



## ANED 2012 Task 4 - National Accessibility Report

**Country:** Liechtenstein  
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The [Academic Network of European Disability experts](#) (ANED) was established by the European Commission in 2008 to provide scientific support and advice for its disability policy Unit. In particular, the activities of the Network will support the future development of the EU Disability Action Plan and practical implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This country report has been prepared as input for the thematic report on *Maximising the Impact and Effectiveness of Accessibility Measures for Goods and Services: Learning from National Experience*. The purpose of the report ([Terms of Reference](#)) is to examine the impact and effectiveness of accessibility laws and standards in EU/EEA countries, and mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement.

### 1 Accessibility laws

The resources in Liechtenstein are in many regards too limited to allow distinct research studies on discrimination on grounds of disability. Despite this, it is not too difficult to have quite clear knowledge of the situation of people with disabilities and their needs since the smallness of the country makes it rather easy to have an overview of it and to gain insight into the issue. Besides this, many studies that were conducted in foreign countries with respect to the general needs of people with disabilities are applicable to Liechtenstein as well.

In 2007, a research project by Marxer & Simon specifically highlighted the social situation of people with disabilities in Liechtenstein. This study was conducted at the occasion of the European Year of Equal Opportunities (see references at the end of this chapter). In the same year, the government published a report where information on accessibility of buildings and infrastructure was listed. The report did not contain details or plans to increase accessibility or mechanisms to make complaints or enforce accessibility obligations. The work on the report was supported by the European Commission (see also references at the end of this chapter). Later on, the content of the report was transferred to a website: <http://www.barrierefreies.li/>.

At present, 297 locations are mentioned on the website, including hotels and restaurants, health services, public buildings, offices, and others. For example, see the following screenshot:

**Hotel Gorfion**

Malbun  
9497 Triesenberg  
Tel. 00423 / 264 18 83  
[gorfion@s-hotels.com](mailto:gorfion@s-hotels.com)  
[www.gorfion.li](http://www.gorfion.li)

Öffnungszeiten:  
Mitte Oktober – Mitte Dezember  
und Mitte April – Ende Mai geschlossen  
sonst täglich geöffnet



- > kompakter Teppich und Schmutzschleuse im Eingangsbereich
- > Hallenbad: 3 Stufen zum Schwimmbecken

nach oben

**Hotel Martha Bühler**

Sennwis 15  
9497 Triesenberg  
Tel. 00423 / 262 57 77  
[hotel@martha-buehler.li](mailto:hotel@martha-buehler.li)  
[www.martha-buehler.li](http://www.martha-buehler.li)

Öffnungszeiten:  
Mo. – So. 07.00 – 24.00



- > Schmutzschleuse
- > zwei Zimmer im Erdgeschoss sind mit Rollstuhl zugänglich

In the Liechtenstein legislation accessibility obligations are enacted in the Act on Equality of People with Disabilities (AEPD) and the By-law (*Verordnung*) to the AEPD. The provisions and obligations address more the public than the private sector. Public buildings, traffic infrastructure and transport systems have to be created or adapted in a barrier free way. Private house owners, on the other hand, are only legally forced to guarantee accessibility if a building consists of six or more apartments. Private transport is excluded from accessibility obligations.

There are no respective provisions regarding accessibility to information, communication methods, or ICT.

The AEPD (Art. 23) gives individuals the right to bring cases or make complaints if they are discriminated against according to Articles 5 to 10 of the AEPD, including discrimination as a result of restricted accessibility. The remedies can be (financial) compensation for damages as well as the obligation to avoid, prohibit or eliminate discrimination.

Activities in favour of visually impaired, deaf or dumb people are regulated in a similar way by the AEPD. The AEPD does not distinguish between different kinds of



disability. In Article 3 disability is defined as “the result of a deficiency of functions that is not just temporary and is based on a physiological, mental, or psychological condition or an impairment of sensory functions which constitutes a possible complication for participation in social life. Such a condition is not deemed temporary if it is likely to last for more than 6 months.” Again, the private sector is to a high degree not charged with duties. Therefore, a stronger obligation to the private sector to start activities in favour of people with disabilities, including accessibility, would be welcome and necessary from the point of view of anti-discrimination.

Activities of the public – i.e. the state and the municipalities – in favour of people with disabilities have expanded in recent years significantly in Liechtenstein. Public buildings are already accessible or will be adapted if necessary. The AEPD obliges the state and the municipalities to guarantee accessibility as soon as a building is renovated. The By-law to the AEPD states in Art. 8 additionally that the authorities have to guarantee that persons with a sensory impairment have access to the authorities and that they can communicate with the authorities. There is no time limit enacted however, and implementation is dependent on requests from concerned persons with disabilities. Thus, the provision is not legally binding in all cases.

The internet services of public authorities also must be accessible to persons with an impairment of sensory functions. Again, there is no time limit provided in Article 9 of the By-law to the AEPD. The website of the government gives an overview of the activities in this field: <http://regierung.li/index.php?id=1185>.

