



General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 February 2023

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Forty-third session
1–12 May 2023

National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21*

Liechtenstein

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



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I. Introduction

1. The promotion and protection of human rights are priorities of Liechtenstein's national and foreign policy and Liechtenstein attaches greatest importance to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism for the improvement of human rights worldwide.
2. Liechtenstein's third assessment as part of the UPR took place in January 2018. A total of 126 recommendations were addressed to Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein has accepted 84 of these. This report focuses on the measures taken since 2018 to implement the recommendations, and it shows that significant progress has been made in many areas.
3. In March 2021, the Liechtenstein Government was sworn in and consists of a coalition of the Patriotic Union (VU) and the Progressive Citizens' Party (FBP). In its 2021-2025 Government Programme, the Government has committed itself to a high level of social cohesion and solidarity. The Government Programme also reaffirms Liechtenstein's engagement within international organisations, in particular its advocacy for the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law, and the application of international law.
4. One of the main themes set out in the 2021-2025 Government Programme is sustainable development. In this context, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals are not only an international commitment, but also a national necessity. For the purpose of improving the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Liechtenstein's ministries have been instructed to include the impact on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in all Government proposals to Parliament starting from March 2022.

II. Methodology

5. This report was prepared by the Office for Foreign Affairs with the involvement of all relevant administrative offices.
6. As part of an NGO dialogue in November 2022, interested civil society stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on the recommendations from the third UPR cycle in 2018. A summary of the feedback received can be found in the Annex.
7. Since 2010, the Government has published annually reports on the situation of human rights in Liechtenstein. This report contains data on about 90 topics relevant to human rights. It is an important tool in Liechtenstein's reporting within the framework of the UPR and international human rights treaties, for domestic policymaking, as well as for NGOs and the general public.
8. The data used in the report includes surveys conducted by the Office of Statistics, including indicators for sustainable development and indicators for gender equality.

III. Implementation of recommendations and developments

9. The fundamental statements on the protection of human rights at home and abroad contained in the first, second, and third national UPR reports of Liechtenstein continue to apply

A. Protection and promotion of human rights at the international level

1. International commitments, signatures and ratifications

10. Liechtenstein is a State party to various international and European treaties on the protection of human rights. Since the third UPR in 2018, Liechtenstein has signed or ratified additional international and regional treaties.
11. In September 2018, the first national conference on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) took place. At the second national conference in February 2020, the national legislative amendments necessary for the ratification were discussed. Liechtenstein signed the convention in September 2020.¹

12. In June 2021, Liechtenstein ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).² By ratifying the convention, Liechtenstein is not only sending an important foreign policy signal, but also improving the situation of victims and witnesses at home.

13. In 2021, Liechtenstein ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

14. In January 2022, Liechtenstein ratified amendments to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Specifically, the amendments on the inclusion of biological weapons and the use of "starvation" as a method of warfare in Article 8 of the Rome Statute. This ratification is a logical continuation of Liechtenstein's commitment to international law and the promotion of the rule of law at the international level.

15. To implement the Rome Statute and the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, new offences in the Criminal Code entered into force in October 2019: crimes against humanity (§ 321a), war crimes against persons (§ 321b), war crimes against property and other rights (§ 321c), war crimes against international missions and improper use of distinctive and national emblems (§ 321d), war crime of the use of prohibited methods of warfare (§ 321e), war crime of the use of prohibited means of warfare (§ 321f), and the crime of aggression (§ 321i).³ This revision also provides for no period of limitation for these offences.

16. Liechtenstein signed and ratified the following other treaties relevant to human rights: Second Additional Protocol of 8 November 2001 to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (signature and ratification 2020), Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (signature 2020), Amendment of 15 October 2016 to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (ratification 2020), Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (signature 2022).

2. Cooperation with international mechanisms and institutions

17. In 2003, Liechtenstein issued a standing invitation – which is still in effect – to the mechanisms⁴ of the UN Human Rights Council, and Liechtenstein supports visits by international human rights bodies to Liechtenstein. Accordingly, Liechtenstein has responded positively to the request of the UN Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and human rights. The UN Independent Expert is expected to visit Liechtenstein in June 2023.

18. Liechtenstein received the following representatives and bodies of international and regional institutions: visit and on-site assessment by the Committee of Experts of the Council of Europe on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) (2021), President of the UN Human Rights Council (2020), experts from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2020), monitoring visit by the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) (2019), evaluation visit by the Group of States against Corruption of the Council of Europe (GRECO) (2019), President of the UN General Assembly (2018), Secretary General of the Council of Europe (2018).

19. Until the end of 2023, Liechtenstein will be a member of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). From March 2023 to 2027, Liechtenstein will also be a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). From 2015 to 2019, Liechtenstein was a member of the CSW. In 2018, Liechtenstein expressed interest in a seat on the UN Human Rights Council, published voluntary pledges and commitments for this purpose based on UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, but ultimately refrained from seeking a seat in favour of Iceland.

20. During the reporting period, Liechtenstein organised several international conferences in Liechtenstein with high-level participation: The Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) Review Conference (2021), an event on 30 years of Liechtenstein's UN membership (2020), the second meeting of the FAST Financial Sector Commission (2019), a seminar on

the European Convention on Human Rights and Liechtenstein (2018) and an Accountability Retreat (2018).

