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Country report

Non-discrimination

Liechtenstein
2022
including summary



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Country report

Non-discrimination

Transposition and implementation at national level of
Council Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78

Liechtenstein

Patricia Hornich

Reporting period 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2021

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACC | Act on the Constitutional Court |
| ACUSSC | Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples |
| AEPD | Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities |
| AEPO | Act on the Employment of Public Officials |
| AEWM | Act on Equality between Women and Men |
| AOP | Act on Occupational Pensions. |
| AS | Act on Statistics |
| AVT | Act on Vocational Training |
| BuA | <i>Berichte und Anträge</i> – Government reports and applications to the State Parliament |
| CCC | Common Civil Code |
| CCP | Code of Civil Procedure |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CJEU | Court of Justice of the European Union |
| CRPD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| ECHR | European Convention on Human Rights |
| ECRI | European Commission against Racism and Intolerance |
| EEA | European Economic Area |
| DPA | Data Protection Act |
| ICERD | International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination |
| LC | Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein |
| LGBl | <i>Landesgesetzblatt – National Law Gazette</i> |
| NOWP | National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act |
| VMR | Verein für Menschenrechte – Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The Principality of Liechtenstein is one of the smallest countries in Europe, with only 39 151 inhabitants as of 30 June 2021. Political power is shared equally between the elected Parliament/the people and the monarch. The Parliament decides on new legislation, which can be amended by the electorate by means of popular initiative or referendum. New laws must be sanctioned by the Prince. Criminal and civil law is handled by the ordinary courts, and appeals are dealt with by the Upper Court in the first instance, and ultimately by the High Court. However, in cases of dispute between citizens and organs of the state, the Administrative Court and the Constitutional Court act as the relevant courts of law. Liechtenstein follows a monist approach to the adoption of international law. The legal system requires that all acts must conform to the Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein and relevant international treaties.

Directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC are based on Article 13 of the EC Treaty. The directives have not been incorporated into the EEA Agreement. Liechtenstein, as a Member State of the EEA and a non-member of the European Union, has refrained from implementing the directives autonomously. The reluctant attitude of Liechtenstein can be explained by the lack of administrative resources and the overriding objective to keep regulatory density as low as possible.

Liechtenstein signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in September 2020. In the course of preparing to ratify the Convention, a need to amend various laws was identified. In particular, there is a need to adapt the current provisions in Section 280 of the Common Civil Code¹ (legal capacity with appointment of a guardian), Section 568 of the Common Civil Code (restriction of testamentary capacity), Articles 10(2) and 11(1) of the Act on Marriage, and Article 3(2) of the Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples (restrictions of legal capacity in marriage and partnership law), which are contrary to the Convention. Likewise, a need to adapt the Human Rights Association Act with regard to Article 33(3) of the Convention was identified.

These amendments have to be made before the Convention can be ratified in Liechtenstein. The corresponding legislative processes continued beyond 2021.

The Liechtenstein Parliament approved Liechtenstein's accession to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled on 7 May 2021. By acceding to the Marrakesh Treaty, Liechtenstein is underlining its will to enable the accessibility of literary, scientific and artistic works for persons with visual impairments and in this way to contribute to improving equal opportunities between sighted and visually impaired people.

On 7 May 2021, the Parliament received the Government's response on the improved integration of persons with disabilities into the labour process.² This outlined which measures are already being implemented, which institutions are involved in the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market and why the introduction of a disability employment act in Liechtenstein would not bring any added value in the view of the Government.

¹ Common Civil Code (*Allgemeine Bürgerlich Gesetzbuch*), [1003001000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li).

² The parliamentary request (postulate) of 27 November 2012 instructed the Government to review how the professional integration of persons with disabilities in Liechtenstein can be improved. As part of this, the legislation should be taken into account and an analysis conducted of potential accompanying measures enabling the (re)integration of persons with disabilities into the world of work (see *Berichte und Anträge der Regierung an den Landtag des Fürstentums Liechtenstein (BuA)* (Government reports and applications to the State Parliament of the Principality of Liechtenstein) No. 17/2021, <https://bua.regierung.li/BuA/default.aspx?nr=17&year=2021&backurl=modus%3dnr%26filter1%3d2021>).

2. Main legislation

In Liechtenstein, there exists no specific anti-discrimination law covering all five grounds under the directives. Besides the anti-discrimination provisions in various national acts listed below, judicial interpretation is required to confirm whether the general anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution and the Criminal Code are sufficient to protect against discrimination.

The following list of anti-discrimination laws in Liechtenstein includes those laws that explicitly cover the relevant grounds of discrimination:

- the Common Civil Code states that the exercise of civil and political rights is not dependent on religious affiliation;
- the Criminal Code³ (for details see below);
- the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD)⁴ protects individuals against any kind of discrimination based on disability (for details see below);
- the Act on Equality between Women and Men (AEWM)⁵ states that disadvantaging someone on the ground of his or her gender is forbidden;
- the Act on Children and Youth⁶ protects children and young persons from discrimination due to sexism, racism, political radicalisation or violence;
- the Act on Postal Services⁷ explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on political, religious or ideological grounds in this area;
- the Act on the Media⁸ declares that media content will be considered to be illegal if it incites or supports discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation;
- the Act on the Employment of Public Officials (AEPO)⁹ governs protection against dismissal in the public sector in relation to the AEWM and the AEPD.

Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein¹⁰

The Constitution states that freedom of religion and belief is guaranteed by the Constitution.¹¹ There are no anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution with respect to other grounds. Since Liechtenstein's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the creation of Article 15(2) of the Act on the Constitutional Court, the fundamental rights laid down in the ECHR have been regularly asserted in individual complaints before the Constitutional Court (Staatsgerichtshof), together with the fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution. As a result, there is effective implementation of the principle of equal treatment. No constitutional amendment is therefore being considered at the present time by the Liechtenstein Government. The international treaties that are deemed explicitly relevant to the Constitutional Court's jurisdiction are listed in Article 15(2) of the Act on the Constitutional Court.¹²

³ Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch, StGB*), LGBl. 1988, No. 37, [1988037000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁴ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (*Gesetz über die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderungen, Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (AEPD)*), BGIG), 25 October 2006, LGBl. 2006, No. 243, [2006243000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁵ Act on Equality between Women and Men (*Gesetz über die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann, Gleichstellungsgesetz*), 10 March 1999, LGBl. 1999, No. 96, [1999096000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁶ Children and Youth Act (*Kinder- und Jugendgesetz, KJG*), 10 December 2008, LGBl. 2009, No. 29, [2009029000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁷ Act on Postal Services (*Gesetz über das liechtensteinische Postwesen, Postgesetz, PG*), 18 December 1998, LGBl. 1999, No. 35, [1999035000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁸ Act on the Media (*Mediengesetz, MedienG*), 19 October 2005, LGBl. 2005, No. 250, [2005250000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁹ Act on the Employment of Public Officials (*Gesetz über das Dienstverhältnis des Staatspersonals, Staatspersonalgesetz, StPG*), 24 April 2008, LGBl. 2008, No. 144, [2008144000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹⁰ Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein (*Verfassung des Fürstentums Liechtenstein, LV*), LGBl. 1921, No. 15.

¹¹ See Article 37 of the Constitution.

¹² Act on the Constitutional Court (*Gesetz über den Staatsgerichtshof, StGHG*), 27 November 2003, LGBl. 2004, No. 32, [2004032000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

Criminal Code

Criminal offences include publicly inciting hatred or discrimination on the grounds of language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation as well as racial discrimination (Section 283(1), first, second and third sentences) and public discrimination against a person or a group of persons on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation in a manner contrary to human dignity (Section 283(1), fourth sentence).

Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD)¹³

This act aims to eliminate and prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities. It seeks to guarantee equal participation in the daily life of society for persons with disabilities. The act covers the fields of education, employment, goods and services, social protection and security as well as social advantages.

International human rights treaties

As a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, Liechtenstein has ratified various international and European agreements on the protection of human rights. It is the ongoing practice of the Liechtenstein Government to ratify an agreement only once the legal and practical preconditions have been created at the domestic level. This ensures that the agreement can be applied domestically from the time of entry into force. The table in Annex 2 includes the most important human rights instruments to which Liechtenstein is a State Party.

On 31 August 2021, the Government adopted a report and motion for the attention of the Parliament on the amendment of the Disability Equality Act to implement Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. The report and motion were dealt with at first reading in the Parliament in October 2021; a second reading will take place in 2022.

In addition, further international treaties with high relevance to anti-discrimination jurisdiction – according to the Act on the Constitutional Court – are in force in Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein law includes various legal acts, covering most aspects of the above-mentioned international human rights treaties. This applies in particular to the equal treatment of women and men and to discrimination on the ground of disability.

3. Main principles and definitions

Out of the grounds covered by this report, direct discrimination is explicitly prohibited only on the ground of disability in the AEPD.¹⁴ It is defined as occurring when a person is treated less favourably than another person has been or would be treated in a comparable situation. Indirect discrimination is defined in the AEPD as occurring when an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons with disabilities at a particular disadvantage compared with persons without disability, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.¹⁵

The Criminal Code says in the first sentence of Section 283(1) that any person who publicly incites hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons on the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation will be sentenced to a period of imprisonment of up to two years. The fourth sentence of Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code clearly states that any person who publicly discriminates against a person or a group of persons on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation in a

¹³ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD), 25 October 2006, [2006243000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2006243000).

¹⁴ See Article 6(1) of the AEPD.

¹⁵ See Article 6(2) of the AEPD.

manner contrary to human dignity must be punished by law. Furthermore, participation as a member of an association whose activity consists of promoting or inciting discrimination within the meaning of the provision is prohibited.¹⁶

Harassment is defined in the AEPD. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to the disability of a person, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.¹⁷ Race and ethnic origin, religion and belief, age and sexual orientation are not included in this definition.

The AEPD¹⁸ prohibits discrimination against persons who assist persons with a disability on a temporary basis or who take care of them, or who report or take action against an act of discrimination on the grounds of disability. There are no further provisions concerning discrimination based on association with persons with particular characteristics – neither regarding persons with disabilities nor in relation to discrimination on other grounds.

The AEPD allows exceptions from the general rule, in cases where there are such rules, and unequal treatment can be 'objectively justified'. Exceptions are allowed specifically in the field of employment if there are genuine and determining occupational requirements, such as special knowledge, skills or physical condition, or if special characteristics are required for a job. Positive action is also allowed.¹⁹ This does not harm anti-discrimination provisions. Further victimisation is prohibited in the AEPD. The complainant must not be penalised as a response to a complaint or as a response to the launching of a legal process to secure a ban on discrimination. Anyone who appears as a witness or informant in court proceedings, or anyone who supports a person affected by discrimination, must not be penalised or disadvantaged.

The AEPD states that multiple discrimination must be taken into account when deciding on compensation for immaterial damages at a court trial.²⁰ There are no provisions regarding multiple discrimination on other grounds, such as religion and belief, sexual orientation, race and ethnic origin or age.

In Liechtenstein, the duty to provide reasonable accommodation is included in the law indirectly, through the prohibition of indirect discrimination. The AEPD provides no provision to set up reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in general, but it states that indirect discrimination has occurred if no attempts have been made to accommodate the situation of the person concerned.²¹

Judicial interpretation would be required to clarify whether or not discrimination on other grounds is also covered, since there are no explicit legal provisions. The Constitution, binding international treaties and provisions in various national laws might eventually justify a conviction. The provisions on victim assistance in the Victim Assistance Act (*Opferhilfegesetz*, OHG) also extend the legal scope of civil law compensation provisions and substantive criminal law provisions with regard to anti-discrimination.²²

¹⁶ See Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code.

¹⁷ See Article 8 of the AEPD.

¹⁸ See Article 5(4) of the AEPD.

¹⁹ See Article 20 of the AEPD, which allows pilot projects in favour of persons with disabilities, including incentives for employers to adapt their workplaces to the needs of persons with disabilities.

²⁰ See Article 23 of the AEPD.

²¹ See Article 7(3) of the AEPD.

²² For example, victims of racist assaults can make a claim for compensation within the framework of criminal proceedings (Section 32 of the Criminal Procedure Code). Compensation for non-material damages can be claimed through civil law. Both criminal law and civil law allow for the use of procedural assistance, which includes, among other things, an exemption from legal costs.

Victim Assistance Act, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2007228000?version=6>.

4. Material scope

The AEPD states that persons with disabilities must not be discriminated against.²³ Further, the AEPD specifies that employees must not be discriminated against, in either a direct or an indirect way. The provisions also include aspects of prohibition of discrimination in recruitment, payment, voluntary social security benefits, vocational training, occupational career and promotion, other working conditions, termination of employment, accessibility to job services, vocational training and other services outside an employment contract, membership and cooperation in trade unions, conditions for access to self-employment, education and access to goods and services.²⁴ There is no explicitly mentioned protection against discrimination on grounds other than disability and gender in either employment or non-employment law.

Since an amendment was made to the Criminal Code in 2016, introducing a comprehensive prohibition of direct discrimination, not only racial discrimination but discrimination on the basis of language, nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation now constitutes a criminal offence. The Criminal Code does not contain any specific provisions about indirect discrimination or the fields of discrimination. It states, however, that a sentence of imprisonment of up to two years will be imposed on any person who refuses to provide a service offered by him or her to a person or group of persons on the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation.²⁵

5. Enforcing the law

Several ministries and workgroups support the enforcement of the law by advising and counselling people affected by discrimination and by coordinating activities. State authorities strongly cooperate with and provide financial support to the non-governmental associations that are listed in Section 6 below.

Complaints are brought to the ordinary courts or, in the case of a complaint against a public authority, to the Administrative Court. Court procedures can be carried out in person or through a representative.²⁶ The representative may be a lawyer, but the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) does not restrict representation to lawyers; the CCP allows any authorised, mandated person – thus including associations – to act as a legal representative. The AEPD defines the circumstances under which associations for persons with disabilities can claim for discrimination on their own behalf.²⁷ Such associations can, on their own behalf, call upon the courts to consider that a discrimination has occurred. As a consequence, the discriminatory actions in question must be eliminated if the court finds that such discrimination has occurred.

Complaints relating to these anti-discrimination provisions are adjudicated by the ordinary courts in the first instance. Claims based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination can be brought to court in the same way as claims based on national law, including the AEPD.

Procedures for addressing discrimination in employment in the private sector are not the same as in the public sector. In private disputes, the ordinary court is the first judicial authority, whereas in disputes between individuals and the public sector it is the Administrative Court (part of the public jurisdiction), followed by the Constitutional Court as the court of last instance.

²³ See Article 5 of the AEPD.

²⁴ See Article 10 of the AEPD in general, and in particular Article 10(1(a to k)).

²⁵ See 283(1) of the Criminal Code.

²⁶ See Articles 25, 26 and 28 of the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP), available at: [1912009001 \(gesetze.li\)](http://1912009001.gesetze.li).

²⁷ See Article 31 of the AEPD.

Court trials must be carried out according to the CCP, although there is an exception with respect to the burden of proof. The AEPD states that, for complaints of direct discrimination, it is obligatory for the defendant to prove that it is more likely, in all the circumstances that he claims, for there to be another reason for the difference in treatment, and that that reason is crucial. There are similar provisions in relation to harassment and indirect discrimination.

Statistical evidence and the use of situation testing in the context of discrimination are not explicitly permitted, but nor are there general restrictions on the use of such material under national law. One can assume, however, that any evidence, including evidence from statistical data, is admissible in court. Due to the low regulatory density and the limited capacity of civil servants within Liechtenstein, there are currently no legal provisions for, or practical examples of, situation testing in Liechtenstein.

