticisms (and of course any compliments!) to [jane@amcham.lu](mailto:jane@amcham.lu) Be assured we fight for you and your interests with all of our strength every day.

My best regards,  
Paul

Paul Michael Schonenberg  
Chairman and CEO

1. **U.S. Ambassadors to Europe  
Chiefs of Missions September Summit 2020**



It was a great honor for me to host U.S. Ambassadors from across Europe for a Chiefs of Missions September Summit here in the Grand Duchy from September 22-24, 2020.

It was a momentous week to have so many American leaders from across Europe gathered together in Luxembourg to participate in strategic discussions on topics ranging from U.S.-European relations and COVID-19 economic recovery to space cooperation. Along with the Ambassadors, we hosted high-level officials from the Department of State and the Export Import Bank. We also had the great fortune to host a Space Delegation comprised of former Speaker Newt Gingrich and senior officials at NASA and the U.S. Department of Commerce.

These leaders in business and policy have made great advances in U.S.-European relations and bringing them together in Luxembourg is just the latest among many events the Embassy has held signaling the importance of this country in the U.S. and Europe, and our strong and continuing bond.

The lineup of meetings set up for the Summit by the Luxembourg Government and U.S. Embassy was extensive and the packed agenda covered a wide range of topics and Luxembourg officials.

On Tuesday, attendees had a lunch meeting with Minister Bausch, Luxembourg Ambassador to the U.S. Gaston Stronck, and AMCHAM President Paul Schonenberg to hear about the business climate in the country.

Prime Minister Xavier Bettel met with the Ambassadors Wednesday morning to discuss current Luxembourg political priorities and investment and job creation on both sides of the Atlantic.

The group then visited the American Battle Monuments Commission Luxembourg American Cemetery in Hamm for a ceremony to pay their respects to the over 5,000 soldiers who rest there.

From there, the Ambassadors moved to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), for a dialogue with President Koen Lenaerts on a host of U.S.-EU bilateral and judicial issues.

Luxembourg Deputy Prime Minister François Bausch, Minister of Finance Pierre Gramegna, and Minister of the Economy Franz Fayot hosted a discussion for the Ambassadors at Bourglinster, highlighting the strong bonds between the United States and Luxembourg as leaders in finance, space, and trade.

In addition, Luxembourg's President of the Chamber of Deputies (the Luxembourg Parliament), Fernand Etgen, hosted Speaker Gingrich, Ambassador Callista Gingrich, Chairman Reed and myself at the Luxembourg Parliament.

The Space Delegation met with representatives from government, including Minister Fayot and LSA CEO Marc Serres, and a host of U.S. and international space companies with operations in Luxembourg. The delegation discussed specific opportunities for Luxembourg space companies to participate in NASA's Artemis Program and affirmed the leading role both our nations will play in the return of man and first woman to the moon.

The Government of Luxembourg and ECJ were gracious hosts of the Summit, and were impressed and pleased by the number of high profile visitors in attendance -the largest such gathering in the history of the country. Ambassadors and U.S. officials likewise left with a much stronger appreciation of the Grand Duchy and the pivotal role it, and the many companies based here, plays in global business, the EU, and the region.

-Ambassador Randy Evans

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The Chiefs of Mission who attended the September Summit were:

- Ambassador J. Randolph Evans, U.S. Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
- Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchinson, U.S. Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the United States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- Ambassador George E. Glass, U.S. Ambassador to Portugal
- Ambassador Stephen B. King, U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic
- Ambassador Carla Sands, U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark
- Ambassador Jamie D. McCourt, U.S. Ambassador to the French Republic and Principality of Monaco
- Ambassador Callista Gingrich, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See
- Ambassador W. Robert Kohorst, U.S. Ambassador to Croatia
- Ambassador Peter Hoekstra, U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands
- Ambassador Duke Buchan, III, U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra
- Ambassador Ronald Gidwitz, U.S. Ambassador to Belgium, Acting Representative of the United States to the European Union
- Ambassador Georgette Mosbacher, U.S. Ambassador to Poland
- Ambassador Jeffrey Ross Gunter, U.S. Ambassador to Iceland
- Ambassador Lynda C. Blanchard, U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia
- Ambassador Kenneth A. Howery, U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden
- Ambassador Adrian Zuckerman, U.S. Ambassador to Romania

Other U.S. officials in attendance were:

- Department of State Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Keith J. Krach
- Counselor of the United States Department of State, Ulrich Brechbuhl
- President and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, Kimberly Reed
- Acting Associate Administrator for International and Interagency Relations at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Mike Gold
- Director of the Office of Space Commerce at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Kevin O'Connell

For a compilation of photos from the week's events, please see the U.S. Embassy Luxembourg [Flickr page](#).