21. In cooperation with its partners, Liechtenstein launched and financed several high-profile foreign policy initiatives and publications to promote international law and human rights: Handbook on the Prevention and Resolution of Self-Determination Conflicts (2021), Report of the Council of Advisors on the Application of the Rome Statute to Cyberwarfare (2021), Commentary on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (2020), Commentary on the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2020), the FAST Blueprint (2019).

22. With the "veto initiative" – which was adopted by consensus as by the UN General Assembly on 26 April 2022 – Liechtenstein made a significant contribution to strengthening international law and the role of the UN General Assembly. Based on this resolution, an automatic referral to the UN General Assembly must now take place whenever a decision in the UN Security Council fails due to a veto by a permanent member.

3. International humanitarian cooperation and development

23. To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Liechtenstein spends approximately CHF 9 million each year as part of its International Humanitarian Cooperation and Development (IHCD) on projects to promote human rights and the rule of law and to improve working conditions, including a wide range of international, regional, and civil society projects. Liechtenstein has for many years been one of the leading per capita donors to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, while advocating for comprehensive funding of the OHCHR through the regular UN budget.

24. Liechtenstein's total expenditure on official development assistance (ODA) rose by 13% from CHF 23.3 million in 2015 to CHF 26.2 million in 2020. This reflects significant efforts to further strengthen Liechtenstein's international solidarity. Liechtenstein's ODA share⁵ in 2020 amounted to 0.41, unchanged from the previous year. The Government aims to further increase the ODA share in the medium term.

25. With its IHCD engagement, Liechtenstein contributes to the strengthening of global sustainable development and specifically the reduction of global poverty (SDG 1). Thematically, the IHCD pursues the following priorities: Rural Development and Food Security through Sustainable Agriculture (SDG 2), Health (SDG 3), Primary Education and Vocational Training (SDG 4); Combating Irregular Migration (SDG 10); Climate and Environment (SDG 13 and 15); and Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law (SDG 16). At the 2019 UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York, Liechtenstein's broad-based delegation presented the country's first report on its implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

B. Protection and promotion of human rights at the national level

1. Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

26. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Liechtenstein took temporary domestic measures to ensure public health and safety. The principles of legality and proportionality of these measures were respected at all times. In its judgment of 10 May 2022, the Constitutional Court held that the "2G rule" introduced by ordinance, requiring vaccination or recovery for certain activities, lacked a sufficient legal basis and was therefore unconstitutional and unlawful. At the time of the judgment, the ordinance had already expired. The 2G legislation was subsequently adopted by Parliament, but this law was rejected in a popular referendum. Accordingly, the introduction of a "2G rule" in the event of a pandemic is currently not permissible in Liechtenstein.

27. A key element of Liechtenstein's measures was to cushion the severe economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures included granting short-time work at Liechtenstein companies combined with compensation payments. This prevented a significant increase in unemployment and resulting inequalities.

28. In summer 2021, the Government commissioned the Liechtenstein Institute to prepare a report appraising the COVID-19 pandemic response in Liechtenstein. The final report is scheduled to be presented to Parliament in March 2023.

29. In September 2020, Parliament approved a supplementary budget of CHF 1 million in light of the massive increase in global demand for humanitarian assistance and development cooperation. These additional funds focussed on combating the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries. In the context of the global pandemic response, Liechtenstein provided cumulative funding of CHF 600,000 (in 2021 and 2022) to the worldwide initiative aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines (COVAX). In this way, Liechtenstein made an active contribution to the global pandemic response, showing solidarity with less developed countries. The contribution covered 120,000 vaccine doses, corresponding to three times as many doses as the number of inhabitants of Liechtenstein.

2. Institutional framework

30. So far, Liechtenstein has not presented any national candidacies to UN human rights treaty bodies. If a candidacy were to be presented, the track record of the person serving as candidate would be the most important selection criterion.⁶

31. In 2017, the Law on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (VMR) entered into force. The VMR is Liechtenstein's National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and it is set up according to the Paris Principles for National Human Rights Institutions. The annual contribution by the Government to the VMR amounts to CHF 350,000, which means that the VMR has sufficient human and financial resources at its disposal, and it also has the possibility to generate additional funds itself.⁷ In 2019, the VMR joined the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions and it is currently considering accreditation with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI)⁸.

32. Liechtenstein established a Human Rights Working Group internal to the National Administration in 2019.⁹ The aim of this working group is to improve the follow-up of recommendations made by international and regional human rights bodies and to coordinate data collection and reporting to these bodies. The working group meets two to three times a year and is also able to involve non-State actors in its work.

33. In 2019, a Threat Management Services unit was created within the National Police. The aim of this specialist unit is to identify and interrupt acts of violence as early as possible and to relieve and protect affected persons. The specialist unit also connects with other such units in Switzerland and abroad and coordinates with the Security Unit in relevant cases. Following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in May 2021, the Government has also appointed a coordination group to implement the convention. The National Police is represented by the Threat Management Services unit in its role as the Domestic Violence Coordination unit.