The AEPD states that claims have a limitation period of a year, starting from the day on which the person concerned first learned about the act of discrimination and the perpetrator, or in any event lasting three years from the day when the act of discrimination occurred.²⁸ The provisions of the Common Civil Code apply correspondingly to further preconditions for statutory limitation.

The AEPD states that persons with disabilities who are discriminated against are entitled to the restitution of any financial losses incurred, and to compensation for the personal detriment suffered. The victim can also request an injunction to ban or prevent the threat of future discrimination, or to eliminate existing discrimination on the ground of disability. In assessing the extent of compensation for the immaterial injury, the length of the period of discrimination, the seriousness of the act, the extent of the detriment and the question whether there has been multiple discrimination, must be taken into account. No limits on compensation are set out in the law.

6. Equality bodies

Given that the directives have not been transposed into Liechtenstein law, no equality bodies have been officially designated in accordance with the directives. Nevertheless, Liechtenstein has two main official institutions that are entrusted with a broad spectrum of tasks concerning disadvantage and discrimination.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities²⁹ was set up by the Government in accordance with the AEPD. The office is attached to the (private) Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities and acts independently. The office has the following tasks:³⁰

- to submit recommendations or applications for action to the Government;
- to advise and ensure cooperation between public authorities and private individuals;
- to participate in the preparation of relevant legislation;
- to carry out public relations work to raise public awareness;
- to promote social dialogue between employers and employees.

The Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (Verein für Menschenrechte, VMR),³¹ founded in 2016, replaced the former Office of Equal Opportunities. The VMR is the

²⁸ See Article 24 of the AEPD.

²⁹ Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities (*Büro für die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderung*). See <http://www.lbv.li/>.

³⁰ See Article 22 of the AEPD.

³¹ Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (*Verein für Menschenrechte*, VMR). See <https://www.menschenrechte.li/category/ueber-uns/>. Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (*Gesetz über den Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein, VMRG*), 4 November 2016, LGBI. 2016, No. 504, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2016504000?version=1>.

independent national human rights institution of Liechtenstein in accordance with the United Nations Paris Principles of 1993. The association has the following main functions:

- advising authorities and private individuals on human rights issues;
- acting as the independent ombudsman for children and young people;
- counselling people and supporting victims of human rights violations;
- inform the public about the human rights situation in Liechtenstein;
- conducting investigations and recommending appropriate measures to authorities and private individuals;
- giving opinions on draft laws and on the ratification of international conventions;
- promoting dialogue and cooperation with human rights bodies.

The European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) published its second report on the situation of the rule of law in Europe at the beginning of July 2021, which includes a contribution on Liechtenstein produced jointly with the Association for Human Rights.³² In 2021 the VMR held a second round table on LGBTI issues, after the first in 2020. The round table identified awareness raising, networking and gaining information on the topic as the first tasks, and a review of legal regulations to eliminate discriminatory legal provisions was considered necessary.³³

The VMR may, with the consent of a victim of a human rights violation, participate in judicial and administrative proceedings either on behalf of or in support of the victim, represented by an external lawyer contracted by the association.³⁴

It should be mentioned that, in respect of either body, there are no specific complaints mechanisms in place for an individual to complain to a treaty body. Since the purpose of the VMR is the protection and promotion of human rights, the Association can only perform an advisory function on human rights issues with regard to private individuals. The same is true for the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities. Its main responsibility is advising private individuals on issues relating to the integration and equality of persons with disabilities.

7. Key issues

In March 2021, the Government commented on the need to amend current legal provisions concerning the forced admission or placement of persons against their will in institutions or psychiatric clinics. The amendments to the law were judged to be necessary because the existing provisions are partly incomplete and contrary to the CRPD, which Liechtenstein signed in 2020. It was noted that there is a need for regulation covering stays in residential or nursing facilities, as restrictions on freedom of movement in the case of a corresponding stay are currently not regulated by law.

As a result, on 7 May 2021, the Parliament passed amendments to the Social Assistance Act and other laws on welfare accommodation and institutional care.

In May 2021, the State Court handed down a landmark ruling for the equality of LGBTI persons. The ban on the adoption of stepchildren by homosexual couples was deemed unconstitutional according to the Court's ruling. The reason given by the State Court was that the inadmissibility of stepchild adoption for same-sex couples under the current law violated the prohibition of discrimination under Article 8, in conjunction with Article 14, of the European Convention on Human Rights – Article 14 because the adoption of

³² European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI), *State of the rule of law in Europe: Reports from National Human Rights Institutions*, June 2021, <http://ennhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Regional-Rule-of-Law-Report-2021.pdf>.

³³ See <https://www.menschenrechte.li/category/menschenrechte/sexuelle-orientierung-lgbti/runder-tisch-lgbti/>.

³⁴ The legal basis for this is stated in Article 5 of the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein.

stepchildren in Liechtenstein is only possible for heterosexual couples, not for same-sex couples.

The Court's judgment refers, *inter alia*, to the following reference cases from the European Court of Human Rights:

- *Orlandi and Others v. Italy*, No. 26431/12, 14 December 2017, Paragraphs 110 et seq. and 192;
- *X. and Others v. Austria* [GC], No. 19010/07, 19 February 2013;
- *Emonet and Others v. Switzerland*, No. 39051/03, 13 December 2007, Paragraph 66;
- *Schalk and Kopf v. Austria*, No. 30141/04, 24 June 2010, Paragraph 94 f.

Thus, the corresponding provisions must be repealed and newly regulated by the legislature. This is expected to happen in 2022.

Liechtenstein is preparing to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it signed in May 2020. Inclusion and accessibility are the overarching objectives of the Convention. In the run-up to ratification, necessary legislative amendments were identified, which have to be implemented before the Convention can be ratified in Liechtenstein. The corresponding process could not be completed in 2021 and is currently still ongoing. As soon as the relevant legislative amendments have been made, ratification of the CRPD can take place.

Liechtenstein was issued a recommendation, as part of the review by the UN Human Rights Council in 2018,³⁵ to continue taking measures towards creating comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would include all prohibited grounds for discrimination. The Government responded that, on the basis of existing laws, Liechtenstein provides comprehensive protection against discrimination. However, the introduction of a general anti-discrimination law would contradict the liberal economic order of the country and could provoke possible conflicts with the principle of freedom of contract. No further action has been taken by the Government in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a very dominant topic for Liechtenstein in 2021. In connection with the introduction of compulsory certification, the VMR formulated recommendations for the attention of the Government, which were implemented. With regard to vaccination privileges, the VMR emphasised in its opinion for the attention of the Government that, in particular, there must be no discrimination:

- on the basis of non-vaccination in citizens' dealings with public authorities (principle of equality of rights);
- against unvaccinated (or vaccinated) persons for activities that are vital for the individual (employment and exercise of profession; visiting shops for basic needs, use of public transport for these purposes, etc.).

Overall, the VMR considers the Government's measures to be proportionate and in conformity with human rights. A brief investigation by the Liechtenstein Institute also came to the conclusion that the Parliament and the Government had taken all measures during the coronavirus pandemic on the basis of their ordinary competences as provided for in the Constitution and the law. The legal measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Liechtenstein included the Ordinance on Measures to Control the Coronavirus (the COVID-19 Ordinance), published on 25 June 2020.³⁶ This COVID-19 Ordinance has been continuously adapted to pandemic developments. Pursuant to Article 11 of the COVID-19 Ordinance, Liechtenstein applies the provisions of the Swiss COVID-19 Ordinance on the

³⁵ UN Human Rights Council (2018), 'Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Liechtenstein' (A/HRC/38/16).

³⁶ Ordinance on Measures to Control the Coronavirus (COVID-19 Ordinance), version as of 06.05.2021, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2020206000?version=31>.

maintenance and adequate supply of care and essential medical supplies to the population, in accordance with the guidelines of the Swiss Society of Intensive Care Medicine (SGI). These guidelines state that the available resources are to be distributed without discrimination, i.e. without unjustified unequal treatment according to age, gender, place of residence, nationality, religious affiliation, social status, insurance status or chronic disability. In relation to the COVID-19 crisis, no amendments have been made to the AEPD, nor is any legal reference between the COVID-19 Ordinance and the AEPD in place.

INTRODUCTION

The national legal system

Liechtenstein's Constitution defines the country as 'a constitutional, hereditary monarchy on a democratic and parliamentary basis',³⁷ where 'the power of the State is embodied in the Reigning Prince and the People'.³⁸ This means that political power is shared equally between the elected Parliament/the people and the monarch. However, the Prince must approve every law and financial resolution in order for it to attain legal force.³⁹ Article 45 of the Constitution states that the Parliament (Landtag) is the 'legal organ which represents and asserts the rights and interests of the people in relation to the Government in accordance with the constitution'. In respect of international relations, the Parliament is not allowed to amend a treaty that has already been signed by the Government, although it can accept or reject it completely. In addition, the people have the direct democratic rights of initiative and referendum, including the right to hold a referendum on international treaties. Therefore, new laws and amendments to laws and the Constitution can be initiated and decided on by the people in a popular vote.

The members of the Government are selected on the recommendation of the Parliament and are appointed by the reigning Prince. The Prime Minister has to countersign the laws and financial resolutions that have been passed by the Parliament and signed by the reigning Prince.⁴⁰

The legal system is dual in nature. Criminal and civil law is handled by the Ordinary Court (*Landgericht*); appeals in the first instance are dealt with by the Upper Court (*Obergericht*), and ultimately by the High Court (*Oberster Gerichtshof*). In cases of dispute between citizens and organs of the state, the Administrative Court (*Verwaltungsgericht*) and the Constitutional Court (*Staatsgerichtshof*) act as the relevant courts of law.⁴¹

A person in Liechtenstein may assert claims arising from human rights, which are enshrined as fundamental rights in the Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein, against any state authority. As the final national instance, the Liechtenstein Constitutional Court (*Staatsgerichtshof*) decides on the basis of Article 15 of the Constitution on individual complaints alleging a violation of human rights.

The national laws of Liechtenstein and the international treaties that have primary relevance for anti-discrimination in Liechtenstein are listed in the annexes.

List of main legislation transposing and implementing the directives

Liechtenstein is not a member of the EU. Directive 2000/43/EC (Council Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin) and Directive 2000/78/EC (Council Directive establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation) have not been transposed to EEC law and therefore to national law in Liechtenstein. Both these directives were considered not to be EEA relevant, because Articles 6 and 13 of the Treaty establishing the

³⁷ Article 2 of the Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 1921 (for English version, copy the following link into web browser): <https://www.gesetze.li/lilexprod/dloadpdf.jsp?smatik=201>.

³⁸ Article 2 of the Constitution.

³⁹ Article 9 of the Constitution.

⁴⁰ Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 1921 (for English version, copy the following link into web browser): <https://www.gesetze.li/lilexprod/dloadpdf.jsp?smatik=201>.

⁴¹ The legal system requires that all laws must be in conformity with the Constitution and with relevant international treaties. Article 104(1) of the Constitution requires that a Constitutional Court be established as a court of public law to protect the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, to decide in conflicts of jurisdiction between the courts and the administrative authorities, and to act as a disciplinary court for Government ministers. Article 104(2) states that the Constitutional Court shall have jurisdiction to review the constitutionality of laws and international treaties and the legality of Government regulations and that, in such matters, it may declare their annulment.

European Community (TEC) (in the Amsterdam version) form the legal basis, and there are no provisions that correspond to these articles in the EEA Agreement. An adoption of the directives would thus have extended the scope of the EEA Agreement.

The following national laws are of relevance in terms of equality and anti-discrimination legislation:

- the Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein states that freedom of religion and belief is guaranteed by the Constitution. There are no anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution with respect to other grounds (for details see below);
- the Common Civil Code (CCC)⁴² states that the exercise of civil and political rights is not dependent on religious affiliation;
- the Criminal Code⁴³ covers the grounds of age, disability, race, ethnic origin, religion, belief, sex, sexual orientation and gender; material scope: all sectors (for details see below);
- the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD)⁴⁴ protects individuals against any kind of discrimination based on disability (for details see below); ground covered: disability; material scope: all sectors;
- the Act on Children and Youth⁴⁵ protects children and young persons from discrimination due to sexism, racism, political radicalisation or violence;
- the Act on Postal Services⁴⁶ explicitly prohibits any discrimination based on political, religious or ideological grounds in this area;
- the Act on the Media⁴⁷ declares that media content will be considered to be illegal if it incites or supports discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation;
- the Act on the Employment of Public Officials (AEPO)⁴⁸ governs protection against dismissal in the public sector in relation to the Act on Equality between Women and Men (AEWM) and the AEPD; grounds covered: disability and gender; material scope: protection against dismissal in reference to the AEPD (Article 22(3)) and the AEWM;
- the Act on Informing and Consulting Employees in Enterprises⁴⁹ states that employees are not allowed to be treated less favourably due to their involvement in a workers' representative organisation.

Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein⁵⁰

Article 15(2) of the Act on the Constitutional Court governs fundamental human rights and grants effective implementation of the principle of equal treatment. No constitutional amendment is therefore being considered at the present time by the Liechtenstein Government. The international treaties that are deemed explicitly relevant to the Constitutional Court's jurisdiction are listed in Article 15(2) of the Act on the Constitutional Court.⁵¹

⁴² Common Civil Code (*Allgemeine Bürgerlich Gesetzbuch*), [1003001000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁴³ Criminal Code, 1988, [1988037000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

In 2016, an amendment to Section 283(1-3) of the Code entered into force, introducing a comprehensive prohibition against discrimination. Criminal offences now include publicly inciting hatred or discrimination on the grounds of language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation as well as racial discrimination.

⁴⁴ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities, 25 October 2006, [2006243000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁴⁵ Children and Youth Act, 10 December 2008, [2009029000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁴⁶ Act on Postal Services, 18 December 1998.

⁴⁷ Act on the Media, 19 October 2005.

⁴⁸ Act on the Employment of Public Officials, 24 April 2008.

⁴⁹ Act on Informing and Consulting Employees in Enterprises (*Gesetz über die Unterrichtung und Anhörung der Arbeitnehmerschaft in den Betrieben, Mitwirkungsgesetz, MWG*), 23 October 1997, LGBl. 1997, No. 211.

⁵⁰ Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 1921.

⁵¹ Act on the Constitutional Court (*Gesetz über den Staatsgerichtshof, StGHG*), 27 November 2003, LGBl. 2004, No. 32, [2004032000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

Criminal Code

The Criminal Code states that any person shall be punished with imprisonment if they publicly incite hatred or discrimination against another person or any group of persons on the grounds of their race, language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation.⁵² On the same grounds, the Criminal Code penalises the public dissemination of ideologies which systematically denigrate or defame; the organisation of or participation in propaganda campaigns; the public denial or gross belittlement of or seeking of justification for genocide or other crimes against humanity; refusing to provide a service that is intended to be provided to the general public; and participation as a member of a group whose activity consists in promoting or inciting discrimination within the meaning of the relevant provision.

Furthermore, the Criminal Code states that any person shall likewise be punished who, with regard to discriminatory written materials, audio or video recordings, signs transmitted by electronic media, images or other objects of this kind,

- produces, imports or stores them or brings them into circulation for the purposes of dissemination;
- publicly advertises, exhibits, offers or shows them.

Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD)⁵³

This act aims to eliminate and prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities. It seeks to guarantee equal participation in the daily life of society for persons with disabilities. The act covers the fields of education, employment, goods and services, social protection and security as well as social advantages.

Other types of legislation

In addition, the following grounds of discrimination are protected by other types of legislation in very limited circumstances:⁵⁴

- religion;
- belief;
- race;
- ethnic origin;
- nationality;
- ideology;
- sexual orientation;
- age;
- language.