## 2. Stimulus Cheques – update 2.0



As a result of the recent receipt of United States Treasury stimulus checks by Americans living in Luxembourg, AMCHAM has become aware that it has become very difficult for Americans to cash US origin US currency checks at local Luxembourg banks. Our investigation has confirmed that, for the moment, ING is the only bank we are aware of which will accept US dollar checks for deposit into US dollar accounts and they do this by transferring the check for processing to their counterparty ING bank in Brussels.

The other banks we have contacted have indicated that they do not permit the cashing of US dollar checks because United States government reporting requirements related to FATCA and other compliance reporting issues cause complicated and expensive reporting requirements with imposed costs and risks which make the granting of this service unprofitable and unacceptable for the banks to bare.

We are advised that the Luxembourg banks are sympathetic to the circumstances and needs of American clients have researched to finds a solution resulting in the discovery that there is a US remedy which can be used to convert these United States government checks into bank to bank transfers which the local Luxembourg banks are fully willing to accept as deposits into US dollar bank accounts. Clients of BCEE Spuerkeess are encouraged to go to directly to the website indicated below and ask to receive a bank transfer instead of cashing the check. This will be less time consuming and additionally less costly:

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payment-information-center-topic-d-receiving-my-payment>

If the client beneficiary account held at the bene bank is a USD account, the IRS can do a direct deposit into the account instead of a hard check. When the taxpayer files their taxes and is getting a refund, the IRS prompts the filer to specify how they would like to receive the funds. At that point the filer would select check or direct deposit; and if direct deposit then enter their banking

details.

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/helpful-tips-for-effectively-receiving-a-tax-refund-for-taxpayers-living-abroad>

AMCHAM appreciates the very kind assistance of BCEE Spuerkees to find a solution to this US check cashing problem. Thank you BCEE Spuerkees!

AMCHAM encourages US citizens who do business with other local banks to bring this solution to those organizations for their kind consideration. AMCHAM would very much appreciate any and all feedback related to this matter.

3. **US Elections** – not sure how they work? Below is an excellent article written by the BBC to help understand the procedure.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2020-53785985>

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4. **Cycling** – Worried about road safety for children? The Sécurité Routière asbl, a non-profit organization that works for the prevention of road accidents has published a very good brochure for parents. They organize events for younger children like a puppet theatre or the « coupe scolaire » in schools, they realize prevention campaigns and we have published a lot of brochures. One of these brochures, which aims to help parents prepare their children for the road to school [www.securite-routiere.lu](http://www.securite-routiere.lu) (<https://www.securite-routiere.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Learning-road-traffic-Klunge-guide-version-GB.pdf>) our thanks to Dina Freitas for this excellent initiative!!

5. **Virtual learning and the increase in the near-sightedness**

New school year is starting soon, and in the actual situation of Covid19 pandemic, students' distance learning and parents' working from home are

some of the challenging options. School closing in the spring and the confinement, already sent many people in a virtual setting in front of their computer screens for remote work.

Ever since, most of the ophthalmologists are facing a marked increase of consultations due to the eye strain and vision problems because of the increase screen time. Children and adults equally, are developing tired, dry eyes from concentrating in looking into laptops and tablets for extended periods of time.

Good news is that most of these symptoms can be alleviated by taking only a few simple steps. We talked about those measures in the previous article, published in the AmCham newsletter before holidays, so you can check it out if you haven't got the chance of reading it yet.

But there are also other more profound implications, the near intensive work and especially the screens, can increase the near-sightedness in children, driving the world into a myopia epidemic.

The younger a child becomes myopic, the more likely it is to advance and can lead to more visual problems, such as early cataract development, glaucoma, myopic maculopathy and retinal detachments. Literally a *growing* problem, myopia involves abnormal elongation of the eyeball or curvature of the cornea such that light no longer focuses directly on the retina.

The causes of paediatric myopia are still a mystery, its prevalence has jumped from 25% to 42% over the past 30 years in the USA, and in Asia the rates are much higher (it doubled in the last 20 years) and it will involve half of the worlds' population by 2050. While genetic factors likely play a role, the transition from outdoor activity with visual focus at ever-changing distances to close vision activities such as reading, and screen use seems to be an important contributor.

In the search for solutions of slowing the near-sightedness progression, some trials are on-going regarding outdoor time and sun exposure, atropine drops and contact lenses.

Evidence-based trials show that two hours spent outdoors, can play an important role in preventing the progression of the myopia, and schools in Asia are starting to implement it in their daily routine.

Low dose atropine drops administered daily can slow up to 70 % the progression of the myopia in children, but not without some adverse reactions like pupil dilation and glare.

Contact lenses could be a better solution. New models of soft lenses (MiSight 1 day) are available for myopic children between 8 and 12 years old, but in order to have a slowing effect on the progression, they must be worn all day every day, not only occasionally.

Orthokeratology is another option. This involves the overnight wear of a specially designed flat fitting rigid contact lenses, that besides slowing the progression of myopia, allows the person to see during the day without any glasses or lenses by flattening the cornea. Although it's the most effective method of slowing the myopia progression, it is suitable for most of the visual problems in all ages.