34. The 2021-2025 Government Programme commits to rigorous implementation of the principles of tax compliance as well as anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). The Government Programme also reaffirms the implementation of international standards and their consistent enforcement in Liechtenstein.¹⁰ Liechtenstein transposed the preventive measures set out in the Fifth EU Anti-Money Laundering Directive into Liechtenstein law in 2021 and established a register of beneficial owners. In 2019, the Law on the Payment of Contributions to Political Parties was revised in the interest of further preventing corruption. The amended law establishes the legal framework for the uniform treatment of political parties and increases the transparency of party financing.¹¹

C. Non-discrimination and equality

35. As already stated in the previous UPR reports, Liechtenstein law guarantees the principle of equality and non-discrimination at the level of the Constitution and legislation in order to avoid disadvantages, inequalities, and discrimination.¹²

36. The Violence Protection Commission raises public awareness. It encourages and provides training for lawyers, public prosecutors, judges, and media professionals with

regard to the social and legal implications of the prohibition of discrimination in the Liechtenstein Criminal Code.¹³ Of particular relevance in this regard is the prohibition of discrimination in § 283 of the Criminal Code, which criminalises hate speech and discrimination based on race, language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation. The Liechtenstein Violence Protection Commission organised a training event for police and judicial personnel on the prohibition of discrimination (§ 283 of the Criminal Code) in August 2021.¹⁴ The event focused on informing employees of the National Police, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the Court of Justice as well as members of the Chamber of Lawyers about the 2016 revision of the comprehensive prohibition of discrimination and on discussing related current issues of case law in Liechtenstein and in neighbouring Switzerland. The Gender Equality Act and the Law on Equality for Persons with Disabilities are also important with respect to equality.

1. Civil and political rights

(a) *Execution of sentences and prevention of torture*

37. In 2019, the offence of torture was set out in § 312a of the Criminal Code.¹⁵ This aligned domestic legislation with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As part of the revision of the Criminal Code in 2019, the offence of enforced disappearance was also introduced in § 312b of the Criminal Code.

38. Pursuant to its mandate, which also includes its function as the national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the independent Liechtenstein Corrections Commission regularly examines the situation and conditions in the National Prison and other places of deprivation of liberty (nursing homes) and makes recommendations to the Government. It sets out its findings in its publicly available annual reports. Based on these recommendations, as well as on the recommendations of international mechanisms for the prevention of torture, Liechtenstein continuously evaluates¹⁶ the adoption of measures to improve conditions in the National Prison or other places of deprivation of liberty. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Corrections Commission was unable to conduct an unannounced inspection in 2020. The lack of complaints attests to the fact that the National Prison handled the numerous challenges resulting from the pandemic well. From 2018 to 2022 – and thus also during the pandemic – no allegations or complaints were made to the Corrections Commission by inmates of the National Prison or residents of the nursing homes concerning the enforcement of sentences or stays in the visited nursing facilities. The Corrections Commission emphasised the good conditions in all these facilities.

39. There is currently no enforcement of sentences for juveniles in Liechtenstein. During the reporting period, a total of only three juveniles were detained for short periods. They were housed in the often unoccupied women's wing of the National Prison, or in a therapy and employment programme tailored to the needs of the juveniles is offered in cooperation with Probation Assistance. In two cases, juveniles were transferred to a suitable Austrian correctional institution with an attached wing for juvenile offenders under the treaty between the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Republic of Austria on the placement of prisoners.

40. Under § 147 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, every accused has the right to consult a defence council before the accused's examination and to have the defence council included in the examination. This also applies to juveniles,¹⁷ who additionally under § 21a of the Juvenile Court Act have the right to involve a person of their trust in the examination.

41. Liechtenstein guarantees legal protection¹⁸ to all persons who are the subject of a judicial placement decision. In this context, the Government considered the legal provisions concerning the forced admission or placement of persons against their will in institutions or psychiatric clinics. A need was identified for legal rules governing stays in residential or nursing facilities. In May 2021, the Government decided to amend the Social Assistance Act and other laws. With the revision of the Social Assistance Act which entered into force on 1 September 2021, significant procedural improvements were introduced, and the conditions for welfare placement were more clearly specified. Furthermore, provisions governing stays in residential facilities were introduced. In particular, the conditions for welfare placement were clarified, and provisions on medical measures were added. Information obligations and

regular reviews of the placement were also introduced. Overall, these new provisions are in line with the right to protection of personal freedom, given that the approach is to apply these measures as restrictively as possible. The rights of the persons concerned are additionally strengthened by the requirement to provide comprehensive information on the cause, purpose, nature, and duration of the medical measures ordered. As was the case under the old rule, the court reviews *ex officio* the admissibility of medical placement in cases of imminent danger. The affected persons and, where applicable, their legal representatives have the opportunity to challenge in court the rejection of a request for release.

42. In December 2019, Liechtenstein submitted its fifth national report under the UN Convention against Torture. The report includes information on the new rules governing Liechtenstein execution of sentences, the powers of the national preventive mechanism, procedural rights, recreational activities, medical care and resocialisation of Liechtenstein detainees, and the placement of patients in psychiatric or welfare institutions.

(b) *Combating human trafficking*

43. In May 2018, the Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking Initiative (FAST) was launched as a Liechtenstein public-private partnership in collaboration with the United Nations University. Since its launch, FAST has achieved significant success¹⁹ in involving the financial sector in combating modern slavery and human trafficking. The basis for its work is the catalogue of measures developed by FAST, "A Blueprint for Mobilizing Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking", which is based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

44. The FAST Secretariat, operated by the United Nations University, as well as Liechtenstein work closely together with relevant public and private bodies to enshrine the goals of FAST as effectively as possible within the international community. Since the launch of FAST, Liechtenstein has regularly organised information events at the international level, especially for the global financial sector, as well as for the general public in Liechtenstein. These events serve to draw attention to the various forms of exploitation through human trafficking and to disseminate the FAST blueprint.