⁵² In April 2016, an amendment to Section 283 of the Criminal Code entered into force, introducing a comprehensive prohibition against discrimination. While before, only racial discrimination constituted a criminal offence, the offence now also includes publicly inciting hatred or discrimination on the grounds of language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation. The amendment of the Criminal Code in 2016 followed a recommendation from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), contained in its Fourth Country Report in 2013. See Section 283(1-2) of the Criminal Code.

⁵³ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities, 25 October 2006, [2006243000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁵⁴ Act on the Media, 19 October 2005. Grounds covered: racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation; material scope: all media and media owners under the jurisdiction of Liechtenstein. Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples (ACUSSC) (*Gesetz über die eingetragene Partnerschaft gleichgeschlechtlicher Paare, Partnerschaftsgesetz, PartG*), 16 March 2011, LGBI. 2011, No. 250: [2011350000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#). Grounds covered: sexual orientation; material scope: inheritance law, social insurance law, occupational pension provision, immigration and naturalisation law, tax law and the other areas of public law. The Constitution provides equality before the law only to Liechtenstein citizens, although the case law of the Constitutional Court has extended the principle of equality before the law to foreigners to a certain extent, covering the field of public services and goods. See the case law of the Constitutional Court: StGH 2013/167 (*Erhebung von Gebühren im Ausländerrecht – Ungleichbehandlung*), https://www.gerichtentscheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=ypRkEt5GShU6UZJjINtNoOUtqCRtb34zuLBLJ_xRQ14Bp3Nhcl_A8s4xlc56h_mpOvk_Rok1pXMc0BPP0hv_3_mnPpQkYK2XrBBuZ4SjiNubXo24U0CPDnZyj38DBP9iIRBOWA2.

1 GENERAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Constitutional provisions on protection against discrimination and the promotion of equality

Articles 27bis to 44 of the Liechtenstein Constitution enshrine numerous fundamental rights and freedoms. In particular, the Constitution of Liechtenstein includes the following articles dealing with non-discrimination:

| Article | Type of clause | Grounds covered | Material scope |
|-----------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Article 27bis ⁵⁵ | A general clause, not listing any specific grounds of discrimination. The article says: 'Human dignity must be respected and protected. No one shall be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' ⁵⁶ | Basic principle of human dignity of all Liechtenstein citizens; prohibits inhuman or degrading treatment | General |
| Article 31 | A general clause on equality between persons with Liechtenstein citizenship. | Basic principle of equality of all Liechtenstein citizens | General |
| Article 37(1) ¹⁰ | An explicit clause that guarantees freedom of religion and conscience | Religion, belief | General |
| Article 39 ¹⁰ | A specific clause stating that the exercise of civil and political rights is not dependent on religious affiliation | Religion, belief | General |
| Article 40 ¹⁰ | A clause covering freedom of speech (<i>Meinungsfreiheit</i>) | Religion, belief | General |
| Article 41 ¹⁰ | A clause covering the right of assembly and association (<i>Vereins- und Versammlungsrecht</i>) | Not explicitly specified | General |

These provisions do not apply to all areas covered by the directives. Their material scope is not broader than those of the directives. These provisions are directly applicable.

These provisions can be enforced against private individuals (as well as against the state).

The case law of the Constitutional Court has derived further fundamental rights from those enumerated above or has recognised them as independent, non-codified fundamental rights. Some fundamental rights only apply to Liechtenstein citizens. In particular, these include political rights and freedom of residence. While the text of the Constitution provides equality before the law only to Liechtenstein citizens, the case law of the Constitutional Court has extended the principle of equality before the law to foreigners.

Liechtenstein uses the incorporation or monist system, whereby a ratified agreement becomes part of domestic law on the date when it enters into force, without the need for separate legislation to be introduced. The Constitutional Court has often ruled on the status of constitutional treaties and has repeatedly found that international treaties approved by

⁵⁵ Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 1921.

⁵⁶ As far as the author is aware, this article has never been interpreted or challenged to include protection on the basis of sexual orientation.

Parliament enjoy at least the same rank as legislation. However, international treaties are not often used to censure discrimination based on the five grounds given by the directive. For example, the following decisions of the Liechtenstein courts refer to the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in connection with discrimination:

- Constitutional Court of Liechtenstein (StGH)⁵⁷ 2013/167 Paragraph 9.1 mentions Article 1 ICERD;
- Constitutional Court of Liechtenstein (StGH) 2013/009 Paragraph 2.6, facts and recitals 1.2 and 5, refer to ICERD and to the definition of racial discrimination. Constitutional Court of Liechtenstein (StGH) 2011/203 recital 4 also refers to ICERD and makes a definition of racial discrimination.

Anyone who believes that a final decision or decree of a court or public authority has violated one of his or her rights guaranteed under the Constitution or rights guaranteed under an international convention for which an individual right of complaint has been recognised by the legislative power⁵⁸ may appeal the decision or decree to the Constitutional Court. This entails that the various international conventions for the protection of human rights are considered as substantive constitutional law. Only after exhausting national legal remedies can a violation of fundamental rights then be asserted before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Since Liechtenstein's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and the creation of Article 15(2) of the Act on the Constitutional Court,⁵⁹ the fundamental rights laid down in the ECHR have been regularly asserted in individual complaints before the Constitutional Court, together with the fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution. As a result, there is effective implementation of the principle of equal treatment. No constitutional amendment is therefore being considered at the present time by the Liechtenstein Government.

⁵⁷ Staatsgerichtshof. See <https://www.stgh.li/en>.

⁵⁸ Liechtenstein has recognised the individual right to complaint under the following conventions: European Convention of 4 November 1950 for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; International Covenant of 16 December 1966 on Civil and Political Rights; International Convention of 21 December 1965 on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention of 10 December 1984 against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

⁵⁹ Act on the Constitutional Court, [2004032000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li).

2 THE DEFINITION OF DISCRIMINATION

2.1 Grounds of unlawful discrimination explicitly covered

Gender and disability are the two grounds of discrimination that are explicitly prohibited in the main legislation transposing and implementing the two EU anti-discrimination directives, as listed in the introduction.

Besides gender (which is covered by the Act on Equality between Women and Men),⁶⁰ disability (covered under the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities)⁶¹ is the only ground that is explicitly covered by specific anti-discrimination law in Liechtenstein.

Furthermore, the fourth sentence in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code⁶² includes a comprehensive prohibition against discrimination on the grounds of:

- language;⁶³
- nationality;
- ethnic origin;
- ideology;⁶⁴
- gender;
- disability;
- age;
- sexual orientation.⁶⁵

The Act on the Media⁶⁶ declares that media content will be considered to be illegal if it incites or supports discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. The act is applicable to media companies and media owners in the territory of Liechtenstein, whereas the Criminal Code⁶⁷ is applicable to a wider circle of persons.

The Act on the Employment of Public Officials (AEPO)⁶⁸ regulates protection against dismissal in reference to the AEPD (Article 22(3)) and the Act on Equality between Women and Men (AEWM).⁶⁹

2.1.1 Definition of the grounds of unlawful discrimination within the directives

There is no general anti-discrimination law in Liechtenstein. Thus, besides the AEPD, Article 3(1) of which provides a definition of the ground of disability, no definition of any other grounds of discrimination is provided. Definitions may be made in reference to the ECHR. In 2005, the Liechtenstein Constitutional Court pointed out that, according to the

⁶⁰ Act on Equality between Women and Men (*Gesetz über die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann, Gleichstellungsgesetzes, GLG*), 10 March 1999, [1999096000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁶¹ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities, 25 October 2006, [2006243000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁶² Criminal Code, 1988, [1988037000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

Criminal offences include publicly inciting hatred or discrimination on the grounds of language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation as well as racial discrimination (Section 283(1), first, second and third sentences) and public discrimination against a person or a group of persons on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation in a manner contrary to human dignity (Section 283(1), fourth sentence).

⁶³ Liechtenstein has been a member of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages since 1998. Furthermore, language has been explicitly mentioned as an inadmissible ground of discrimination in the Criminal Code since 1 April 2016.

⁶⁴ The Criminal Code does not define ideology. Thus, judicial interpretation would be needed here.

⁶⁵ As regards sexual orientation, there are no legal cases known to the author that refer to the adopted provisions of the Criminal Code that entered into force in April 2016.

⁶⁶ Act on the Media, 19 October 2005.

⁶⁷ Criminal Code, 1988, [1988037000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁶⁸ Act on the Employment of Public Officials, 24 April 2008.

⁶⁹ Act on Equality between Women and Men, 10 March 1999, [1999096000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

settled case law of the Constitutional Court, the ECHR holds a constitutional status,⁷⁰ and that the definitions within the ECHR are applicable to Liechtenstein and national law.

a) Racial or ethnic origin

The Liechtenstein legal framework does not contain a specific legal definition of race or ethnic origin.

In a ruling in 2011, the Administrative Court stated that a legal distinction based on a link to nationality did not constitute discrimination per se. This was justified by the fact that the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination states in Article 1(2) that 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which a State Party may make between its own nationals and foreign nationals' does not fall under the prohibition of racial discrimination as long as the distinction is not made on the basis of a 'frowned upon (taboo)' characteristic.⁷¹ With this ruling, reference can be made to the applicability of the definition in the ICERD, which entered into force in Liechtenstein on 31 March 2000, for specific definitions of the grounds of discrimination.⁷²

In the light of the judicial decisions of the State Court and other courts in Liechtenstein, it can be said that Liechtenstein courts refer to and apply the ICERD.⁷³

Further legal interpretation would be necessary to provide guidance on the limits or scope of ethnic origin or race.

b) Religion and belief

The Liechtenstein legal framework does not contain a specific legal definition of religion or belief. An interpretation of how 'religion' is defined may be based on Article 9 of the ECHR.

c) Disability

Article 3(1) of the AEPD gives the following definition of disability:

'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 the labour market. Such a condition is not deemed temporary if it is likely to last for more than 6 months.'

Comparing this definition with the definition of disability based on Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (referring to the CJEU case of *HK Danmark, Ring and Skouboe Werge*), it can be said that the definition in Article 3(1)(a) of the AEPD largely corresponds to that in Art 1(2) of the CRPD. In this respect, there is

⁷⁰ See Constitutional Court 2005/89, <http://www.gerichtsentscheide.li/default.aspx?mode=suche&txt=EMRK&gericht=2&vonjahr=2005&bisjahr=2006&id=1601&backurl=?mode=suche%26txt=EMRK%26gericht=2%26vonjahr=2005%26bisjahr=2006>.

⁷¹ The Court came to this interpretation of the law in its ruling StGH 2011/203 with reference to other legal treatises (Kälin, W. (2000), *Grundrechte im Kulturkonflikt*, Zürich, Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, p. 102; Waldmann, B. (2003), *Das Diskriminierungsverbot von Art. 8 Abs. 2 BV als besonderer Gleichheitssatz*, Bern, Stämpfli Verlag), where the term *verpönt* ('frowned upon') was used. See https://www.gerichtsentscheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=j1hdehR988NZFg80gqVNoy5HCs5abV9q4sNGiafRA9kPktkcwOq-q8v3fi_tL4IdOmQ0uhRNDKVV4VpELQtTMyyVBeo8DEchUF058Q_50.

⁷² In Article 1, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) defines racial discrimination as: 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.'

⁷³ See court rulings: StGH 2013/167 Recital 9.1 mentions Art. 1 ICERD. StGH 2013/009 No. 2.6 Facts and Recitals 1.2 and 5 refer to the ICERD and the definition of racial discrimination; see also StGH 2011/203 Recital 4.

hardly any need for action. However, the concept of disability in Article 29 of the Act on Disability Insurance (*Gesetz über die Invalidenversicherung, IVG*)⁷⁴ must be reviewed with regard to its compatibility with the concept of disability in the CRPD because Article 29 of the IVG describes disability as 'the probable permanent or prolonged incapacity to work caused by a physical or mental impairment of health resulting from a birth defect, illness or accident'. However, in contrast to the CRPD, it does not follow the social-integrative approach; rather, the IVG has adopted the traditional medical defect-centred approach.

In the Government's report to the Liechtenstein Parliament concerning the enactment of the AEPD in 2006,⁷⁵ it was stated with regard to the definition of disability that the disability insurance scheme determines the degree of disability on the basis of existing earning capacity.⁷⁶ With this, the Government provided an answer to the discrepancy between the social-integrative approach and the traditional medical defect-centred approach used by the IVG. In addition, the legislature made a reference to the World Health Organization's holistic concept of disability assessment, which focuses on the consequences of health disorders rather than on the causes. Against this background and taking into account the intention of the legislator (referring to the definition of disability in the Act on Disability Insurance), it can be assumed that illness may be regarded as a disability under the AEPD.

d) Age

The law is silent on the definition of age in respect of discrimination. Only one definition is given in the Act on Children and Youth, stating that children and young people up to and including the age of 18 enjoy special protection.

e) Sexual orientation

The Liechtenstein legal framework does not contain a specific legal definition of sexual orientation. Even the Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples (ACUSSC)⁷⁷ contains no definition of sexual orientation. Based on the case law known to the author, no definitions of sexual orientation have been made by the courts.

2.1.2 Multiple discrimination

In Liechtenstein, multiple discrimination is prohibited by law.

The AEPD states in Article 23 (in combination with Article 5) that multiple discrimination must be taken into account when deciding on compensation for immaterial damages at a court trial. However, there is no definition or description of grounds of multiple discrimination in the sense of listing possible grounds, or even combinations of grounds, to fall under the term 'multiple discrimination'. There are no provisions regarding multiple discrimination on other grounds (religion or belief, sexual orientation, race and ethnic origin or age). The author is not aware of any plans for the adoption of such rules.

In Liechtenstein, there is no case law dealing with multiple discrimination.

⁷⁴ Act on Disability Insurance (*Gesetz über die Invalidenversicherung*), 23 December 1959, [1960005000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

⁷⁵ See <https://bua.regierung.li/BuA/default.aspx?nr=15&year=2006&erweitert=true>.

⁷⁶ The AEPD does not state that only persons who have been officially assessed as having a disability under the Act on Disability Insurance will qualify as disabled under the AEPD.

⁷⁷ Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples, [2011350000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

2.1.3 Assumed and associated discrimination

a) Discrimination by assumption

In Liechtenstein, discrimination based on a perception or assumption of a person's characteristics is not explicitly prohibited in national law. National law (including case law) does not explicitly prohibit discrimination by assumption.

b) Discrimination by association

In the national law of Liechtenstein, discrimination based on association with persons with particular characteristics is prohibited to a limited extent in terms of disability.

According to Article 5(2) to (4)⁷⁸ of the AEPD, the prohibition of discrimination based on disability shall also apply to any parent who is discriminated against because of the disability of a child (including a stepchild, adopted child or foster child) whose care they provide, as required because of the disability. Furthermore, the AEPD extends the provision to relatives and other persons who provide persons with disabilities with the care required for their disabilities. The AEPD can therefore be viewed as being in line with the judgments in case C-303/06 (*Coleman v. Attridge Law and Steve Law*).

In Liechtenstein, there is no case law dealing with discrimination by association.

2.2 Direct discrimination (Article 2(2)(a))

a) Prohibition and definition of direct discrimination

In Liechtenstein, direct discrimination is prohibited in national law. It is defined.

Out of the grounds covered by this report, direct discrimination is explicitly prohibited on the ground of disability in Article 6(1) of the AEPD. It is defined as occurring when a person is treated less favourably than another person has been or would be treated in a comparable situation. The material scope is not explicitly defined within the AEPD regarding direct discrimination. It is applicable to the areas of employment, education and social protection, but the AEPD does not include a specific provision to explicitly prohibit discrimination against persons with disability regarding access to and the supply of goods and services (see chapter 3.2). Article 2(2) covers some exceptions to the general non-discrimination regulations in Article 2(1). For example, privately offered goods and services, insofar as they do not include specific items for persons with disabilities, are excluded from non-discrimination law (for instance, if a beautician offers her services in a treatment room within her private building, the AEPD regulations regarding accessibility do not apply).⁷⁹ On the basis of Article 2 of the AEPD, it can be said that the production or sale (in terms of services) of goods that cannot be used by certain persons with disabilities because of their impairment cannot be treated as a form of discrimination. This also applies to the supply of such goods.