There is no perfect solution for controlling the myopia, and each one of these options presented here must be well explained and tailored from one case to another. Contact your ophthalmologist if you want to know which treatment is better for your children. It will help with slowing the myopia into becoming another pandemic.

**Dr Christine Hubert** is a respected eye surgeon with offices in Belgium who will be opening a Luxembourg practice in Bertrange in the coming months. Many thanks for this article!

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7. It is with great pride that Ginkgo Solutions opens the doors of its brand new centre "The City by Ginkgo" in the very lively Avenue Pasteur in Limpertsberg: generous glass roofs, bright and comfortable work and meeting



spaces, stylish and elegant decoration ... everything is thought out with care, anticipation and creativity.

No less than 50 offices from 10 to 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> are now ready to accommodate any type of company, whatever its size is, 7 meeting rooms for 4 to 30 people, a huge open space of Coworking and "Fixed desk" a conference area (auditorium), a fitness and yoga room and a private lounge with espresso bar complete this outstanding space ideally located in the heart of the city.

This new "jewel" completes the already extensive collection of Ginkgo Solutions Facilities business centres, which, it should be remembered, is a "Made in Luxembourg" company, created in 2013. This event gave rise to an in-depth reflection at entity level. Although Ginkgo's loyal customers easily recognize the Ginkgo touch when they navigate from one centre to another during a meeting or appointment, a unifying image had to be found. Barbara Brecko mobilized her teams and partner resources to find it, in order to make the centres identifiable and recognizable.

The adventure continues and the "little Ginkgo houses" have not finished opening their doors...

For a visit to the new centre in Limpertsberg or any other locations, please contact Orsolya Kamaras on 28 488 857 or by email [Orsolya.Kamaras@ginkgo-solutions.lu](mailto:Orsolya.Kamaras@ginkgo-solutions.lu) .

For any request for a HD photo, logo, please send your request to [karine@kosmo.lu](mailto:karine@kosmo.lu).

8. A very interesting article found in the Economist: The future of the office- Covid 19 has forced a radical shift in working habits read here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy65oykn>

9. Amcham upcoming events

<https://www.amcham.lu/events/finance-xplained/>

Finance Xplained 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 at 10:30 am

<https://www.amcham.lu/events/brexit-as-an-opportunity-for-business/>

Brexit as an Opportunity 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020 at 12:00

Schrems II

27<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 at 18:30

<https://www.amcham.lu/events/after-schrems-ii-can-i-still-transfer-personal-data-outside-of-the-european-economic-area/>



#### 10. Halloween Pumpkin Soup

Leaves are falling down, Halloween is around the corner -- it's terrifyingly terrific pumpkin time! This soup is great for kids, satisfying, nutritious and very delicious.

Ingredients:

Pumpkin - medium size, peeled and diced

Carrot - 1 large, peeled and roughly chopped

Potato - 1 large, peeled and roughly chopped

Vegetable Stock - 2L / 8 cups

White Onion - 1 large, peeled and finely chopped

Garlic Cloves - 3, peeled and finely chopped

Star Anise - 1

Ground Cumin - 1 teaspoon

Ground Nutmeg - 1/4 teaspoon

Ground Allspice - 1/4 teaspoon

Ground Ginger - 1/4 teaspoon

Salt - 2 teaspoons

Black pepper - 1/4 teaspoon

Olive Oil - to drizzle

Creame Fraiche (half fat) -

Crusty Farm Bread –

Preheat the oven to 400°F/ 200°C. Place the pumpkin chunks in to a baking tray and drizzle with olive oil. Roast for approx. 30 minutes, turning as needed.

In the meantime finely chop the onion, mince the garlic, dice the carrot and potato, and get the vegetable stock ready.

Heat the butter in your stockpot over medium heat, sauté the onion and when they are about done, add the garlic. Once translucent, add the diced carrot and potato. Sprinkle the cumin, nutmeg, allspice, ginger, salt and pepper on top and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the pumpkin chunks, vegetable stock, star anise and cover. Simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat and let the soup cool down for a few minutes. Take out the star anise. Purée the ingredients with a hand blender in the stockpot or puree in batches in your blender.

Return the soup to a clean pan and season to taste.

When ready to serve, bring back to a simmer. Fill your piping bag with creame fraiche to garnish the soup with a fun image or elegant swirl. Ladle the soup in to bowls, garnish and serve with a piece of crusty farm bread.

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AMCHAM offers to each of you and your families our best wishes for your health and happiness. Be strong. Stay connected with your families and friends by phone and email. Use this time wisely and productively so you come out of this crisis stronger than when you started. For all those who don't know AMCHAM yet, please find our website here: <https://www.amcham.lu> and particularly our mission statement here: <https://www.amcham.lu/about-us/mission-statement/> and how you can join AMCHAM here:

<https://www.amcham.lu/membership/> If you need us, we are here and will do all we can do to help. Feel free to pass on our newsletter to your colleagues