



STÄNDIGE VERTRETUNG DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN  
BEI DER ORGANISATION FÜR SICHERHEIT UND ZUSAMMENARBEIT IN EUROPA (OSZE)

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**Liechtenstein Contribution**

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**Specially selected topic: promotion of tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual respect and understanding: review of implementation by participating States of OSCE commitments related to tolerance and non-discrimination**

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**Introduction:**

Bordering on Switzerland in the West and on Austria in the East, the Principality of Liechtenstein has a surface area of 62 square miles. It has a population of approximately 35,000, 34.1 per cent of which are foreigners, mainly Swiss, Austrian and German citizens. The whole foreign population residing in Liechtenstein is composed of people from about 90 nations. In addition, circa 14,000 people working in Liechtenstein commute daily across the border. Consequently, more than 65 per cent of the jobs are held by foreigners. The peaceful way in which the various cultures coexist is part of everyday life in Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein's village structure and rural character prevent the segregation of foreign communities. Fortunately, there are neither xenophobic political parties nor anti-Semitic or other racist movements in Liechtenstein. But there is one small group of juvenile right wing extremists. The government is aware of the need for preventive measures with regard to xenophobia, racism and hate crimes. As this report shows, the government, in cooperation with others, has taken a series of actions in form of legal and practical measures.

At this stage, Liechtenstein draws the attention to the reports and contributions, made available to different OSCE events on issues on tolerance and non-discrimination in the past. The OSCE participating States have thereby been kept up-to-date on the national efforts by Liechtenstein to implement international, and more particularly OSCE commitments. The present contribution to the HDIM 2006 demonstrates once more that the Liechtenstein authorities take this issue seriously. The main content of this paper centres on practical examples that aim to contribute to a social environment in which racism, discrimination and intolerance have no home.

As for the structure of this paper, it introduces the current working bodies in place, describes the main activities with regard to implementing international commitments as well as close cooperation with international actors in this field.

### **National working bodies:**

The following working bodies have been established to promote tolerance and non-discrimination:

Working Group against Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Xenophobia (WG R): Since its establishment by the Government in 2002 the main task of the working group has been in preventing and combating racism. In 2005, the working group received the additional mandate of preventing and fighting anti-Semitism.

Working Group on the Elaboration of a new Law on Integration: In 2006 the Government mandated this working group to elaborate legislation on the integration of foreigners.

Working Group on the Promotion of the Integration of Muslims: With its establishment, the Government succeeded in institutionalising the dialogue between Muslims and Christians aiming at generating a climate of reciprocal tolerance and respect.

Commission and Office of Equal Opportunity: The Commission and its implementing Office, established by the Government in 2005, promote equality on all levels of society, especially with regard to gender, disability, sexual orientation, social status and questions on immigration and integration of foreigners.

National Commission on the Prevention of Violence: Its task is to monitor the situation concerning public violence and violent acts with special attention to right-wing extremism. The Commission focuses on establishing a comprehensive policy of preventing violence and developing measures and concepts for this purpose.

### **Broad approach to promote tolerance and inclusion:**

The following nine examples showcase Liechtenstein's determination to implement international commitments, and in particular OSCE commitments in accordance with the OSCE Ministerial Council decision 10/05, in particular paragraph 5, and the Cordoba Declaration, in particular paragraph 6, in 2005. This list does not claim to be complete:

**The Constitution and legislation:** The Constitution of Liechtenstein assigns to the State the task of taking particular care to organize and administer education in such a way that through the combined action of family, school and church, young people acquire in the process of growing up a comprehensive ethic and moral education. Based on its international obligations, Liechtenstein has explicitly recognized the basic right to education. Education is compulsory for all children, resident in Liechtenstein. Schools are open to all children regardless of origin, religion, and gender. The Education Act also provides that public schools, including kindergartens, shall be accessible to all, and that attendance at public schools is basically free of charge. The Constitution also provides that the State facilitates attendance at higher education by well-qualified students without the necessary resources through the award of appropriate grants.

Upon its accession to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Liechtenstein modified its laws as follows: Article 33 and article 283 of the Penal Code were amended in 1999 in order to provide the criminal law foundation for the punishment of public acts of racial discrimination committed by private individuals. The Code of Criminal Procedure was amended in accordance. Furthermore, Article 321 of the Penal Code affords special protection to religious, racial, ethnic, cultural or national groups and persons and establishes genocide as an offence punishable by law. Finally, it is noteworthy that Liechtenstein introduced the individual right of appeal in accordance with article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. In this context, the law on the constitutional court was amended so that the constitutional court can function as the national court of appeal with regard to such complaints.

These laws stipulate, in consequence, that those crimes committed on the grounds of racism and xenophobia are highly reprehensible and are punishable through prison terms. The fact that such penalties are imposed reflect the strong disapproval of such motives by national authorities. Still, Liechtenstein is fortunate to say that since this legislation entered into force only 2 sentences have so far been passed.

**Monitoring and data collection:** The National Police records offences in accordance with national legislation and reports to the Prosecution Service. The statistics on criminal offences is published by the National Police. Also, the National Commission on the Prevention of Violence is tasked to monitor the situation and reports to the government. Based on the small number of cases, statistics do not differentiate between the different forms of bias. The emphasis on collecting data is on prevention.