The fourth sentence of Section 283 of the Criminal Code states that any person shall be punished with imprisonment if they publicly discriminate against another person or group of persons, which has to be understood as a general prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, even if the Criminal Code is not a comprehensive anti-discrimination act. The Criminal Code does not provide a definition of direct discrimination.

⁷⁸ The AEPD contains a prohibition of discrimination against persons who assist persons with a disability on a temporary basis or who take care of them, or who report or take action against an act of discrimination on the ground of disability (Article 5(4)).

⁷⁹ Where such a service was offered in a building open to the public, the anti-discrimination prohibitions of the AEPD would apply.

b) Justification for direct discrimination

In Liechtenstein, there are no specific requirements for a test to justify direct discrimination.

There has not been any recent case law regarding this issue. Nevertheless, judicial interpretation would be required, and the person claiming that discrimination had taken place would have to produce evidence.

2.3 Indirect discrimination (Article 2(2)(b))

a) Prohibition and definition of indirect discrimination

In Liechtenstein, indirect discrimination is prohibited in national law. It is defined only on the ground of disability (AEPD, Article 6(2)). It is defined as occurring where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice, or characteristic of a designed environment, may put persons with disabilities at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion or practice, or characteristic of a designed environment, is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

There are no legal prohibitions in place regarding indirect discrimination in relation to other grounds. The specific anti-discrimination provisions of the fourth sentence of Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, which punish discrimination on the grounds of race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, do not include any definition of indirect discrimination. The law constitutes a prohibition of discrimination against another person or a group of persons (Section 283(1), fourth sentence, of the Criminal Code).

There has not been any case law on the matter.

b) Justification test for indirect discrimination

According to the AEPD (Article 6(2)), differential treatment is objectively justified if provisions, criteria or procedures are necessary in order to achieve a legitimate aim, although no specific justification test is mentioned. In addition, the means of achieving that aim must be appropriate. Liechtenstein law thus states that justification of indirect discrimination is possible in certain situations.

The justification for indirect discrimination in the AEPD is compatible with the directives.

2.3.1 Statistical evidence

a) Legal framework

In Liechtenstein, there is legislation regulating the collection of personal data.

The Data Protection Act (DPA),⁸⁰ which refers to the EU General Data Protection Regulation, entered into force on 26 May 2018 (EU Regulation 2016/679 and 2016/680 as of 27 April 2016), and governs the protection of the personality and the fundamental rights of natural persons with regard to the collection and processing of their personal data. The provisions of Chapter III, Articles 45 and 46 DPA apply to the processing of personal data by public bodies responsible for the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or for the execution of criminal sentences, insofar as they process data for the purpose of carrying out those tasks.

⁸⁰ Data Protection Act (*Datenschutzgesetz, DSG*), 4 October 2018, LGBl. 2018, No. 272, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2018272000?version=1>.

In Article 46(o), the DPA specifies sensitive personal data that requires particular protection as a separate category of personal data. This special category of data consists of:

- data regarding race/ethnicity;
- data regarding religious, ideological or political beliefs;
- data on sexual orientation;
- genetic data;
- biometric data for the unique identification of a natural person;
- health data.

The law is silent about how to identify data on sexual orientation, for instance, as national law does not provide any specific definition of sexual orientation.

Data collection in respect of information about disability and age is not explicitly mentioned in the DPA, but could be subsumed under 'biometric' or 'health' data.

The processing of data from this category is only permitted if it is absolutely necessary to fulfil the institution's duties and if:

- a law expressly provides for it;
- it serves to safeguard the vital interests of a person; or
- it relates to personal data which is made public by the data subject himself/herself.

Where special categories of personal data are processed, appropriate safeguards have to be provided to protect the legal interests of the data subjects.

The DPA contains no explicit regulation regarding data collection for the purposes of litigation and positive action measures. The officials of the Data Protection Agency would have to decide whether or not data collection for the purposes of litigation and positive action measures should be allowed in a specific case. Data collection is allowed for statistical or scientific purposes without an explicit duty to inform the person involved about that collection of data (Article 27 of the DPA).

The Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) does not contain any specific regulations allowing statistical data to be admitted as evidence in court with regard to indirect discrimination. The same applies to the DPA. Thus, judicial interpretation would be required to clarify whether statistical data is admissible as evidence in court.

b) Practice

Statistical evidence is not used in practice in order to establish indirect discrimination. Its use is not explicitly permitted by national law for this purpose. The same applies to case law, although there is no general restriction on the use of statistical data. However, one can assume that any evidence, including evidence from statistical data, is admissible in court. Up to now, no case of discrimination has been brought to court using statistical data as evidence.

2.4 Harassment (Article 2(3))

a) Prohibition and definition of harassment

In Liechtenstein, harassment is prohibited in national law. It is defined.

Article 8 of the AEPD prohibits harassment within its specific scope on grounds of disability. Harassment is defined as unwanted modes of behaviour towards a person with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person and of creating an intimidating, hostile,

degrading, humiliating or abusive environment. Such behaviour can relate to a person's disability.

Furthermore, harassment is prohibited on the ground of sex in Section 203 of the Criminal Code. Thus, sexual harassment is prohibited but, apart from gender and disability, no other ground is explicitly mentioned as being subject to protection against harassment.

In Liechtenstein, harassment explicitly constitutes a form of discrimination based on the grounds of disability and sex. Article 8 of the AEPD clearly states that harassment constitutes discrimination.

There has not been any recent case law on the matter.

b) Scope of liability for harassment

In Liechtenstein, where harassment is perpetrated by an employee, the employer and the employee are liable. However, the law is silent about the extent of liability, leaving it for the court to determine whether the employer and employee are severally liable and, if so, their share of liability.

In relation to the AEPD, the individual who has been practising discrimination or harassment can be held liable under the terms of Article 23 of the AEPD.

Employers may be held liable for the actions of their employees. Article 10(2) of the AEPD states that discrimination also exists when an employer fails to act to remedy a situation of harassment by employees in accordance with statutory regulations and the norms and standards set out in the labour contract. This means that the employer can also be punished.

2.5 Instructions to discriminate (Article 2(4))

a) Prohibition of instructions to discriminate

In Liechtenstein, instructions to discriminate are prohibited in national law. Instructions are defined. Article 9 of the AEPD states that discrimination occurs when a person instructs another to discriminate or harass someone on the ground of disability. The AEPD states this without placing limitations on the scope of the regulation.

The first sentence in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code says that any person who publicly incites hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation will be punishable by imprisonment for up to two years. As the Criminal Code only refers to 'incitement' and does not explicitly include the text 'instructs another person to discriminate', judicial interpretation would be needed to determine whether 'instructions to discriminate' fall under this legal definition.

In Liechtenstein, instructions explicitly constitute a form of discrimination, as set out above.

b) Scope of liability for instructions to discriminate

In Liechtenstein, the instructor and the discriminator are liable.

According to the first sentence in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, a person who publicly incites hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons can be held liable for this action. As the law does not explicitly include the wording 'instructs another person to discriminate', judicial interpretation would be needed to determine whether

'instructions to discriminate' fall under this legal definition. Regarding the discriminator, the fourth sentence in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code states that the person who carries out the discrimination can be punished by imprisonment of up to two years.

Article 9 of the AEPD stipulates that people who give instructions to another person to discriminate against others may be held liable. It may be assumed that employers can be held directly liable for the actions of their employees as long as they are directly involved in the instruction to discriminate against others (see also Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code).

Based on the law as it stands, there is no general exclusion clause for holding a person liable for discriminating against persons on any grounds other than disability and sex because she or he received an instruction to do so from another person. There are no specific provisions regarding the liability of people who have given instructions to discriminate (e.g. to what extent they can be held liable) or of the person who discriminated against another person because she or he received an instruction to do so. Judicial interpretation is required, as such a situation would have to be evaluated and legally decided upon based on the individual case, given that the degree of the dependency relationship between the person giving the instruction to discriminate and the person who discriminated might be of relevance to the question of punishment.

2.6 Reasonable accommodation duties (Article 2(2)(b)(ii) and Article 5 Directive 2000/78)

- a) Implementation of the duty to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in the area of employment

In Liechtenstein, the duty on employers to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities is not explicitly included in the law and is not defined.

Although Article 10 of the AEPD implements the concept of protection against discrimination in the field of employment for persons with disabilities, it is not clearly defined how and to what extent there is a duty on employers to provide reasonable accommodation in terms of individualised measures to accommodate the needs of a specific person with a disability in a specific situation. It can be assumed that it is included in the law indirectly, through the prohibition of indirect discrimination. Article 10 of the AEPD states that no person shall be discriminated against directly or indirectly on grounds of disability in connection with an employment relationship in either the private or public sector or in any other sphere of employment, in particular with regard to other working conditions. This prohibition covers, in particular, the establishment of the employment relationship, training and retraining measures and promotions. Thus, it could be argued that Article 10 of the AEPD comprehensively implements the provisions of Article 27 of the CRPD.

Furthermore, Article 7(3) of the AEPD states that indirect discrimination has occurred if no attempts have been made to accommodate the situation of the person concerned. This could be interpreted as requiring individualised measures to accommodate the needs of a specific person with a disability in a specific situation. Judicial interpretation of Article 7(3) of the AEPD is required. So far, no case law has been generated.

In addition, Article 7 of the AEPD lists the type of disproportionate burden (*unverhältnismässige Belastungen*) that may justify unequal treatment and prevent it from being regarded as indirect discrimination (see Section 2.3(a) for the definition of indirect discrimination). Article 7(2) AEPD specifies that the following criteria in particular have to be taken into consideration when deciding whether the likely burden is 'disproportionate':

- the effort involved in eliminating the conditions giving rise to the disadvantage;

- the economic capacity of the party contesting discrimination;
- public subsidies for the relevant measures;
- the time between the entry into force of the AEPD and the alleged discrimination;
- the effect of the disadvantage on the general interests of the group of persons protected by the AEPD.

Thus, given that binding and legal obligations on employers are lacking in Liechtenstein legislation, adaptations to workplaces and other integrative activities are developed on a case-by-case basis.

In cases where indirect discrimination is a consequence of barriers, Article 7(4) states that it must be proved whether other legal provisions regarding accessibility exist and, if so, whether the appropriate legal tasks have been fulfilled.

If the requirements that are set out in other laws have not been met, and barriers exist as a result, the existence of those barriers will be regarded as indirect discrimination. This would be the case, for example, if a public building did not provide wheelchair access, as that is a legal requirement under Articles 11 and 12 of the AEPD.

The provisions of Articles 19 and 20 of the AEPD are rather vague, setting out that the state supports the integration of persons with disability, and that authorities and the public administration may establish appropriate programmes. Article 10(1) of the AEPD states that no one may be discriminated against directly or indirectly on the grounds of disability in connection with an employment relationship in either the private or public sector. Nevertheless, there is no legal provision that specifically obliges a private sector employer to accommodate the particular needs of persons with disabilities in a certain way.

b) Case law

To the best of the author's knowledge, there has not been any recent case law confirming or explaining a duty on employers to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

c) Definition of disability and non-discrimination protection

Articles 11 to 14 of the AEPD make no distinction in the definition of disability for the purposes of claiming a reasonable accommodation via the prohibition of indirect discrimination or with regard to protection through the general non-discrimination rules.

d) Failure to meet the duty of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities

In Liechtenstein, failure to meet the duty of reasonable accommodation in employment for persons with disabilities is not explicitly recognised as a form of discrimination. The law is silent with regard to an explicit duty to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in employment. However, the definition of indirect discrimination could be interpreted in such a way that a failure to provide reasonable accommodation would count as indirect discrimination. However, under Article 10(1) of the AEPD, no one may be discriminated against on the ground of disability in connection with an employment relationship in either the private or public sector, in particular with regard to other working conditions. Thus, it may be assumed that this provision includes the duty of reasonable accommodation for employees. Furthermore, Article 7(3) of the AEPD states that indirect discrimination has occurred if no attempts have been made to accommodate the situation of the person concerned. This could be interpreted as requiring individualised measures to accommodate the needs of a specific person with a disability in a specific situation. Judicial interpretation would be needed in such cases.

Regarding the burden of proof, Article 26(1) of the AEPD states that, when a person claims to have been discriminated against according to Articles 5 to 10, that claim must be credible. In cases of direct discrimination, however, under Article 26(2) of the AEPD, the defendant is obliged to prove that it is more likely than not that the claim of unequal treatment in the sense of discrimination can be explained for another reason, and that this reason is crucial. Article 26(3) states that, when a complaint is made about harassment or indirect discrimination, the defendant must prove that, in consideration of all the circumstances, it is more likely than not that the facts substantiated by him or her are legally truthful. The provisions of Article 26 refer to the section on protection against discrimination in general and in employment (Articles 5 to 10 of the AEPD).

The second part of Article 26 states that the defendant may try to prove that he or she has a non-discriminatory reason for the difference in treatment and that that reason is of crucial importance to the defendant in respect of his or her economic and/or social environment. This can also be applied to the right to reasonable accommodation. If the defendant can come up with a sensible and crucial reason for having ignored the law on reasonable accommodation, he or she may be exonerated by the court. The justifications for such disproportionate burdens are defined in Article 7(2) of the AEPD.

- e) Duties to provide reasonable accommodation in areas other than employment for persons with disabilities

In Liechtenstein, there is no explicit legal duty to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities outside the area of employment. This means that there is no individualised reactive duty to provide reasonable accommodation outside the field of employment.

With reference to the legal provisions of protection against discrimination in Article 7(3) of the AEPD, judicial interpretation would be needed to clarify whether duties exist in areas other than employment. Article 7(3) states that, if the elimination of conditions that constitute a disadvantage (e.g. barriers) proves to be a disproportionate burden within the meaning of Article 7(1) of the AEPD, discrimination shall be deemed to have occurred if reasonable measures have failed to bring at least a significant improvement in the situation of the person concerned in the sense of the closest possible approximation to equal treatment.

- f) Duties to provide reasonable accommodation in respect of other grounds

In Liechtenstein, there is no legal duty to provide reasonable accommodation in respect of other grounds in the public sector and/or the private sector.

3 PERSONAL AND MATERIAL SCOPE

3.1 Personal scope

3.1.1 EU and non-EU nationals (Recital 13 and Article 3(2), Directive 2000/43 and Recital 12 and Article 3(2), Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, the following residence/citizenship/nationality requirements are applied when it comes to protection under the relevant national laws transposing the directives.

The basic rights of Liechtenstein citizens and foreigners are stated in the Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein of 1921 (LC). Article 31 of the Constitution states that all citizens are equal before the law. The term citizen is to be understood as referring to all persons holding Liechtenstein national citizenship without distinction of sex.⁸¹ Foreigners are excluded from this definition. The rights of foreigners are governed by treaty and, in the absence of any treaty, by reciprocal law.

The purpose of the AEPD is to eliminate or prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities, thereby ensuring the equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and enabling them to lead their life autonomously. The AEPD does not make a distinction between Liechtenstein citizens and others, nor are its provisions based on residency status or the holding of asylum permits.

Special provisions regarding discrimination on grounds of race, nationality or origin are contained in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code. Like the AEPD, the Criminal Code does not make any distinction between Liechtenstein citizens and foreigners, nor are its provisions based on residency status or the holding of asylum permits. Protection against racial discrimination or discrimination on the ground of origin is independent of citizenship.