45. After ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Liechtenstein in April 2018 received and responded to a questionnaire from the independent Group of Experts (GRETA) on the implementation of the convention in Liechtenstein. Based on Liechtenstein's responses and the GRETA country visit, the Group of Experts prepared a final report with a list of recommendations. In addition to programmatic recommendations, the report also included proposals for substantive adjustments in criminal law.

46. The Round Table on Human Trafficking meets regularly to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement authorities, migration authorities, and institutions for the support of victims of human trafficking. The Round Table takes a coordinated approach to combating human trafficking and can involve other stakeholders as needed, including non-governmental organisations. In 2020, the National Police introduced a whistleblower platform secured with the latest technology for submitting both open and anonymous reports of suspicion. Whistleblowers are now able to submit reports worldwide and around the clock in the following areas: money laundering, terrorist financing, economic offences, and corruption offences. In 2022, the Round Table on Human Trafficking requested inclusion of human trafficking as a new focus area in the whistleblower system, with implementation planned for 2023. The Round Table on Human Trafficking is also in contact with ACT212 (the National Hotline against Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Switzerland) with a view to offering training and lectures for vulnerable groups in Liechtenstein in 2023.

(c) *Combating racism*

47. In September 2019, the Violence Protection Commission organised a workshop for Liechtenstein media professionals with the project director of the non-governmental organisation International Network against Cyber Hate (INACH) to provide them with knowledge, options for action, and tools for dealing safely with hate and incitement. The presentation at this event was published in the Liechtenstein journal for legal professionals.

48. Promoting mutual understanding and the fight against all forms of discrimination and xenophobia also form integral parts of the Liechtenstein educational curriculum.

49. In March 2018, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) compiled its fifth country report on Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein submitted its report under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in June 2020 and its interim report on the urgent ECRI recommendations in October 2020.

2. Economic, social, and cultural rights

(a) Social security

50. In 2020, the Government on several occasions considered the long-term security of Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (AHV) and pension increases. Extensive clarifications and work were carried out in connection with the establishment and design of a unified complaints body, which is necessary for introducing a general part of social insurance law.

(b) Labour market

51. Since 2021, Liechtenstein has recorded statistical indicators of economic participation in Liechtenstein: labour force participation rate (ratio of the labour force to the permanent population of working age 15 to 64, disaggregated by gender); weekly working hours (average weekly working hours of men and women in gainful employment); unemployment rate (ratio of unemployed persons to the labour force, disaggregated by gender); wage gap (wage gap between men and women as a percentage of men's wages); academic and technical occupations (ratio of women in academic and technical occupations to all employed women and ratio of men in academic and technical occupations to all employed men); management positions (ratio of women in management positions to all employed women and ratio of men in management positions to all employed men); self-employment (ratio of self-employed women to all employed women and ratio of self-employed men to all employed men).

52. With an increase by 6.6%, the labour force participation rate of women experienced an upward trend between 2000 and 2019, while that of men fluctuated. In 2019, 68% (in 2000: 61.4%) of women of working age²⁰ and 81.6% (in 2000: 86.0%) of men actively participated in the labour market. The labour force participation rates of women and men have converged since 2000. In contrast to men, however, the majority of women are employed on a part-time basis. In 2019, 50.6% of employed women and 14.0% of employed men worked part-time.

53. The share of women among members of boards of directors of establishments and private companies with State participation has risen continuously since 2012. In 2012, the share of women was 13.3%. Between 2012 and 2020, the share more than doubled to 32.2%. This means that in 2020, women accounted for about one-third of such board memberships.

54. The share of women among members of boards of trustees has risen continuously since 2012. In 2012, the share of women was still 35.9%. Between 2012 and 2020, the share of women increased by 18.1 percentage points to 54%. During the same period, the share of men declined. The gender ratio flipped in 2019.

55. The wage gap between women and men has declined. In 2005, the wage gap²¹ amounted to CHF 1,289 (20.2%). Over the past 15 years, the wage gap has fallen by CHF 272 (6.2 percentage points). In 2020, the average gross monthly salary of men totalled CHF 7,287, while that of women was CHF 6,270. Women received an average of CHF 1,017 (14%) less per month than men in 2020. This means that men receive approximately one seventh more gross monthly salary than women.

56. Liechtenstein implements a variety of measures²² in the field of education, especially to promote the interest of girls in technical and mathematical subjects and professions. In 2010, about one-third of employed women were working in an academic or technical profession. Over the following years, the percentage of employed women working in an academic or technical profession increased by 7.3%, reaching 40.5% in 2015. This means that for every 1,000 employed women, 405 worked in technical or academic professions,

while the figure for men that year was 409 out of 1,000. The two shares are equal, so that there is no longer any gender-specific disparity.