Due to the small number of hate crimes, no judges or public prosecutors deal with such offences exclusively, and no separate statistics are available. However, judges and public prosecutors do receive information and education on such offences in the course of their general training. The Liechtenstein Criminal Police has received special training on hate crimes with the aim to raise awareness and learn methods to identify such offences.

**Training of public officials:** Training of officials focuses on the most relevant offices, including the Immigration and Passport Office, the Office of Social Affairs, the Office of Education and the National Police. A seminar on “Intercultural Communication” was offered and widely attended within the National Administration. Special training has been provided for schoolteachers to enable them to handle violence and racism in the classroom. Also, the WG R has presented its work to a conference of school headmasters. It has given information on best practices and has encouraged teachers to pick up on these topics in class. A collection of specific materials has been compiled by a didactic media library and distributed to schoolteachers. The WG R is continuously improving its own expertise through regular contacts with, for example, the Swiss Federal Commission against Racism.

**Holocaust Commemoration Day:** In 2005, the Government decided to introduce in Liechtenstein the Holocaust Memorial Day of 27 January. It has also been decided to finance further education for schoolteachers on the topic “Holocaust in class”. Classroom activities, for example workshops, lectures,

film viewing, exhibitions and discussions have widely been conducted. In connection with the results of the Independent Commission of Historians in 2005, appointed by the government to analyse Liechtenstein's role in World War II, it was decided to focus on activities in schools and financially support two projects in Jerusalem, Israel. The WG R has been mandated to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the Independent Commission of Historians with regard to prevent and combat Anti-Semitism.

**School curricula and activities:** Other important activities have been undertaken to promote the broader subject of integration in schools. The general topic of integration, intolerance, and racism is becoming firmly incorporated at all levels of the school curriculum. Different school subjects such as German, History, Foreign Languages, Religion, Ethics, Philosophy, Education/Psychology, Art Education and Life Sciences provide for opportunities to integrate these topics as part of classroom instructions. It is the overarching goal of this broader effort that students understand the principles of human rights and that they orient their action accordingly.

**The Christian and Muslim communities:** The integration of Muslims in Liechtenstein society is of particular concern as they constitute the largest non-Christian group in Liechtenstein. The Liechtenstein Government is well aware of the fact, that integration does not mean the adaptation of the minority to the culture of the majority. Only if the majority and the minorities are ready to enhance their understanding for each other and each others needs, integration can be a success. In 2006 the Government has established a working group to elaborate legislation on integration. With the set up of a Working Group on the Promotion of the Integration of Muslims in May 2004, the Government has established a platform for dialogue between Muslims and Christians to contribute to generate a climate of reciprocal tolerance and respect.

**Cooperation with NGO:** The Government undertakes activities not only to promote tolerance and understanding between different ethnic and religious groups, but also supports private initiatives in this field. The Government actively seeks to cooperate with foreigners' associations. In 2005, the Prime Minister invited representatives of all foreigners' associations to two round table discussions. In this respect, the Office of Equal Opportunity is presently drafting a networking platform for a permanent dialogue between the government and the foreigners' associations. They are encouraged to present themselves to the population on the national holiday of their members.

The Government financially supports the Association for Intercultural Education. This NGO aims to promote the integration of migrants – and among them especially women - by language training, computer and other courses as well as cultural events. The NGO provides a possibility for the Liechtenstein population to learn more about foreign cultures and traditions. Also, the Liechtenstein Development Service regularly organises public events to foster the interest in and understanding of different cultures. To strengthen a multicultural Liechtenstein society, the WG R supported an intercultural festival of the Turkish Women's Association "Hi Turkey – Merhaba Liechtenstein" in 2005.

**Role of the Media:** In 2004, the WG R organised a workshop with journalists and representatives of all newspapers and media stations in Liechtenstein in

order to raise awareness about the potential of the media to contribute positively to mutual understanding through impartial and sensitive reporting.

**Migration and Integration:** The Head of State, the Government and Parliament alike have confirmed the importance and the objective of a successful integration of people of all nationalities as the base for a sound and prosperous society. Various measures (see above) have been and are being undertaken in this regard. The comprehensive integration concept, currently being drafted, or legal provisions on integration aiming at promoting integration on the base of incentives for all are the latest measures.

### **Cooperation with International Organisations:**

The Government very much values the international co-operation in fighting discrimination. Liechtenstein was represented at ministerial level at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in Durban in 2001. Liechtenstein regularly reports to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Alvaro Gil-Robles, visited Liechtenstein in 2004. The report was published in 2005, containing a number of aspects on the issues of racism and discrimination. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe (ECRI) is going to visit Liechtenstein in spring 2007 for the third time. Also in spring 2007, the UN-Commission on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) will consider the second and third report of Liechtenstein. The recommendations, assessments and encouragements of these European and international regimes are being followed up through measures like the ones mentioned above and others.

In addition, Liechtenstein has supported pertinent ODIHR projects in many instances. Liechtenstein also finances projects in developing countries where the promotion of tolerance is an integrated element of the development cooperation. These activities are often long-term, annual support projects with the goal of developing the idea of solidarity among young adults. Furthermore, minorities are often especially considered in such projects.

### **Internet – Website Portal:**

For further information, please consult the internet portal of the Principality of Liechtenstein [www.liechtenstein.li](http://www.liechtenstein.li) on these issues.