There are no further national laws dealing with discrimination based on grounds of race or origin.

3.1.2 Natural and legal persons (Recital 16, Directive 2000/43)

a) Protection against discrimination

In Liechtenstein, the personal scope of anti-discrimination law covers natural persons for the purpose of protection against discrimination.

Judicial interpretation is required to a certain extent when it comes to legal persons. The Personal and Corporate Law Act⁸² distinguishes between a natural person (*natürliche Person*) and a legal person (*juristische Person*) in the context of protection and measures against discrimination. As regards protection against discrimination on grounds of disability, the AEPD focuses on natural persons. This is set out in Articles 2, 3(2), 5 and 8 of the AEPD. As the term 'person' is defined as referring to members of both female and male gender, the law applies to both women and men. Article 23(1) of the AEPD covers the restitution of any financial losses incurred and compensation for the personal detriment suffered. Only persons, i.e. natural persons, are mentioned in that section of the Act.

⁸¹ The phrase 'without distinction of sex' makes sense because, in German, there is a difference between male citizens (*der Landesangehörige*) and female citizens (*die Landesangehörige*). The Constitution only uses the male term (*der Landesangehörige*), but this term also includes women. This was explicitly stated in an act amending the Constitution (LGBl. 1971, No. 22).

⁸² Personal and Corporate Law Act (*Personen- und Gesellschaftsrecht, PGR*), 20 January 1926, LGBl. 1926 No. 4, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1926004000?version=44>.

b) Liability for discrimination

In Liechtenstein, the personal scope of anti-discrimination law covers natural and legal persons for the purpose of liability for discrimination.

The AEPD does not make a distinction between natural and legal persons with regard to liability. Further, the AEPD does not contain a specific article determining liability for discrimination regarding natural and legal persons, except for Article 12(8), which explicitly states that the building owner as well as the executing planner, the construction management, the engineers and the contractors are responsible for the implementation of the accessibility regulations within the scope of their duties after the building permit has been granted.

The Criminal Code uses the term person in Section 283(1), and the responsibility of legal persons is defined. Legal persons, insofar as they do not act in execution of the law, are responsible for offences and crimes committed unlawfully and culpably in the exercise of business activities within the scope of the purpose of the legal person (occasional acts) by management personnel. Thus, the Criminal Code does not distinguish between natural and legal persons for the purpose of liability for discrimination. The Code further states that the legal person shall be held responsible only for actions that are committed by employees of the legal entity, although not culpably if the commission of the action was made possible or substantially facilitated by the fact that management personnel, within the meaning of the law, had failed to take the necessary and reasonable measures to prevent such actions.

3.1.3 Private and public sector including public bodies (Article 3(1))

a) Protection against discrimination

In Liechtenstein, the personal scope of national anti-discrimination law covers the private and public sectors, including public bodies, for the purpose of protection against discrimination. Basically, the AEPD is applicable to both the private and public sectors (Articles 2, 3, 5 and 8 of the AEPD). Nevertheless, the AEPD contains some regulations that restrict the application of the law to the private sector. Based on Article 2(2) of the AEPD, the anti-discrimination provision does not apply to buildings and structures that are not open to the public, with the exception of residential complexes with six or more residential units and subsidised residential buildings. Thus, the provisions of the AEPD are applicable to housing provided by state authorities, but housing provided by private housing companies or individuals renting out their houses that contain fewer than six apartment units and that do not attract state funding are outside the scope of the anti-discrimination law in the AEPD. Furthermore, the Criminal Code is applicable to the private and public sectors in terms of the non-discrimination regulations.

Within the framework of the protection of the employee's personality in Chapter VII, Article 27 of the Common Civil Code, the employer must ensure, in particular, that employees are not harassed and that the victims of harassment do not suffer further disadvantages. The grounds of harassment are not defined within the CCC, although they are encapsulated under the term 'protection of the personality of the employee'. However, based on the Criminal Code regulations under Section 283(1), one can assume that the same grounds must apply for the CCC as those set out in the Criminal Code (race, language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, gender, disability, age, or sexual orientation). Thus, judicial interpretation is required.

b) Liability for discrimination

In Liechtenstein, the personal scope of anti-discrimination law covers the private and public sectors, including public bodies, for the purpose of liability for discrimination. Section 74a of the Criminal Code states that legal persons can be held liable for discrimination against

others, irrespective of whether they are in the public sector or the private sector. Thus, legal persons are liable, unless they act in execution of the law for misdemeanours and crimes unlawfully and culpably committed by management personnel in the course of business activities within the scope of the purpose of the legal person (offences). Penalties apply against discrimination on all grounds.

Furthermore, under the Common Civil Code, employers can be held liable for not respecting or protecting the personality of the employee by not ensuring the protection of the employee against harassment or sexual abuse. There is an implicit liability on the part of the employer in cases of harassment by employees. The CCC is not very specific with regard to the grounds of discrimination (see Article 27 of Section C, Chapter VII of the Code). Only gender is explicitly mentioned in the section on prohibition of discrimination (Section C, Article 9). There is no case law known to the author regarding such discrimination in Liechtenstein.

3.2 Material scope

3.2.1 Conditions for access to employment, to self-employment or to occupation, including selection criteria, recruitment conditions and promotion, whatever the branch of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy (Article 3(1)(a))

In Liechtenstein, national legislation prohibits discrimination in relation to conditions for access to employment, self-employment or occupation, including selection criteria, recruitment conditions and promotion, whatever the branch of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy, on the ground of disability in both the private and public sectors, as described in Directive 2000/78.

Article 5 of the AEPD states that nobody shall be discriminated against due to disability. Some exceptions to this general rule are set out, however, in Article 10(3) and (4). Article 10(3) of the AEPD states that discrimination does not apply in cases where special attributes are necessary to fulfil the professional task and the person with disability concerned does not have such attributes. Article 10(4) states that wages may be set in relation to merit, without this being regarded as discrimination. Article 10(1), Paragraphs (a) to (k), covers recruitment, employment and conditions for access to self-employment.

As there are no specific references in the AEPD, it can be assumed that the scope of discrimination covers all aspects of conditions for access to employment, self-employment or occupation. However, in relation to the public sector, discrimination is further limited by the Act on the Employment of Public Officials (AEPO), which explicitly sets out a guarantee of equal opportunities for women and men (Article 4(2)(f)), as well as providing for the integration of persons with special needs, such as persons with disabilities (Article 4(2)(i)), as an objective of personnel policy, whereas there are no such positive statements relating to the private sector.

Apart from the AEPD, no specific national law exists on the conditions for access to employment, self-employment or occupation, including selection criteria, recruitment conditions and promotion, whatever the branch of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy for the other grounds (race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, age and sexual orientation), in both private and public sectors, as described in the directives. Therefore, judicial interpretation is required to confirm whether the general anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution are sufficient to protect against discrimination.

There is no case law known to the author on this issue.

3.2.2 Employment and working conditions, including pay and dismissals (Article 3(1)(c))

In Liechtenstein, national legislation explicitly prohibits discrimination in working conditions, including pay and dismissals, for the ground of disability and for both private and public employment.

There are explicit anti-discrimination provisions in Article 10 of the AEPD.

Article 30 of the Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples (ACUSSC)⁸³ stipulates equal treatment for pension rights in the event of a divorce, regardless of whether the person was living in a legally recognised same-sex partnership in accordance with the ACUSSC, or in a marriage (see also Article 86b of the Act on Marriage).⁸⁴ The equivalent ruling is also stated in Article 54 of the National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act.⁸⁵

The laws and articles mentioned above refer to regulations regarding the avoidance of discrimination in the area of employment and working conditions, including with regard to payment and dismissal, based on different grounds. For other grounds of discrimination, judicial interpretation is required to confirm whether the rather general provisions in the Constitution, in international treaties and in national law are sufficient to protect against discrimination. As grounds for discrimination in employment and working conditions, race and religion are not covered by any specific law.

Judicial interpretation would be required to determine if the general regulation principle of the Criminal Code – which states that discrimination exists if the principle of equality has been violated by unequal treatment without objective reason, linked to the criteria mentioned in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, and if the intention or effect was to damage the human dignity of the persons concerned – explicitly prohibits discrimination in working conditions, including pay and dismissals, for all other grounds.

There is no case law known to the author on this issue.

3.2.3 Access to all types and to all levels of vocational guidance, vocational training, advanced vocational training and retraining, including practical work experience (Article 3(1)(b))

In Liechtenstein, national legislation prohibits discrimination in vocational training outside the employment relationship, such as adult lifelong learning courses or vocational training provided by technical schools or universities.

The AEPD (Article 10(1)) covers all types and stages of vocational training and education. This includes access to careers guidance, vocational training, retraining and further training, as well as access to practical professional experience. In addition to the AEPD, the Act on Vocational Training (AVT, Article 1c)⁸⁶ promotes, among other things, equal treatment of women and men, as well as the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities in relation to any vocational training system. The AVT is silent about any other ground of discrimination, as are other laws.

No specific case law regarding this topic is known to the author.

⁸³ Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples, [2011350000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2011350000).

⁸⁴ Act on Marriage (*Ehegesetz (EheG)*), 13 December 1973, LGBl. 1974 No. 20, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1974020000?version=9>.

⁸⁵ National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act (*Gesetz über die Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung (AHVG)*), 14 December 1952, LGBl. 1952, No. 29, [1952029000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/1952029000).

⁸⁶ Act on Vocational Training (*Berufsbildungsgesetz (BBG)*), 13 March 2008, LGBl. 2008, No. 103, [2008103000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2008103000).

3.2.4 Membership of, and involvement in, an organisation of workers or employers, or any organisation whose members carry on a particular profession, including the benefits provided for by such organisations (Article 3(1)(d))

In Liechtenstein, national legislation prohibits discrimination in relation to membership of and involvement in workers' or employers' organisations as formulated in the directives for the ground of disability for both private and public sector employment.

Article 10(1) of the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD) prohibits discrimination in the above-mentioned areas. Other grounds are not covered by the AEPD or by any other legislation.

No specific case law regarding this topic is known to the author.

3.2.5 Social protection, including social security and healthcare (Article 3(1)(e) Directive 2000/43)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation does not prohibit discrimination in social protection, including social security and healthcare, as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive. Liechtenstein provides social security services to all individuals, with equal treatment.

However, it can be assumed, on the basis of the anti-discrimination provisions of the Criminal Code, that discrimination is prohibited in the area of social protection if the principle of equality has been violated by unequal treatment without objective reason, linked to the criteria mentioned in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, and if the intention or effect was to damage the human dignity of the persons concerned. According to Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, a person is liable to criminal prosecution if he or she publicly disparages or discriminates against a person on the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation in a manner that violates human dignity by word, writing, image, gestures, assault or in any other way. Thus, social protection could be interpreted with reference to Section 283 of the Criminal Code as covering any unequal treatment in the area of social security and healthcare when it is based on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation. Judicial interpretation is necessary here.

The Constitution lays down the basic principle of equality. Article 27bis states that 'human dignity shall be respected and protected', and that 'no one may be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. Article 31 notes that 'all Liechtenstein citizens shall be equal before the law'. Through international treaties such as the ECHR, this equality rule is extended to non-nationals, with the exception of political rights, especially voting rights.

With regard to the special rights arising from a marriage (e.g. social security and pension insurance), the Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples states that the same rules apply to same-sex couples as to heterosexual married couples regarding social security and occupational pensions (Article 30). Therefore, the ACUSSC grants the same benefits to registered same-sex couples as to married heterosexual couples and prohibits discrimination in general in the respective areas.

It should be mentioned in this context that the Constitutional Court found a discriminatory paragraph in the ACUSSC. In its ruling 2020/097,⁸⁷ the Court noted that the prohibition on registered couples adopting stepchildren violates the European Convention on Human Rights: it violates the equality principles, as persons with a certain sexual orientation

⁸⁷ Constitutional Court decision StGH 2020/097, <https://www.gerichtsentcheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=MNSBoaHb7nz3AAOK-DYeNcrxu84slUiIGNkdmTgrxt0NoySLfghR2EMmQOP-IuvCqtMioz6KZFUhZMEBBEHaNKjnvIy8Wc-NL0>.

(same-sex couples) are restricted by law with regard to adoption in comparison with heterosexual couples.⁸⁸

Discrimination in the context of social protection (e.g. social security or healthcare) is not explicitly listed in the AEPD. All areas of the lives of persons with disabilities are covered by Article 2 of the AEPD, so social protection falls under the anti-discrimination provisions of the act.

a) Article 3.3 exception (Directive 2000/78)

Payments of various kinds are made under state schemes or similar arrangements, including state social security or social protection schemes, which refer to the exceptions in Article 3.3 of the Employment Equality Directive. The author has no knowledge about any problems at a national level based on these exceptions.

3.2.6 Social advantages (Article 3(1)(f) Directive 2000/43)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation does not prohibit discrimination in social advantages as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive.

The AEPD does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the ground of disability in the area of social advantages, although Article 2 defines the scope of application of the AEPD as applicable to all designed areas of life of persons with disabilities, and Article 5 states clearly that there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability, which could be interpreted to include the area of social advantages. The anti-discrimination provisions in the Constitution regarding the grounds of disability, age and sexual orientation can be interpreted as a prohibition regarding discrimination in social advantages, but judicial interpretation would be required. As far as the author is aware, there has been no case law and no court decisions in this respect so far.

According to the Criminal Code, discrimination exists if the principle of equality has been violated by unequal treatment without objective reason, linked to the criteria mentioned in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code, and if the intention or effect was to damage the human dignity of the persons concerned. Thus, the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation would be included.

Judicial interpretation is necessary here.

Liechtenstein makes available a wide range of benefits to groups of persons with lower incomes. In particular, a tax reduction for families,⁸⁹ childbirth grants, extra monthly pay for children, discounts for access to public buses and other facilities for young and old people have all been implemented, as well as many other benefits. Support in this regard is not interpreted as discriminating against others. These benefits are provided to all people or to persons with special characteristics, including those of age or income, but no discrimination is made on grounds such as disability, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, or religion and belief. Discrimination is not explicitly prohibited with regard to the provision of these social benefits.

⁸⁸ The full Constitutional Court decision is not yet available, but it should be published shortly at: https://www.gerichtentscheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=XwwLKn-e-0-Zy8bCALSk1m05MvW_C9FV0.

⁸⁹ In this context, the definition of family is linked to persons who have their own children, children who have been adopted, stepchildren and foster children (Article 186 of the Common Civil Code). The Common Civil Code does not provide any specific rule regarding same-sex families in this context. On the basis of Article 25 of the Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples, persons living in a registered partnership are not admitted for adoption or reproductive procedures. In 2021 there was a Ruling of the State Court on the adoption of stepchildren by same-sex couples (see Chapter 12 for further details). For additional information about privileges, see Article 24 of the Family Allowance Act (*Familienzulagengesetz, FZG*), 18 December 1985, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/1986028000>.

The National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act (NOWP) covers aspects of the old age pension with reference to the Act on Disability Insurance.⁹⁰ This may be understood to mean that discrimination on the ground of disability with regard to social advantages is prohibited by national law, although judicial interpretation is required.

3.2.7 Education (Article 3(1)(g) Directive 2000/43)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation does not prohibit discrimination in education as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive.

Liechtenstein law says nothing about specific educational measures in relation to racial or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. Nevertheless, the Constitution includes the basic principle of equality. Article 27bis states that 'human dignity shall be respected and protected' and that 'no one may be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. Article 31 notes that 'all Liechtenstein citizens shall be equal before the law'. To the best knowledge of the author, the Constitution has never been interpreted in relation to educational discrimination by a court.