57. In 2021, Liechtenstein participated with two pictures in a photo exhibition organised by the UN Office in Geneva on the topic of combating gender bias in career choices. The exhibition entitled "Not A Woman's Job?" featured portraits of professional women who demonstrate through their work that every profession should be open to women. Two women from Liechtenstein were featured: a 19-year-old polymechanics apprentice who had successfully completed her initial training as an agricultural machinery mechanic; and the general manager of the Liechtenstein Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who was portrayed in the pepperMINT laboratory for experimentation in Vaduz where girls and boys can come into contact with STEM subjects (also referred to as MINT: mathematics, information sciences, natural sciences, and technology) in a playful way.

58. Liechtenstein is continuously implementing measures²³ to promote the compatibility of family and career and to combat role stereotypes. The business community and business associations continue to be involved for this purpose,²⁴ especially with regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and through the traditional NGO dialogue on human rights issues.

59. One of the main topics in the current 2021-2025 Government Programme is the compatibility of family and career. Promoting compatibility continues to be an important concern – both from a social perspective and from the perspective of the business community. To ensure that the supply of day care spots is adequate and in line with demand, dialogue and coordination with the municipalities and the business community are being intensified. The Equal Opportunities Unit of the Office of Social Services issues an annual plan containing the specific measures to be elaborated in the areas of general equal opportunities, gender equality, migration and integration, disability, and sexual orientation, contributing to the promotion of equal opportunities in Liechtenstein. The plan of measures is revised and adjusted each year.

60. As part of a family survey conducted in 2017/2018, the Family Policy Working Group established by the Government provided the impetus to assess the needs of the families concerned in this regard. The survey showed the desire of young families to care for their children themselves during the first year of life. In 2020, the Family Policy Working Group presented its report containing proposed measures. A key point was implementation the EU Work-life Balance Directive, which introduces paid paternity leave and paid parental leave. Implementation of this directive aims to support childcare in the first year of life. The consultation report to this effect was published in December 2022.

61. In 2019, the Government developed a subsidy system and a software platform for the fair treatment of the various forms of childcare outside the home, along with uniform booking and billing. In September 2019, the financing for all publicly available out-of-home childcare facilities and child minders was switched to the new income-based system with graduated fee schedules. The fees are reviewed on an ongoing basis and adjusted if necessary. After three years of operation, it was determined that "standard costs" (i.e., the basic cost for a unit of service per fee bracket, as recognised and determined by the State) were set too low. The standard costs were increased in the Out-of-Home Childcare Contribution Ordinance (AKBV) (mostly at the expense of the State). The adjustment entered into force on 1 November 2022.

3. Rights of specific groups

(a) Women

62. The 32 indicators introduced in 2021 provide an overview of the development of equality between men and women in Liechtenstein in five areas of life: politics, the economy, public service, health, and education. These indicators are divided into the following dimensions: The dimension of economic participation takes into account paid and unpaid work as well as monetary remuneration; the education dimension takes into account different levels of education, qualifications, and skills; the dimension of political participation takes into account participation at the municipal and national level as well as in interest groups; the

public service dimension takes into account leadership positions and positions with decision-making power; the health and violence dimension takes into account gender-based violence, the state of health, and health behaviour.

63. In October 2021, Liechtenstein published guidance on gender-inclusive language, serving as an aid and providing information on usage. Adequate representation of women and men in language is an important instrument for de facto equality.

64. Balanced representation of women and men in political bodies²⁵ is an important element of de facto equality between women and men. During the reporting period, the representation of women in political bodies in Liechtenstein increased considerably.

65. In the 2019 municipal council elections for the 2019 to 2023 term, 65 women ran for a total of 104 seats; 43 were elected. This increased the share of women in the municipal councils from 17% in the 2015-2019 term to 41.4%. In two of the eleven municipalities, a woman was elected mayor, and also in two of the eleven municipalities, there are now more women than men in the municipal council for the first time.

66. 23 women (31%) and 52 men (69%) ran in the 2021 national elections. 7 women were elected to the Liechtenstein Parliament consisting of 25 members, achieving a share of women of 28%. This percentage of female members of Parliament is the highest in Liechtenstein history. Moreover, 4 of the 10 substitute members of Parliament for the 2021 to 2025 legislative period are female.

67. Three of the five ministers in the new Government elected in 2021 are female. The share of women in the Government is accordingly 60%. This is also historic: Never before have there been more women than men in the Liechtenstein Government.

68. In the course of ratification of the Istanbul Convention, adjustments were made to the Code of Civil Procedure and the Non-Contentious Proceedings Act in the area of victim and witness protection, in particular separate examinations, the questioning of minors by experts, confidentiality of the residential address, and legal aid and procedural assistance. As part of implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the Government in October 2021 established a coordinating body under Article 10 of the Convention, whose tasks include coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating policies and other measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. The coordinating body held its first technical exchange with civil society (NGO dialogue) in June 2022.

69. The criminal law revision in 2019 brought improvements with regard to gender-based and domestic violence, including the offence of continuous use of force (§ 107b of the Criminal Code). This criminalises force used over a longer period of time, which is especially relevant in relationships. The expansion of aggravating causes makes it possible to impose more severe penalties for committing an offence against family members.

70. In the context of gender-based violence against women, the introduction of the new offence of violation of sexual self-determination (§ 204a of the Criminal Code) is also important. This new penal provision sends a clear signal for the prevention and avoidance of sexual violence by expanding the range of punishable non-consensual sexual contacts. This provision is supplemented by the new offence of forced marriage (§ 106a of the Criminal Code). In the 2019 revision, this offence was separated out of the existing offence of aggravated coercion (§ 106 of the Criminal Code) and expanded to include the element of the threat of termination or deprivation of family contacts.