Bus stops are adapted with white marks in order to improve accessibility for visually impaired people. At the end of June 2012, the Liechtenstein government announced that in future, press conferences of the government would be accompanied by a sign language translator, and the websites of the government and the administration ([www.regierung.li](http://www.regierung.li) and [www.liechtenstein.li](http://www.liechtenstein.li)) would be adapted in such a way that people with disabilities have access to all public information, <http://regierung.li/index.php?id=158&uid=906> - 19 June 2012. There are no similar provisions or plans known regarding television subtitling, audio description and phone technology.

The Act on Equality of People with Disabilities (AEPD) thus led to a number of improvements and facilitation for people with disabilities, though more in the public than in the private sector. But there are also provisions in the Act which allow financial support for enterprises to adapt workplaces to the needs of people with disabilities, including measures for better accessibility.

A significant weakness of the legal situation is that many of the activities are not obligatory, neither for the public nor – even less – for the private sector. Implementation is in many regards voluntary and/or without an ambitious time schedule. Article 32 of the AEPD regulates that public buildings and facilities must be accessible for all persons until the year 2019 (12 years after entering into force of the AEPD) if they were constructed before 2002, and until 2027 (20 years after entering

into force of the AEPD) if they were constructed between 2002 and 2007. Public schools must be accessible for all by 2012, just like public transport systems. New public buildings have to be constructed in an accessible way right from the start.

Nevertheless, the public sector has improved accessibility substantially in the last few years since the budgets of the state and the municipalities allowed it to expend financial means for such activities. Additionally, there are legal provisions obliging the state and the municipalities to guarantee accessibility to new buildings and to those that are reconstructed. Accessibility standards in private housing, however, are only provided for buildings with six or more apartments. Accessibility to workplaces is touched on rather generally by the AEPD, in that it requests non-discrimination. The law does not oblige employers to design workplaces in a barrier-free way. The law favours single-case solutions and adaptations of workplaces, which can be financially supported by the state, instead of overall requirements.

Generally, the AEPD is not very strong. This is in line with the fact that Liechtenstein feels not obliged to implement the EU Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78. The political strategy moves somewhere between selectively supporting vulnerable social groups (including people with disabilities), safeguarding ample scope for any stakeholder at the same time – employers, house owners, public administration et al. –, and keeping the financial and administrative burdens, notably for private enterprises, low. This indicates that accessibility is perceived in terms of help for vulnerable groups – or even as a measure where action should be taken on the basis of individual cases – rather than a strategy towards a society generally open to everybody at any time.

There is no case law on the subject of accessibility in Liechtenstein registered on the website concerning decisions of the Liechtenstein courts <http://www.gerichtsentseide.li/>.

## 2 Accessibility Standards

As mentioned in section 1, some accessibility standards were legally adopted in the Act on Equality of People with Disabilities. One can say that the standard for the public sector is quite well developed and more or less in line with what is provided in the national legislation of other countries and in the EU Directives. However, obligations for the private sector are not strongly implemented in the Liechtenstein legislation.

There are no research studies or reports on the effectiveness and the impact of accessibility standards. But there is some evidence that in the public sector the awareness is growing and there are some results (see section 1).

Some standards are explicitly stated in the By-law to the Act on Equality of People with Disabilities (AEPD). Concerning accessibility of public building, the Swiss norm SN 521 500/1988 (*Behindertengerechtes Bauen*) is applicable (Art. 3 of the By-law to



the AEPD). Additional norms are valid for special buildings like hospitals, rehabilitation centres, old age homes etc.

Concerning internet services of public authorities the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) are applicable (Art. 9 of the By-law to the AEPD).

Articles 27 to 31 of the AEPD set out the legal rights of victims of discrimination and of associations. It is stated that complaints may be presented by concerned persons without a time limit if it is a public building, and up to five years after entry into service in cases of public traffic routes or public transport systems. If there are renovations or amendments, the time period of five years starts again.

Article 31 of the AEPD provides that domestic associations for people with disabilities that have been in existence for more than five years are entitled to bring complaints in their own names. In Article 10 of the By-law to the AEPD, the government has designated the Liechtenstein Association for People with Disabilities as a legitimised association, according to Article 31 of the AEPD. This association also counsels architects, house owners, administrative bodies etc. in order to improve accessibility. Link: Liechtenstein Association for People with Disabilities (*Liechtensteiner Behinderten-Verband*), <http://www.lbv.li/default.aspx>.

Article 7 of the By-law to the AEPD states that building applications concerning public buildings and facilities are sent to the designated associations for people with disabilities (i.e. Liechtenstein Association for People with Disabilities) to make comments on the applications.

### 3 Accessibility in Regulatory Bodies and Systems

As for section 2 (regarding accessibility standards), there are no research studies or reports on the effectiveness and the impact of accessibility in regulatory bodies and systems. Again there is some evidence that in the public sector awareness is rising and that there are some effects, as one can see by the following examples.

There are plans in existence to convert different Offices which are in one way or another dealing with discrimination, to one single Office with more power and more staff resources. The government is considering introducing an Ombudsman Office which might be established in 2013, although this is not sure yet. It possibly will unify the Office for Equal Opportunities, the Integration Office at the Alien's Department, the Office for Equality of People with Disabilities, and the Ombudsman Office for Children and Young Persons, concentrating their activities in one single Ombudsman Office.