The AEPD states in Article 1 that the law aims to eliminate or prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities and thus to ensure the equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and to enable them to lead a self-determined life. To this end, Article 2 of the AEPD states that the scope of application applies to all areas of life of persons with disabilities. A few exceptions are defined for this purpose, but these do not include the area of education.

Article 18 of the AEPD states in relation to children and young persons with disabilities:

- 1) The State shall ensure that children and young persons with disabilities receive early intervention and a basic training that is customised to their specific needs. The main regulations are laid down in the Act on School Education.
- 2) The State promotes appropriate forms of training for pupils as well as adequate training and support for teachers in integrating children and young persons with disabilities into regular schools. The rules of the Act on School Education and the Act on Teachers contain the relevant regulations.⁹¹
- 3) The State shall further ensure that children and young persons with disabilities receive vocational education with respect to their special needs, abilities and interests. The State can contribute to the disability-related costs, provided they are not covered by insurance and other benefits. The law is silent about any rules determining when the State will cover such costs.

Based on these general duties to take the specific needs of pupils with disabilities into account in their education, Article 1c of the Act on Vocational Training (AVT)⁹² prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any area of vocational training. The specific needs of persons with disabilities in respect of their pre-vocational training (basic education and training) should be considered on the basis of Article 16 of the AVT, with the possibility of shortening or extending the training period. These are the two issues that are explicitly covered by the AVT.

The priority for the legal framework is to include children with disabilities within mainstream education. However, in practice, many children and young persons with disabilities – especially those with intellectual impairments – attend the Special Education Centre (HPZ). There, they have the opportunity to attend a special education day school

⁹⁰ Act on Disability Insurance, 23 December 1959.

⁹¹ Act on School Education (*Schulgesetz*), 15 December 1971, LGBl. 1972 No. 7, [1972007000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#); Ordinance to the Act on Teachers (*Verordnung zum Lehrerdienstgesetz*), 6 April 2004, LGBl. 2004, No. 92, [2004092000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

⁹² Act on Vocational Training, 13 March 2008, [2008103000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

(*Sonderpädagogische Tagesschule*), which gives them individual tuition and prepares them for the world of work. There are also various other organisations that provide children, young people and adults with an interesting and varied programme that they can attend after school, at weekends and during holidays. If possible, children are integrated into the regular schools, in which case assistance is provided by professionals.

In the school year 2020/2021,⁹³ 96 pupils with disabilities in Liechtenstein were taught and supported at the special education day school. Approximately 37 % of all pupils with disabilities are integrated into the mainstream school system in Liechtenstein. This figure has not increased very much over recent years. After the mandatory school years, there is only a partial integration of pupils with disabilities into the post-compulsory school system.

However, the CRPD requires that the entire education system has to be designed to be inclusive. The inclusive education strategy is based on four core principles: availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. In the long term, it seeks to end the dual system of education. This means an end to the parallelism of any form of special schools for persons with disabilities alongside general schools. This has not yet been achieved in Liechtenstein. In addition, adequate inclusion of persons with disabilities in bodies that develop, decide on or evaluate educational measures, such as the school councils or a children's and youth advisory board, does not yet exist. With regard to performance assessment, the needs of persons with disabilities must also be addressed by way of an inclusive education system. In particular, a different assessment procedure must be used in addition to assessment with grades.

The AEPD prohibits discrimination in vocational training outside the employment relationship. Article 10(1) covers all types and stages of vocational training and education. In addition to the AEPD, the Act on Vocational Training (AVT, Article 1c)⁹⁴ promotes, among other things, the equal treatment of women and men, as well as the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities in relation to any vocational training system. The AVT is silent about any other ground of discrimination, as are other laws. The term 'vocational training' can be interpreted to cover education for persons with disabilities in Liechtenstein but, as far as the author is aware, no such interpretation has been made by the courts up to now.

If the right to education of persons with disabilities is understood as applying without discrimination, with the same opportunities provided as those enjoyed by persons without disabilities, measures are needed to identify and remove legal, physical, social and financial barriers within educational institutions and the community in order to create inclusive education in Liechtenstein. Competence and responsibility for the education of persons with disabilities lies with the Ministry of Social Affairs, not the Ministry of Education.⁹⁵

On the basis of the current version of the COVID-19 Ordinance,⁹⁶ classroom instruction is carried out with physical presence. For this reason, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Education and Environment has issued guidelines regarding school-specific implementation plans (protection concept) at public kindergartens, elementary schools, lower and upper secondary schools and private schools approved by the Government.⁹⁷

⁹³ Details based on education statistics (*Bildungsstatistik*) 2021, Central Statistical Office, available at: https://www.llv.li/files/as/ibildung_2021.pdf.

⁹⁴ Act on Vocational Training, 13 March 2008, [2008103000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.llv.li/files/as/2008103000_gesetze.li).

⁹⁵ When drafting new laws or revising existing laws, the Liechtenstein Government takes into account the provisions of Protocol No. 12 to the ECHR and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, in accordance with the Education Integration Concept 2011-2013.⁹⁵ The focus of this concept, which was the most recent specific project in this area, was on integration with anti-discrimination measures on grounds of gender, origin and race. Disability was not a focus.

⁹⁶ Ordinance on Measures to Control the Coronavirus (COVID-19 Ordinance), version as of 01.01.2022.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Home Affairs, Education and Environment, Guidelines regarding school-specific implementation plans, [vorgaben-betr-schulspez-umsetzungsplane-schutzkonzept-v44-def.pdf \(llv.li\)](https://www.llv.li/files/as/vorgaben-betr-schulspez-umsetzungsplane-schutzkonzept-v44-def.pdf).

The Government of Liechtenstein has not launched specific measures during the COVID-19 pandemic regarding the education of children and adults with disabilities. There are no cases or complaints known to the author regarding discrimination in access to education on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or ideology, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation in relation to the pandemic regulations.

a) Trends and patterns regarding Roma pupils

In Liechtenstein there are no specific trends or patterns (whether legal or societal) in education regarding Roma pupils, such as segregation.

There are no specific problems that need to be addressed concerning Roma or other minorities. A Roma minority does not exist in Liechtenstein.

In addition, no major policies aiming to address discrimination against such persons in education are known to the author.

3.2.8 Access to and supply of goods and services that are available to the public (Article 3(1)(h) Directive 2000/43)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation prohibits discrimination in access to and the supply of goods and services, as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive.

Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code states that a sentence of imprisonment of up to two years will be imposed on any person or group of persons who refuses to provide a service offered by him or her to the general public on the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, as this is regarded as discrimination. This prohibition is not further specified in the Criminal Code. In its practical application, this regulation focuses on services offered or provided in general to the public, which cannot be refused to people in individual cases with reference to one of the grounds listed above.

The Constitution includes the basic principle of equality. Article 27bis states that 'human dignity shall be respected and protected' and that 'no one may be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'

Regarding the ground of disability, the AEPD aims to eliminate and prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities and, in Article 2(1), covers access to and the supply of goods and services. The act aims to guarantee equal participation by persons with disabilities in the daily life of society. However, the AEPD does not include a specific provision to explicitly prohibit discrimination against persons with disability regarding access to and the supply of goods and services. Article 2(2) covers some exceptions from the general non-discrimination regulations in Article 2(1). In particular, privately offered goods and services – other than specific items for persons with disabilities – are excluded from non-discrimination law. The legal regulation of the AEPD does not explicitly state that privately offered goods and services have to be accessible to persons with disabilities. For example, if a beautician offers her services in a treatment room within her private building, the AEPD regulations regarding accessibility do not apply.⁹⁸

Article 9 of the Act on Health Insurance⁹⁹ states that equal treatment must be ensured regarding access to and the supply of goods and services, and that discrimination on the ground of age is not allowed. To capture differences in treatment relating to social insurance on the grounds of age and disability, one has to distinguish between obligatory

⁹⁸ Where such a service was offered in a building open to the public, the anti-discrimination prohibitions of the AEPD would apply.

⁹⁹ Act on Health Insurance (*Gesetz über die Krankenversicherung, KVG*), 24 November 1971, LGBl. 1971, No. 50, [1971050000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li).

and voluntary insurance. According to Article 9 of the Act on Health Insurance, insurance companies must offer the obligatory benefits without consideration of the age and health of the applicant. For insurance benefits beyond the obligatory regulations, insurance companies are free to define age limits and to exclude insurance for diseases from which the applicant has suffered in the past (Articles 8 and 9 of the Act on Health Insurance).

There is no case law known to the author on this matter.

a) Distinction between goods and services available publicly or privately

In Liechtenstein, national law distinguishes between goods and services that are available to the public (e.g. in shops, restaurants and banks) and those that are only available privately (e.g. those restricted to members of a private association).

Article 2 of the AEPD states that all areas of life of persons with disabilities are equally affected by the non-discrimination legislation. Exceptions to this general clause are listed in Article 2(2) of the AEPD, and include private offerings of goods and services that are not explicitly defined as being for persons with disabilities. No such exception is made in terms of goods and services offered by public authorities.

The sixth sentence of Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code states that it is a criminal offence to refuse a service that is offered the public to a person or a group of persons on grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Article 3 of the Act on Occupational Pensions¹⁰⁰ (AOP) allows for differential treatment of employees in cases of disability. It releases employers from the obligation to provide an occupational pension to an individual employee if that employee is two-thirds disabled. Thus, unequal treatment is possible on the ground of disability. Nevertheless, Article 34 of the AOP grants the employee the right to participate in the occupational pension scheme on his or her own behalf, but without the employer being obliged to contribute. Persons with a degree of disability of more than 60 % and who attain the official retirement age are given a 'helplessness allowance', in addition to the state pension (see Article 3bis of the Act on Supplementary Aid to the National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension, in combination with Article 67bis. The degree of disability, on the other hand, is defined and stated under the disability insurance.

3.2.9 Housing (Article 3(1)(h) Directive 2000/43)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation does not prohibit discrimination in the area of housing as formulated in the Racial Equality Directive. There are no such regulations that provide protection on the grounds of race and ethnic origin.

The author knows of no case law or judicial interpretation whereby housing is considered to fall within the area of provision of services. Thus, it is not clear so far if the prohibition of discrimination in Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code could be applicable to the area of housing.

According to Article 3(1) AEPD, accessibility exists 'if designed areas of life are accessible and usable for persons with disabilities in the generally customary manner, without particular difficulty and basically without outside assistance'. This includes, in particular, the identification and removal of obstacles and barriers to access to 'buildings, roads, means of transport and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, homes, medical facilities and places of work'. At the national level, this mainly concerns the regulations relating to construction and planning.

¹⁰⁰ Act on Occupational Pensions (*Gesetz über die betriebliche Personalvorsorge, BPVG*), 6 May 1988, LGBl. 1988, No. 12, [BPVG | Lilex - Gesetzesdatenbank des Fürstentum Liechtenstein](#).

The legal definition contained in Article 3(1) AEPD can therefore be regarded as fundamentally broad and openly formulated.

In Articles 12 to 14, the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (AEPD) contains rules on structural accessibility and, in this respect, contains three sets of regulations for (a) publicly accessible buildings and facilities (Article 12), (b) residential buildings (Article 13) and (c) subsidised residential buildings (Article 14). The AEPD protects persons with disabilities by ensuring access to public buildings. To this end, the Government is obliged to consult the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities (Article 22) as well as recognised organisations for persons with disabilities (Article 31), before formal approval for construction work is granted in accordance with Article 1. Private housing units with more than six apartments must be accessible to persons with disabilities, and Article 14 of the AEPD states that residential buildings may only be subsidised if they may be adapted to provide accessibility (if they are not already accessible). Thus, the AEPD ensures accessibility, but contains no explicit provisions prohibiting discrimination in the field of housing. In respect of accessibility, the AEPD has an exception for private buildings with fewer than six apartments in a private housing area. The AEPD prohibitions do not come into force for such buildings, as they only stipulate an obligation for buildings with six flats or more to be accessible by persons with disabilities. If the owner of such a building refuses to rent out a flat to a person with disability and if, in a legal case, the property owner can prove that other reasons had been relevant and the disability was not the sole ground, this would probably not count as discrimination. To the best knowledge of the author, no case law exists in Liechtenstein regarding this issue. Furthermore, in such a situation, the legally defined measures for adaptations to buildings to make them accessible for persons with disabilities do not apply.

According to an expert report commissioned by the Government in 2021,¹⁰¹ migrants have to be treated equally under anti-discrimination legislation in the field of housing. In particular, they have to have equal access to housing. The author knows of no patterns of segregation in social housing, nor of any major anti-discrimination case law involving migrants in the field of housing.

a) Trends and patterns regarding housing segregation for Roma

In Liechtenstein, there are no trends and/or patterns of housing segregation and discrimination against the Roma. There are no specific problems that need to be addressed concerning Roma since there is no Roma minority living in Liechtenstein.

¹⁰¹ The report was approved by Government Decision LNR 2021-47 BNR 2021/220 on 9 February 2021. See <https://www.regierung.li/files/attachments/20220117-LIGK-Integration-Broschuere-A4-WEB.pdf?t=637786406283668409>.

4 EXCEPTIONS

4.1 Genuine and determining occupational requirements (Article 4)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation provides for an exception for genuine and determining occupational requirements.

It should be noted that, according to Article 10(3) AEPD, there is no discrimination if a characteristic related to disability 'constitutes an essential and determining occupational requirement by reason of the nature of a particular occupational activity or of the context in which it is carried out and provided that the objective is legitimate and the requirement is reasonable'. This does not mean, however, that far-reaching restrictions on access to jobs can be introduced for persons with disabilities. An assessment must be made of which characteristics actually constitute an 'essential and decisive' occupational requirement. As long as there are obvious reasons for specific requirements to be made, this would not be interpreted as discriminating against persons with other characteristics. In addition, public service jobs can be restricted to Liechtenstein citizens, but race and ethnicity would not be permitted as selection criteria.

There are no such reservations for other grounds.

4.2 Employers with an ethos based on religion or belief (Article 4(2) Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, national law does not provide for an exception for employers with an ethos based on religion or belief.

Apart from the ECHR, there is no specific legislation dealing with discrimination against people in the case of employers with an ethos based on religion or belief. Like several other international treaties, the ECHR is relevant to Constitutional Court decisions and thus can have an effect on decisions regarding discrimination.

- Conflicts between rights of organisations with an ethos based on religion or belief and other rights to non-discrimination

In Liechtenstein, there are specific provisions relating to conflicts between the rights of organisations with an ethos based on religion or belief and other rights to non-discrimination in the context of employment. Article 37 of the Constitution states that freedom of faith and conscience is guaranteed for everyone. The same article goes on to state that the Roman Catholic Church is the national church and, as such, enjoys the full protection of the state. Other denominations shall be guaranteed the exercise of their profession and the holding of their worship within the bounds of morality and public order. Thus, the Catholic Church enjoys some privileges compared to other religious communities (e.g. in relation to recognition, financial support, the alignment of cultural events with festivals and holidays, religious education and cemeteries). The necessary steps towards equality of religions could only be taken through the drafting of a new law on religious communities, which was passed by the Parliament in 2012, although the necessary constitutional amendment was postponed so that it could be dealt with together with the outstanding issues around an agreement with the Holy See and the reorganisation of the relationship between the state and religious communities. However, since no agreement could be reached with the Roman Catholic Church on ownership in two of Liechtenstein's 11 municipalities, the entire process is on hold.