71. The Threat Management Services unit of the National Police serves as the Domestic Violence Coordination unit, raising the awareness of the National Police regarding domestic violence. In 2020, the Equal Opportunities Unit of the Office of Social Services raised awareness of the issue among the general public in Liechtenstein with updated guidance on violence in marriage and partnership as well as emergency cards²⁶ in eight languages on "Violence must not have a home". The guidance entitled "Violence in marriage and partnership – How can I help?" provides family members and other close persons with information on how to act and help when domestic violence is suspected.

72. For 26 years, the Liechtenstein Women's Shelter has offered women and children affected by domestic violence counselling and shelter in an emergency. The Government

supports this organisation within the framework of a service agreement with CHF 320,000 annually, covering²⁷ a large part of the expenses of the Women's Shelter. Women affected by violence also receive counselling and support at infra – the Information and Counselling Centre for Women.

73. In 2018, Liechtenstein submitted its fifth national report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2019, Liechtenstein made a submission for the preparation of the UN report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in June 2021, Liechtenstein submitted its interim report on the urgent recommendations pursuant to its fifth national report on implementation of CEDAW.

(b) *Children*

74. Education and the active participation of children play an important role in the Government's strategy for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The elaboration of Liechtenstein's Education Strategy 2025, published in 2021, was accordingly a key project for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Liechtenstein's Education Strategy 2025 set the goal of creating standards for early childhood education. In the 2022 annual planning, the Integration Strategy also formulates integration measures for early childhood.

75. Liechtenstein has a high-quality education system. To ensure this high standard in the future, Liechtenstein will continue to consistently implement the new Liechtenstein Curriculum (LiLe), the Education Strategy 2025, the school buildings strategy, and the use of information and communication technologies in schools. Liechtenstein also has a comprehensive integration strategy, with measures in the fields of education and work that facilitate the integration of all children with a migration background, including asylum-seeking children. The current Government Programme also explicitly provides for the integration of foreign-language children through early German-language training. To secure Liechtenstein's economic success for the future, Liechtenstein promotes the basic and continuing training of young professionals and skilled workers. For this purpose, the Government pursues the consistent implementation of educational strategies such as dual vocational training and STEM/MINT education.

76. Gender and social justice, as well as diversity and discrimination²⁸ also play an important role in the new Liechtenstein Curriculum (LiLe) introduced in 2020: "Be aware of differences without judging them" is the principle. These topics are also reflected in the new teaching materials. The school subject "Economy, Work, and Household", for example, addresses the question of the value of housework, women's jobs versus men's jobs, and wage inequality. The subject "Ethics, Religion, Community" covers religion as well as human rights, women's rights, children's rights, and experiences of violence.

77. The entire package of language support for children and young people with a migration background forms a crucial basis for minimising the problems in the educational development of children who speak German as a second language.²⁹ Mastery of German, i.e. of the language used at school, is crucial for success at school and in the workplace. In addition to the German as a Second Language (DaZ) support programme and the DAZ intensive course (for children and young people who have migrated recently), many municipalities now offer early language support that takes place even before kindergarten. DaZ is also offered at the baccalaureate school (Liechtenstein Gymnasium) and at the vocational school.

78. Three of Liechtenstein's eleven municipalities so far (Eschen, Mauren, and Ruggell) have been recognised as child-friendly municipalities by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These municipalities have introduced processes for the active involvement of children.

79. In 2021, the mandate of the Expert Group on Protection from Sexual Abuse was expanded by including increased cooperation between authorities on implementation of the Lanzarote Convention of the Council of Europe on Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, in addition to casework. Case counselling is offered on behalf of Liechtenstein through "ifs Child Protection Vorarlberg". The counselling can extend over

a longer period of time, from the moment of suspicion to possible criminal proceedings and – as needed – with a recommendation for therapy. Counselling is free of charge and, if desired, anonymous. The Expert Group on Protection from Sexual Abuse is also a contact point for professionals who have questions on this topic. On behalf of the Expert Group on Protection from Sexual Abuse, further training on sexual abuse is also systematically carried out for all employees of out-of-home childcare.

80. The Liechtenstein Children's Lobby is coordinated by the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People. The focus is on exchanging ideas and providing information about children's rights. Each year, the Children's Lobby chooses a topic relating to children's rights and draws attention to it through various campaigns and an event on Children's Rights Day. In November 2022, the Children's Lobby celebrated its tenth anniversary. Liechtenstein placed the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the focus of its eleventh dialogue (2019) with Liechtenstein non-governmental organisations in the field of human rights. A contribution by the Austrian representative of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child was the main component of the NGO dialogue. The Office for Foreign Affairs also co-organised a lecture at Haus Gutenberg in November 2019 focusing on children's rights.

81. Since 2019, Liechtenstein has appointed foreign policy youth delegates to represent the interests of Liechtenstein's young people at the UN.