At present, the Office for Equal Opportunities (*Stabstelle für Chancengleichheit*) is the administrative department with the broadest spectrum of issues concerning disadvantage and discrimination. The main focus however, based on the Act on Equality of Women and Men (AEWM), is gender equality. The Office is also

mandated by the government to cover other grounds of discrimination (disability, sexual orientation, migration and integration, social disadvantage). It is subordinated to the government (Ministry of Family Affairs and Equal Opportunities). It only partly acts independently. Link: Office for Equal Opportunities (*Stabstelle für Chancengleichheit*), <http://www.scg.llv.li/>.

The Integration Office at the Alien's Department is responsible for integration agreements, integration courses, public affairs, campaigning and other activities for a successful integration of migrants in Liechtenstein. It is legally based on the Act on Foreigners (AF).

The Office for Equality of People with Disabilities (*Büro für die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderung*) was installed by the government according to Art. 22 of the AEPD after the AEPD had entered into force in 2007. It is attached to the (private) Association for People with Disabilities and acts independently. It is managed by a part-time employee (50 percent). Although the Office is affiliated to the Liechtenstein Association for People with Disabilities, it does not act independently enough. The Act on Equality of People with Disabilities (AEPD) characterizes the Office as very much dependent on the government. Additionally, the financial means to implement projects and activities are not sufficient, since the Office focuses not only on accessibility but all aspects of discrimination against people with disabilities. All this indicates that the political intent to combat discrimination is limited and, up to the present, very much under control of the government. Link: Office for Equality of People with Disabilities (*Büro für die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderung*), <http://www.lbv.li/Dienstleistungen/B%C3%BCrof%C3%BCrdieGleichstellung/tabid/916/Default.aspx>.

The Ombudsman Office for Children and Young Persons was installed by virtue of Article 96 to Article 100 of the Act on Children and Youth (ACY).

The establishment of a single Ombudsman Office would be a great opportunity to enact a general anti-discrimination law, covering all grounds of discrimination. But there are no such plans at the time being. At present, measures against discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation, religion and belief, race and ethnic origin are not or not strictly enough enacted in the Liechtenstein legislation.

#### **4 Accessibility Strategies or Action Plans**

There is no comprehensive strategy or action plan in Liechtenstein to combat discrimination on grounds of disability or age. There exist rather isolated activities, described above in sections 1 to 3 and at the end of this section, for instance concerning accessibility of public websites, accessibility of public buildings and transport systems.

Until now, activities to improve the situation of people with disabilities have been selective. For instance, bus stops are marked with white lines, public buses are

equipped with platforms in order to enable people in wheelchairs to enter a bus, and bus stops are announced acoustically in the buses, just to mention some of them. Accessibility standards are established for the public sector, at least. But there is still much to do (cf. also section 1).

Concerning internet services, the website of the National Pension and Disability Insurance is designed in a barrier-free way and holds the certification "Access for All".



In June 2012, the government announced the use of sign language at press conferences in the future and to adapt some websites in a barrier-free way (cf. section 1 and the following link), <http://regierung.li/index.php?id=1185>.

Some municipalities also have designed their website in a barrier-free way:



See for example the link to the municipality of Schaan:

<http://www.schaan.li/CFDOCS/cmsout/admin/index.cfm?GroupID=53&MandID=1&meID=3434&>

But these examples are the highlights rather than the normal case. As already mentioned, much remains to do.

At this point, one should mention that there is much publicity on any aspects of disability in the daily Liechtenstein newspapers, and also on older people. Newspaper articles are published several times per year, and there is a wide reporting on sports activities of people with disabilities (e.g. Special Olympics).

Concerning accessibility, there are some improvements to be mentioned. From the point of view of the Liechtenstein Association for People with Disabilities, co-operation with the national administration is quite well developed with respect to accessibility of public buildings, the design of bus-stops and other measures. Co-operation with the municipalities, though, could still be improved. Quite often there is a lack of knowledge and sensitisation. The Association is involved with about forty projects every year where it counsels architects, house-owners or officials. But it is a question of priorities and resources of the association whether accessibility can be focused on sufficiently or not. Overall, the Association of People with Disabilities is quite satisfied with recent progress.



## 5 European and International Dimensions

Liechtenstein's anti-discrimination policy is strongly influenced by the international and European developments. Monitoring by foreign institutions and expert groups, including not only the EU, but also the United Nations and the Council of Europe (ECRI), raises political awareness and the political ambition to catch up with international standards. This influences legislation as well as strategies and activities.

Thus, the European Year of Equal Opportunities in 2007 had the effect of stimulating research and activities in Liechtenstein. The same holds true for EU Directives and commitments arising from international treaties. On the other hand, since Liechtenstein is not a member of the EU, directives eventually do not have the same effect as they have in member states.

However, again, there are no research studies on effectiveness and impact of the European and international dimension.





## References

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[Integration of People with Disabilities in Sports Clubs and other Associations]

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[Barrier-free throughout Liechtenstein]

<http://www.barrierefreies.li/>.