In connection with a petition submitted by the Islamic Community of the Principality of Liechtenstein in 2021, representatives of the Liechtenstein political parties pointed out that a reorganisation of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church in Liechtenstein and the state was urgently needed. In response, the Government announced that it would

press ahead with the reorganization of church and state during the current legislative period (until 2025).¹⁰² The latest ECRI report, published in 2018, recalls that differential treatment of religious minorities, in particular with regard to their legal recognition and funding, may constitute discrimination on the grounds of religion and thus a violation of Articles 9 and 14 of the ECHR. On 18 May 2021 ECRI published its concluding observations on the implementation of the urgent recommendations issued to Liechtenstein based on the interim report submitted by the Liechtenstein Government in October 2020. ECRI noted that governmental measures had been launched under the leadership of the Ministry for Social Affairs. ECRI further noted, however, that a new national action plan on integration still required to be developed and implemented. ECRI encourages the authorities to continue and complete these efforts. Overall, ECRI considers that its recommendation has been partially implemented.

There are no specific provisions or case law on this subject. Judicial interpretation is required in order to determine the extent to which the rather general provisions in the Constitution and in international treaties, including the ECHR, are applicable.

4.3 Armed forces and other specific occupations (Article 3(4) and Recitals 18 and 19, Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, national legislation does not provide for an exception for the armed forces in relation to age or disability discrimination (Article 3(4), Directive 2000/78).

Liechtenstein abolished its armed forces in 1868. Since then, Liechtenstein has focused on a neutral position, with an independent and active foreign policy. Due to the fact that there are no armed forces in Liechtenstein, no discrimination can occur in this area.

Pursuant to Article 11(1) of the Police Act (*Polizeigesetz*),¹⁰³ only Liechtenstein citizens who meet the minimum requirements for admission may be admitted into the Liechtenstein National Police. Any other person who meets the minimum requirements but does not have Liechtenstein citizenship may not be admitted. However, there is scope for exemption under Article 11(3) of the act, in that, in justified cases and with the prior consent of the Parliament, the requirement for Liechtenstein citizenship under Article 11(1) may be waived for the admission of police officers.

4.4 Nationality discrimination (Article 3(2))

a) Discrimination on the ground of nationality

In Liechtenstein, national law includes exceptions relating to difference of treatment based on nationality.

The free movement of persons, one of the basic European freedoms, is restricted in Liechtenstein with respect to taking up residence. This is a crucial issue for Liechtenstein. The number of annually available residence permits is limited according to a special treaty between Liechtenstein and the European Union as a result of the access of Liechtenstein to the European Economic Area in 1995. This special regulation was introduced because Liechtenstein already had a high share of foreigners among its resident population (by the end of 2020, 34.5% of the total population were foreigners with resident permits).¹⁰⁴ Following this agreement, the Liechtenstein Government has differentiated between persons of Swiss and EEA nationality and persons of third countries when applying different

¹⁰² *Liechtensteiner Vaterland*, "[Thema Kirche und Staat kommt noch in dieser Legislatur aufs Tapet](#)", 31 August 2021.

¹⁰³ Police Act (*Gesetz über die Landespolizei; Polizeigesetz*), LGBl. 1989, No. 48, <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1989048000?version=28>.

¹⁰⁴ Annual population report (*Bevölkerungsstatistik*, 31 December 2020), Central Statistical Office, [Amt für Statistik \(AS\) - Bevölkerungsstatistik \(llv.li\)](#).

procedures and quotas. This also applies to integration requirements, in cases of family reunion, for instance. However, there is no discrimination between permanent residents with respect to specific nationalities. Specific regulations for persons with EEA and Swiss nationality are laid down in the Act on Free Movement of EEA Persons and Swiss citizens.¹⁰⁵ In respect of persons with third country nationality, the Act on Foreigners regulates residency rights.¹⁰⁶

In Liechtenstein, nationality (as in citizenship) is mentioned as a protected ground in the first and fourth sentences of Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code (on incitement to hatred or discrimination against a person and on publicly disparaging or discriminating against a person, respectively). The fourth sentence states that any person shall be punished with imprisonment if they publicly discriminate against another person or group of persons, which has to be understood as a general prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of nationality, among other things, even if the Criminal Code is not a comprehensive anti-discrimination act. There is no specific, separate national anti-discrimination law dealing with the ground of nationality in terms of discrimination.

Furthermore, the Constitution of Liechtenstein, the Act on Free Movement of EEA Persons and Swiss citizens¹⁰⁷ and the Act on Foreigners include specific regulations regarding nationality, but no anti-discrimination provisions.

b) Relationship between nationality and 'racial or ethnic origin'

There is no specific national anti-discrimination law which defines 'nationality' and 'racial or ethnic origin' or explains the relationship between these terms. Uniquely, however, the Criminal Code was extended in 2016 *inter alia* to racial or ethnic origin. Section 283(1), fourth sentence, of the Criminal Code states that a person who publicly disparages or discriminates against a person or a group of persons on the grounds of race, nationality or ethnic origin will be punished by imprisonment.

Therefore, judicial interpretation is needed in this regard.

4.5 Health and safety (Article 7(2) Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, there are no exceptions in relation to disability and health and safety as allowed for under Article 7(2) of the Employment Equality Directive.

4.6 Exceptions related to discrimination on the ground of age (Article 6 Directive 2000/78)

4.6.1 Direct discrimination

a) Exceptions to the prohibition of direct discrimination on grounds of age

In Liechtenstein, there is no general prohibition of discrimination on the ground of age and therefore national law does not provide for specific exceptions in regulating direct discrimination on the ground of age. Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code provides for a penalty clause if a person publicly disparages or publicly discriminates against a person or group of persons on grounds of age.

Differential treatment based on age is admitted by law in some specific areas (see Section 4.6.1(b) below).

¹⁰⁵ Act on Free Movement of EEA Persons and Swiss citizens (*Gesetz über die Freizügigkeit für EWR- und Schweizer Staatsangehörige, PFZG*), 20 November 2009, LGBl. 2009, No. 348, [2009348000 \(gesetzze.li\)](#).

¹⁰⁶ Act on Foreigners (*Gesetz über die Ausländer, Ausländergesetz, AuG*), 17 September 2008, LGBl. 2008, No. 311, [2008311000 \(gesetzze.li\)](#).

¹⁰⁷ This act forms part of Liechtenstein's national legislation.

b) Justification of direct discrimination on the ground of age

In Liechtenstein, national law does not provide for justifications for direct discrimination on the ground of age. The law is silent on the issue of potential legitimate aims to justify direct discrimination.

As far as the author is aware, there was no case law on this issue during 2021 (nor in previous years).

c) Permitted differences of treatment based on age

In Liechtenstein, national law neither explicitly permits nor prohibits differential treatment based on age for any activities within the material scope of Directive 2000/78. Although there is no general prohibition of discrimination on the ground of age, some specific age-related provisions exist, for example:

- provisions on the special protection of children in the Act on Children and Youth and in the Regulations on Special Provisions for the Protection of Young Employees;¹⁰⁸
- the Decree on the Organisation of the Police (Article 56), which states that, in general, a candidate for the police must not be older than 35 years;
- the Act on Foreigners (Article 13(1e)), which states that an application for residency and a working permit can be refused if various factors – including the age of the applicant – suggest that the applicant might not be able to achieve long-term integration into society and the world of work, as outlined in Article 41 of the Act on Foreigners.

d) Fixing of ages for admission to occupational pension schemes

In Liechtenstein, national law allows occupational pension schemes to set ages for admission to the scheme, taking up the opportunity provided by Article 6(2).

The Act on Occupational Pensions (AOP) states in Articles 3(2) and 4(1)(c) that insurance is mandatory for employees who fulfil the following criteria:

- they are insured through the occupational pension fund;
- their annual salary is at least two thirds of the maximum pension from the occupational pension fund;
- in the case of old age pensions: a minimum age of 23 years if the employment is not limited in time (i.e. under a temporary contract);
- in the case of disability pension: a minimum age of 17.

Article 5(3) of the Ordinance to the AOP¹⁰⁹ stipulates that, in their regulations, the respective pension funds must convert the basis for calculating retirement assets upon reaching retirement age into a life-long retirement pension in accordance with recognised technical principles. The pension conversion rate or its basis of calculation must be specified in the regulations. Thus, the age relevant for determining the level of contributions and retirement credits corresponds to the difference between the current calendar year and the year of birth of the insured person. In addition, most regulations provide for early retirement within the framework of the statutory provisions, provided that the gainful employment is discontinued completely or at least to a quarter of the previous workload (partial retirement).

¹⁰⁸ Ordinance to the Special Provisions for the Protection of Young Employees (*Verordnung zum Arbeitsgesetz, ArGV V, Sonderbestimmungen über den Schutz der jugendlichen Arbeitnehmer*), 22 March 2005, LGBl. 2005, No. 67, [2005069000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹⁰⁹ Ordinance to the Act on Occupational Pensions (*Verordnung zum Gesetz über die betriebliche Personalvorsorge, BPVV*), 30 December 2005, LGBl. 2005, No. 288, [2005288000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

4.6.2 Special conditions for younger or older workers

In Liechtenstein, there are no special conditions set by the Labour Act (ArG)¹¹⁰ for younger or older workers in order to promote their vocational integration.

However, some positive measures, mainly based on governmental projects and private network activities, are frequently taken to support younger and older persons with regard to their opportunities in the labour market.

On its homepage, the Sichtwechsel network group¹¹¹ has compiled an overview of services to promote vocational integration for persons with disabilities offered by public bodies and private institutions. The network group and this service are supported by the Government.

The Job Integration initiative in Liechtenstein¹¹² has adopted the method of 'supported employment', which is internationally recognised as a proven and effective method of vocational integration for persons with disabilities, to reintegrate older people into everyday working life. The aim is to integrate people who have experienced long-term gaps in their life (e.g. due to an illness, an accident or unemployment) back into working life and to help them become financially independent. This initiative was launched by the Assisted Living Association Liechtenstein.

The Office of Vocational Training and Career Counselling¹¹³ is active in advising older persons on finding employment and/or educational training. In addition, the Office of Education supports young people who fulfil certain criteria with scholarships.¹¹⁴ There are no further special conditions known to the author.

There is no case law known to the author on this subject.

4.6.3 Minimum and maximum age requirements

In Liechtenstein, there are exceptions that permit minimum and/or maximum age requirements in relation to access to employment and training. Article 56 of the Decree on the Organisation of the Police states that, in general, a candidate for the police must not be older than 35 years. Besides this exception, minimum and maximum age requirements are not regulated by legislation as long as the employment does not constitute child labour.

There is no case law known to the author regarding this subject.

4.6.4 Retirement

a) State pension age

In Liechtenstein there is a state pension age, at which individuals must begin to collect their state pensions.

The state-imposed and generally applicable pensionable age is 65 for women as well as for men (Article 36 National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act, NOWP).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Labour Act (*Arbeitsgesetz, ArG*), 31. January 1967, LGBl. 1967, No. 6, [1967006000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

¹¹¹ Sichtwechsel, overview of services for promoting vocational integration, <https://www.llv.li/files/scq/uberblick-uber-die-angebote-der-amtsstellen-und-der-ahv-mai-2016.pdf>.

¹¹² Job Integration initiative Liechtenstein, [Verein für Betreutes Wohnen - JIL - JOB INTEGRATION IN LIECHTENSTEIN \(vbw.li\)](#).

¹¹³ Office of Vocational Training and Career Counselling (Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung, ABB). See [Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung \(ABB\) - Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung \(llv.li\)](#).

¹¹⁴ Office of Education (*Schulamt*). See <http://www.llv.li/#/11631/schulamt>.

¹¹⁵ National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension Act, [1952029000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

If an individual wishes to work beyond the state pension age, the pension can be deferred. According to Article 74 of NOWP, it is possible to work until the maximum age of 70.

On the other hand, it is also possible to draw the pension a maximum of four years in advance by accepting fixed reductions in the monthly payable amount (on early withdrawal after the age of 60 (maximum), see Article 73 NOWP) or to defer the pension for a maximum of five years (ending at the age of 70) and receive a higher pension afterwards. Thus, according to Articles 73 and 74 of NOWP, an individual can collect the state pension (as a certain share of the full pension amount) and still work.

There is no specific case law known to the author in respect of the directive requirements on unlawful discrimination.

b) Occupational pension schemes

In Liechtenstein, there is a standard age at which people can begin to receive payments from occupational pension schemes and other employer-funded pension arrangements.

The pension age is defined by Article 8 of the Act on Occupational Pensions (AOP) and corresponds to the above-mentioned pension age for state pension.

If an individual wishes to work longer, payments from such occupational pension schemes can be deferred; because of the longer working and pension-contribution period, the future pension payments increase. An individual can collect a pension and still work.

In accordance with the same regulation as for the state pension age, an individual who wishes to enter into retirement earlier than the stated pension age can draw their pension in advance. By law, early retirement can take place four years before a person reaches the legally defined pension age. Occupational pension schemes are free to prolong this period according to their statutory retirement regulations. Thus, they can offer their insurance holders an earlier pension age by contract. In such cases, the consequence of early retirement is that the pension is paid at a reduced rate.

The author knows of no specific case law regarding the directive requirements on unlawful discrimination.

c) State imposed mandatory retirement ages

In Liechtenstein, there is a state-imposed mandatory retirement age for both the public and private sectors.

The state-imposed retirement-age is 65 for all sectors, regardless of gender. In recent years there has been a political discussion on changing the retirement age for economic and demographic reasons.¹¹⁶

In December 2019, the Liechtenstein Government proposed solutions on how to secure old-age and pension provision insurance in Liechtenstein. One scenario involves an increase in the retirement age.¹¹⁷

At the Parliament's session of 2 September 2021, an inquiry by several members concerning the financing of the state pension fund was referred to the Government. The

¹¹⁶ Interviews with HSH Prince Hans-Adam II in 2013, available at: <http://www.vaterland.li/index.cfm?ressort=home&source=lv&id=21429>; and in 2018, available at: <http://www.vaterland.li/liechtenstein/politik/fuerst-hans-adam-ii-mit-leserbrief-zu-pensionsalter;art169,316652>.

¹¹⁷ BuA regarding the 2019 actuarial appraisal for the *Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung (AHV)* (the national old age and widow's/widower's pension). See https://www.liv.li/files/srk/bua_138_2019_gutachten-ahv.pdf.

inquiry put various questions to the Government, in particular concerning the last pension regulation adjustment in 2011. The Government answered the questions on 2 November 2021. In summary, with regard to the pension age, the Government maintains that the negative financial impact of an increase in the maximum pension (up to CHF 2 400 per month, or EUR 2 334 at time of writing) could be offset, for example, by increasing the contribution rate or by raising the retirement age to 66.¹¹⁸

The discussion is still ongoing and has focused primarily on the state pension fund. No decision has yet been taken, however, and European developments in this area might influence relevant national regulation in the future.

The author knows of no specific case law in this area.

d) Retirement ages imposed by employers

In Liechtenstein, national law does not permit employers to set retirement ages (or ages at which the termination of an employment contract is possible) by contract and/or collective bargaining and/or unilaterally. The law makes no differentiation between pension age and retirement age.

The retirement age is defined by Article 8 of the AOP. Employers, both public and private, have the right to set specific retirement ages for their particular company pension schemes, offering early retirement with payment deductions etc. as a voluntary – and therefore positive – option for the employee. Nevertheless, the minimum and maximum retirement ages must be in line with the age set out by law.

The author knows of no specific case law in this regard.

e) Employment rights applicable to all workers irrespective of age

The law on protection against dismissal and other laws protecting employment rights apply to all workers irrespective of age, even if they remain in employment after attaining retirement age or any other age.

Age is not defined as a permissible reason for dismissal in national law. Furthermore, there is no upper age limit for protection against unfair dismissal. Employers can impose retirement at the pension age of 65 without liability for unfair dismissal. Thus, even if the employee wishes to continue working (by prolonging their pension age from 65 to 70), there is no legally binding condition on the employer to allow this. The relevant provisions apply to all workers, irrespective of their age.