82. In 2019, Liechtenstein submitted its initial report under the Second Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Also in 2019, Liechtenstein participated in the special report on protecting children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention). In 2022, Liechtenstein submitted its third and fourth reports on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(c) *Older persons*

83. The 2021-2025 Government Programme recognises the need, in light of demographic change, to ensure the financing and availability of benefits in old-age nursing and care. The goal is to secure the benefits of Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (AHV) for the long term to enable people of advanced age to live independently. AHV funding for future generations must be ensured for this purpose. In addition, residential care facilities must continue to be expanded in line with demand; future demand is forecast at regular intervals to ensure timely construction of new retirement and nursing homes.

84. The interests of older persons are represented by the Seniors' Association, whose information and counselling centre receives an annual contribution from the State. Older persons are provided with information about new services and support, such as the reduction of health insurance premiums. This happens regularly and on a recurring basis.³⁰

(d) *Persons with disabilities*

85. With a view to ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Liechtenstein has taken steps to initiate the necessary legislative amendments. This includes the introduction or improvement of legal rules governing institutional care and compulsory placement, the essential elements of which were implemented through an amendment to the Social Assistance Act effective 1 September 2021. In autumn 2022, the Government initiated a consultation procedure for amendments to the following legislation: The Non-Contentious Proceedings Act, the Law on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, the Statistics Act, and the Public Information Act. These amendments cover the necessary adjustments prior to ratification of the convention.

86. The Disability Equality Act forms the basis for the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities. The office continuously advances³¹ the integration of persons with disabilities in Liechtenstein. The office's tasks include advising authorities and individuals, preparing statements and recommendations, and carrying out public relations work and projects.

87. The Equal Opportunities Unit of the Office of Social Services had previously been responsible for coordinating, organising, and conducting the meetings of the "sichtwechsel"

networking group for persons with disabilities who are in need of support. In October 2021, this responsibility was transferred to the Association of People with Disabilities. The Equal Opportunities Unit is still a member of the networking group and from 2018 to 2022 had primary responsibility for organising a campaign for the International Day of People with Disabilities on 3 December. For this day in 2018, 2021, and 2022, topical reports were written and broadcast together with Liechtenstein Radio, and two cinema trailers with a one-year run were produced in 2020. In 2019, the brochure "Language is treacherous – linguistic discrimination against persons with disabilities", published by AGILE.CH, was sponsored by the networking group "sichtwechsel" and distributed to institutions and organisations via the Equal Opportunities Unit. Together with the Association of People with Disabilities and the Association for Human Rights, the Equal Opportunities Unit published a series of articles on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in autumn 2022.³²

88. Consideration of the needs of children with disabilities is strongly enshrined in the legal system, including in the Children and Youth Act. Liechtenstein has a comprehensive system for providing adequate support to children with disabilities.³³

89. The purpose of the Disability Equality Act is to eliminate or prevent disadvantaging of persons with disabilities, ensuring equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and to enable them to lead a self-determined life. The act sets out a prohibition of discrimination. The provisions include ensuring barrier-free access³⁴ to public buildings and facilities. Pursuant to implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/2102, public bodies are also required to ensure barrier-free access to websites and mobile applications. The Equal Opportunities Unit has prepared an implementation plan starting in 2023.

(e) *Migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers*

90. The Government approved an integration strategy in February 2021. The integration strategy defines the common political understanding of future integration efforts. A key goal of the strategy is to improve the opportunities and participation of migrants in social, economic, and cultural life. Integration is recognised as a complex horizontal responsibility.

91. To obtain an overview of the integration process in Liechtenstein, the Government commissioned a study entitled "Integration in Liechtenstein: Socio-economic potentials and areas of tension". In June 2020, the result was presented to the public. The realisation of this study implemented an urgent recommendation of the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) from 2018.

92. To ensure a uniform set of rules with Liechtenstein's neighbouring countries, the Foreigners Act was revised in 2018, including new and stricter provisions on the punishability of promoting unlawful entry and residence (smuggling of human beings).

93. Gender-specific³⁵ grounds for asylum are provided for in the Asylum Act as a basis for granting refugee status. Liechtenstein is aware of its responsibility in this regard – especially as a member of the Schengen/Dublin area – and treats gender-specific violence with the necessary diligence.

(f) *Sexual orientation*

94. At the international level, Liechtenstein advocates in particular for the protection³⁶ of LGBTIAQ+ persons from violence and discrimination, given that LGBTIAQ+ persons are still frequently subjected to serious human rights violations.

95. In its judgment of 10 May 2021 (StGH 2020/097), the Constitutional Court annulled Article 25 of the Registered Partnership Act, finding it to be contrary to both the ECHR and the Liechtenstein Constitution. Article 25 provided that persons living in a registered partnership were not eligible to adopt children or to use reproductive medical procedures. The Constitutional Court ruled that the impermissibility of stepchild adoption for same-sex couples in Liechtenstein violated Article 8 in conjunction with Article 14 ECHR, given that stepchild adoption in Liechtenstein was possible only for heterosexual couples, not for same-sex couples. The legal effect of the annulment of this provision – promulgated in LGBl. 2021 No. 237 on 13 July 2021 – was postponed by one year. The Government subsequently proposed amendments to the Partnership Act and the General Civil Code (Report and Motion

No. 19/2022 and Statement No. 41/2022) to legally enshrine stepchild adoption for registered partners and cohabiting partners, so as to eliminate the inequality found by the Constitutional Court.

96. In May 2022, the Liechtenstein Parliament adopted the newly created provision in the Partnership Act on stepchild adoption by registered partners (Article 24a) and at the same time rejected the proposed amendment to Article 25 of the Partnership Act, according to which joint adoption and the use of reproductive medical procedures would continue to be excluded for registered partners. As a result, and given the lack of a replacement provision, Article 25 of the Partnership Act expired on 13 July 2022, so that the prohibition of joint adoption and the use of reproductive medical procedures in the Partnership Act was repealed without replacement in light of the Constitutional Court ruling. However, this means the Partnership Act now contradicts the ABGB, which allows joint adoption only for married spouses. Because the equality of heterosexual and homosexual couples under adoption law as intended by the Liechtenstein Parliament is accordingly not enshrined in law, a (new) need for legislative action has arisen. This is being addressed by amending the General Civil Code and the Partnership Act to achieve full equality between same-sex and opposite-sex couples in adoption law (Report and Motion No. 125/2022). The first reading already took place in the December 2022 session of Parliament; the second and final reading is currently scheduled for spring 2023. Also of note is the motion submitted in the November 2022 session of Parliament on "Marriage for all" under civil law. The Government now has a window of two years to fulfil the terms of the motion.

97. There have been no developments with regard to legal changes to gender status since 2018. From 2018 to 2022, there were a total of 10 legal changes to gender status in Liechtenstein (6 persons from female to male and 4 persons from male to female).

IV. Consultation with civil society

98. As remarked in previous UPR reports, civil society plays an important role in Liechtenstein. Especially noteworthy are the numerous associations that are supported by the State and the municipalities through various means, including financially. There are numerous associations engaged in human rights in the broadest sense.

99. Since 2009, the Office for Foreign Affairs has organised an annual human rights dialogue with Liechtenstein civil society (NGO dialogue). At the 2022 dialogue, the attending organisations had the opportunity to comment on Liechtenstein's implementation of the recommendations from the last UPR. A summary of the discussions and assessments of the human rights situation in Liechtenstein by the participants can be found in Annex to the report.

V. Concluding remarks

100. The last UPR as well as the reports and country visits by international and regional experts have repeatedly attested to Liechtenstein's high level of human rights protection. At the same time, the Liechtenstein Government is aware that further improvements are necessary and possible. The Liechtenstein Government will draw on the intergovernmental dialogue within the framework of the fourth UPR assessment of Liechtenstein and the recommendations arising therefrom as an important benchmark for determining need for action in the coming years.

Notes

¹ see Recommendations 108.8., 108.9., 108.12.-108.14., 108.16., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.5, 8.5, 10.2, 11.2, 11.7.

² see Recommendations 108.17.-108.18., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.2.

³ see Recommendation 108.19.

⁴ see Recommendation 108.24.

- ⁵ see Recommendation 108.46., contributing to the implementation of SDG 17.2.
- ⁶ see Recommendation 108.22.
- ⁷ see Recommendations 108.26., 108.27
- ⁸ see Recommendation 108.28
- ⁹ see Recommendation 108.29.
- ¹⁰ see Recommendations 108.21., 108.48., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.4 and 16.5.
- ¹¹ see Recommendation 108.64., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.4 and 16.5.
- ¹² see Recommendations 108.83., 108.84., 108.87., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5, 10 and 16.
- ¹³ see Recommendations 108.33., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.7, 5.2 and 16.1.
- ¹⁴ see Recommendations 108.37., 108.41., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5, 10 and 16.
- ¹⁵ see Recommendations 108.51., 108.53., 108.54., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.2.
- ¹⁶ see Recommendation 108.52., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.2.
- ¹⁷ see Recommendation 108.57., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.2.
- ¹⁸ see Recommendation 108.58., contributing to the implementation of SDG 16.2.
- ¹⁹ see Recommendations 108.49., 108.56., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.2, 8.7, 16.2 and 17.16.
- ²⁰ see Recommendations 108.86., 108.92., 108.95.-108.99., 108.101., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5
- ²¹ see Recommendation 108.85., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.5.
- ²² see Recommendation 108.76., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.
- ²³ see Recommendation 108.70., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.1, 5.4, 5.5.
- ²⁴ see Recommendation 108.71., contributing to the implementation of SDG 17.17.
- ²⁵ see Recommendations 108.65., 108.68., 108.86, 108.88, 108.91., 108.93., 108.94., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.5.
- ²⁶ see Recommendations 108.90., 108.100., 108.104., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.2.
- ²⁷ See Recommendation 108.89, contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.2.
- ²⁸ see Recommendation 108.80., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.1.
- ²⁹ see Recommendation 108.79., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.6.
- ³⁰ see Recommendations 108.35., 108.77., contributing to the implementation of SDG 3.
- ³¹ see Recommendations 108.107., 108.108., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.5, 8.5, 10.2, 11.2, 11.7.
- ³² see Recommendation 108.111., contributing to the implementation of SDG 10.2.
- ³³ see Recommendation 108.109., contributing to the implementation of SDG 4.5, 4.a.
- ³⁴ see Recommendation 108.110., contributing to the implementation of SDG 11.2, 11.7.
- ³⁵ see Recommendations 108.69., 108.118., 108.123., contributing to the implementation of SDG 5.2.
- ³⁶ see Recommendation 108.43., contributing to the implementation of SDG 10.3.
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