The Law on Work in Industry, Trade and Commerce¹¹⁹ (Labour Code, LGBl. 1967.006) only provides for exceptions with regard to age for young people, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. Thus, these exceptions are not applicable to all workers irrespective of age.

f) Compliance of national law with CJEU case law

In Liechtenstein, national legislation is not in line with the CJEU case law on age regarding mandatory retirement.

¹¹⁸ Answer to the inquiry by the Government of Liechtenstein to the Parliament of Liechtenstein concerning the financing of the state pension schema taking into account the possibility of a pension adjustment (No. 91/2021). See [BERICHT UND ANTRAG \(Iv.Ii\)](#).

¹¹⁹ Law on Work in Industry, Trade and Commerce (*Gesetz betreffend die Arbeit in Industrie und Gewerbe, Arbeiterschutzgesetz*), 29 November 1945, LGBl. 1964 No. 4, [1946004000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

Directive 2000/78 prohibits discrimination on grounds of age in the field of employment and occupation. However, the directive does not preclude national measures that are necessary for the protection of people for very specific reasons, meaning that national legislature can, in certain cases, provide for differences of treatment based on age, which will not, therefore, be treated as discrimination. Liechtenstein's anti-discrimination legislation does not define discrimination on the ground of age, and there are no relevant provisions regarding this. Differential treatment based on age is not prohibited by law in some specific areas. Since age as a ground of discrimination is not explicitly stated in the law, discrimination on the ground of age does not need to be justified and unequal treatment in employment is therefore allowed, for instance by defining a minimum or maximum age when hiring employees.

Although Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code criminalises a person who publicly incites hatred or discrimination against another person because of his/her age, there is no explicit national legislation regulating age discrimination or requiring proportionality in age requirements at a general level. Therefore, it can be said that national legislation has not implemented the content and rationale of Directive 2000/78 regarding discrimination on the grounds of age. However, the documented and practical treatment of age limits in employment in Liechtenstein complies with CJEU case law (e.g. regarding the Liechtenstein police requirements profile¹²⁰ – see case C-229/08 Wolf [2010] ECR I-00001) and is therefore in line with Article 4.1 of Directive 2000/78.

4.6.5 Redundancy

a) Age and seniority taken into account for redundancy selection

In Liechtenstein, national law does not permit age or seniority to be taken into account in selecting workers for redundancy.

Liechtenstein's anti-discrimination legislation does not explicitly define discrimination on the grounds of age. Nevertheless, Article 46 of the CCC¹²¹ defines redundancy due to reasons based on personal attributes (age would be defined as a personal attribute in judicial interpretation) as improper and therefore against the law. The law is silent about seniority as a ground for redundancy, but it can be assumed that seniority would also count as a personal attribute and would therefore be interpreted as a ground for redundancy which is protected by the law.

b) Age taken into account for redundancy compensation

In Liechtenstein, national law provides compensation for redundancy. Such compensation is not affected by the age of the worker.

As it is not permitted by law for age to be taken into account in selecting workers for redundancy, no age-related redundancy compensation would be in line with the law. Judicial interpretation is required to determine whether the concept of 'seniority' is the same as age and if it should therefore be legally treated in the same way as age. Thus, in the case of an improper redundancy based on personal attributes (as noted above, age would be defined as a personal attribute in judicial interpretation, based on Article 46 of the CCC), this would be classified as improper and therefore against the law.

¹²⁰ See "[Polizeiberuf](#)", [Landespolizei des Fürstentums Liechtenstein](#).

¹²¹ Common Civil Code, [1003001000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

4.7 Public security, public order, criminal offences, protection of health, protection of the rights and freedoms of others (Article 2(5), Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, national law includes exceptions that seek to rely on Article 2(5) of the Employment Equality Directive.

The special regulations listed below include exceptions that seek to rely on Article 2(5) of the Directive:

- the AEPD (Article 4);
- the Act on Children and Youth;
- the Regulations on Special Provisions for the Protection of Young Employees;
- the Decree on the Organisation of the Police;¹²²
- the Act on Foreigners;
- the Act of National Old Age and Widow's/Widower's Pension.

There are no other provisions explicitly referring to these issues.

4.8 Any other exceptions

In Liechtenstein, there are no other exceptions to the prohibition of discrimination (on any ground covered by this report) provided in national law.

One remark may be made regarding the placement or retention of persons against their will in institutions or psychiatric clinics, which was regulated under Articles 11 to 13 of the Social Assistance Act (*Sozialhilfegesetz*, SHG).¹²³ According to these provisions, persons who were 'mentally ill or mentally deficient' (*geisteskrank oder geistesschwach*), who suffer from addictive disorders or who were severely neglected may be placed or retained in a suitable institution against their will if the necessary assistance could not be provided to them in any other way. This legislation was incomplete and out of date. Thus, the Liechtenstein Parliament amended the Social Assistance Act on 6 June 2021,¹²⁴ and the relevant articles were deleted.

¹²² Decree on the Organisation of the Police (*Verordnung über den Dienstbetrieb und die Organisation der Landespolizei, PolDOV*), 22 August 2000, LGBl. 2000, No. 195, [2000195000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2000195000).

¹²³ Social Assistance Act (*Sozialhilfegesetz*, SHG), [1985017000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/1985017000).

¹²⁴ Government report and motion No. 91/2021, <https://bua.regierung.li/BuA/default.aspx?nr=27&year=2021&erweitert=true>.

5 POSITIVE ACTION (Article 5 Directive 2000/43, Article 7 Directive 2000/78)

a) Scope for positive action measures

In Liechtenstein, positive action is permitted in national law in respect of disability.

Essentially, only the AEPD states that positive action is permissible and does not constitute discrimination. Article 4 of the AEPD, on positive measures, states: 'Specific measures to achieve equal participation of persons with a disability in daily life within society are not considered to be discriminatory.' The AEPD allows for positive measures to integrate persons with disabilities. However, most positive measures can be described as soft law, and Liechtenstein does not have any kind of quotas. Article 19 of the AEPD covers integration programmes for persons with disabilities in education, employment, accommodation, transport, culture and sport, and Article 20 covers pilot projects for people's integration into working life. Other grounds are not covered in the AEPD.

There are no similar definitions of positive action measures against discrimination based on religion or belief, age, racial or ethnic origin or sexual orientation in any other specific national law. This corresponds with the fact that there are no specific laws on these grounds of discrimination. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive anti-discrimination act in Liechtenstein covering all grounds of discrimination. Positive action measures on grounds other than disability are not clearly set out in the law as a legal commitment. Nevertheless, some measures have been implemented. These have mainly been communication campaigns, including campaigns in relation to foreigners and old people. Such activities are directly supported by the Government (via the integration department of the Immigration and Passport Office or the Office of Social Services) or indirectly supported by mandating private associations with such tasks.

The Association for Human Rights (Verein für Menschenrechte, VMR) is tasked, *inter alia*, with raising public awareness of human rights and combating all forms of discrimination, in particular racial discrimination, by increasing public awareness through information and education and using the press and other media.

b) Quotas in employment for persons with disabilities

In Liechtenstein, national law does not provide for a quota/quotas for the employment of persons with disabilities.

Articles 17 to 20 of the AEPD state that different measures in favour of persons with disabilities may be supported. Article 19(3) of the AEPD specifies that various programmes may be implemented and supported by the Government, including those on vocational training, integration and housing. Article 20 states that pilot projects on the integration of persons with disabilities into the work environment may be supported by society.

6 REMEDIES AND ENFORCEMENT

6.1 Judicial and/or administrative procedures (Article 7 Directive 2000/43, Article 9 Directive 2000/78)

a) Available procedures for enforcing the principle of equal treatment

In Liechtenstein, the following procedures exist for enforcing the principle of equal treatment:

- Article 25 of the AEPD states that the civil courts (as ordinary courts) are the appropriate authority to decide upon complaints against discrimination on the ground of disability. Claims are adjudicated under the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP).¹²⁵
- Complaints relating to the anti-discrimination provisions of the Criminal Code (race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation) are adjudicated by the ordinary courts in the first instance (Section 283(1–2) of the Criminal Code).
- Claims based on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which came into force in Liechtenstein in 2000, can be brought to a Liechtenstein court (the Constitutional Court) on the basis of Section II - A, Article 15(2c) of the Act on the Constitutional Court.¹²⁶

Procedures for addressing discrimination are not the same for employment in the private sector and the public sector. In private disputes, the ordinary court is the first judicial authority, whereas in disputes between individuals and the public sector it is the Administrative Court (part of the public jurisdiction), followed by the Constitutional Court as the court of last instance.

The out-of-court settlement of disputes is regulated by Articles 594 to 616 of the CCP. In 2005, the Act on Mediation in Civil Law Cases¹²⁷ entered into force. This law defines mediation and mediators, as well as their rights and duties. Details concerning the necessary qualifications of a mediator are stated in the Regulations on the Act on Mediation in Civil Law Cases.¹²⁸ However, mandatory mediation in particular legal cases have not yet been introduced. If this were to be implemented, it might open the way to people being able to make a complaint without the financial risk of undertaking a court process. However, there are no current discussions about such an extended use of mediation.

b) Barriers and other deterrents faced by litigants seeking redress

There is no legal provision that requires the use of a lawyer when bringing a complaint before the court, although using a lawyer is likely to be helpful. Article 25 of the CCP states that court procedures can be carried out either in person or by a representative (e.g. a lawyer). Articles 63 to 73 of the CCP concern assistance for court trials (*Verfahrenshilfe*). Assistance has to be provided for persons who are not able to finance a trial without this having a negative effect on their ability to feed themselves properly. This holds for anyone, not just for persons with disabilities or other groups with specific characteristics.

The time schedule for court proceedings is regulated by particular acts – or, where that is not the case, the judge can decide on deadlines with respect to the needs and the nature of the specific court case.

¹²⁵ Code of Civil Procedure (*Gesetz über das gerichtliche Verfahren in bürgerlichen Rechtsstreitigkeiten, Zivilprozessordnung, ZPO*), LGBl. 1912 No. 9/1, [1912009001 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹²⁶ Act on the Constitutional Court, [2004032000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹²⁷ Act on Mediation in Civil Law Cases (*Gesetz über die Mediation in Zivilrechtssachen, Zivilrechts-Mediations-Gesetz, ZMG*), 15 December 2004, LGBl. 2005, No. 31, [2005031000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹²⁸ Ordinance to the Act on Mediation in Civil Law Cases (*Verordnung zum Gesetz über die Mediation in Zivilrechtssachen, Zivilrechts-Mediations-Verordnung, ZMV*), 12 April 2005, LGBl. 2005, No. 71, [2005071000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

Since Liechtenstein is a very small country and all national judicial authorities are located in the country, the travelling distances to the courts are very short.

c) Number of discrimination cases brought to justice

In Liechtenstein, statistics on the number of cases related to discrimination that have been brought to justice are not publicly available as standard. In response to a request for information, the Liechtenstein Court Administration stated that, in 2021, eight new proceedings for discrimination were initiated by the public prosecutor's office. Preliminary investigations were discontinued in two proceedings. One proceeding against unknown perpetrators was discontinued, and three proceedings were discontinued following out-of-court settlements (the accused person paid financial compensation to the alleged victim).

Thus, criminal complaints were filed with the ordinary court (Landgericht) in two proceedings, one of which ended in a conviction; the other case was still pending as at the end of 2021.

In addition, two proceedings in which a criminal complaint was filed with the ordinary court in 2020 resulted in convictions for discrimination under Section 283 of the Criminal Code.

This has resulted in three convictions under Section 283 of the Criminal Code in 2021, one on each of the following grounds of discrimination:¹²⁹

- race, nationality or ethnicity;
- gross trivialisation of genocide and other crimes against humanity, namely the Holocaust and the persecution, internment and systematic murder of other population groups during the Nazi era;
- sexual orientation.

Discrimination law cases prosecuted by the national courts are not generally open to the public. Whether the case and the judgment are made public depends on the court's decision. The main criteria for a court decision to be published or not are the interests of the public and the protection of the privacy of the parties involved. The above-mentioned court decisions have not been published by the Court Administration.

d) Registration of national court decisions on discrimination

In Liechtenstein, court decisions on discrimination are not registered as such by the national courts.

As stated under Paragraph (c) above, no specific statistics on discrimination cases are made public, and no statistics from published decisions are available to the public.

6.2 Legal standing and associations (Article 7(2) Directive 2000/43, Article 9(2) Directive 2000/78)

a) Engaging in proceedings on behalf of victims of discrimination (representing them)

In Liechtenstein, associations, organisations and trade unions are entitled to act on behalf of victims of discrimination if they have been mandated by the victim as a representative.

Article 31 of the AEPD states that organisations for persons with disabilities that have existed for at least five years and have their registered office in Liechtenstein may assert legal claims on their own behalf on the grounds of discrimination within the meaning of Articles 27 to 29 of the AEPD.

¹²⁹ In response to a request, the Court was unable to state when publication is planned.

Article 25 of the AEPD states that court trials must be carried out according to the Code of Civil Procedure (CCP), with the exception of the provision regarding the burden of proof in Article 26. Basically, the CCP states that court procedures can be carried out in person or by a representative (Article 25). The representative may be a lawyer, but the CCP, in Articles 26 and 28, does not restrict the term to lawyers, and a representative can be any authorised, mandated person.

Article 17 of the CCP states that any person who has a legal interest in one party prevailing in a legal action pending between other persons may intervene in the legal action on behalf of that party (subsidiary intervention). Furthermore, all persons who are entitled to intervene by virtue of statutory provisions shall be entitled to do so.

The author knows of no discrimination case law where this right was exercised in 2021.

- b) Engaging in proceedings in support of victims of discrimination (joining existing proceedings)

In Liechtenstein, associations, organisations and trade unions are entitled to act in support of victims of discrimination under certain criteria.

The AEPD is silent about any regulation of associations entitled to act in support of victims of discrimination joining ongoing proceedings. The Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) states in Articles 17 and the subsequent articles¹³⁰ that the admission of a third party to participate or intervene in a case makes the individual a party to the judicial proceedings. With the consent of the parties involved in the case, the third party, as intervener, can even take the place of the party for whom he/she intervened.

- c) Actio popularis

In Liechtenstein, under specific conditions, national law allows associations, organisations and trade unions to act in the public interest on their own behalf, without a specific victim to support or represent (*actio popularis*).

Whether associations are allowed to act in the public interest on their own behalf depends on the relevant law. Articles 27 to 29 and 31 of the AEPD entitle associations for persons with disabilities to make legal claims on their own behalf only for accessibility provisions in public buildings, for the accessibility of public roads and traffic areas, and for accessibility on public transport systems. There are preconditions, however – that such associations must be based in Liechtenstein and must have been in existence for at least five years. They can make such claims in their own name (see Paragraph 7(e) below).

In addition, according to the Act on the Constitutional Court (ACC),¹³¹ the Constitutional Court decides on the compatibility of laws and regulations (*Verordnung*) with the Constitution and international treaties. As far as regulations are concerned, 100 or more individuals who are entitled to vote can demand a review of a provision by the Constitutional Court (Article 20 ACC) within one month of the publication of the regulation concerned. Associations are not allowed to ask for such a review, but Article 20 of the ACC gives them the opportunity to collect the required number of signatures in order to have regulations examined by the Constitutional Court.

The above-mentioned provisions cover the review of regulations. As regards the verification of the compatibility of laws and international treaties with the Constitution, the right to demand a review by the Constitutional Court is restricted to other courts, the Government, municipalities, administrative bodies or the Constitutional Court itself, depending on the case.

¹³⁰ Code of Civil Procedure, [1912009001 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

¹³¹ Act on the Constitutional Court, [2004032000 \(gesetze.li\)](#).

d) Class action

In Liechtenstein, national law allows associations, organisations and trade unions to act in the interest of more than one individual victim under a class action for claims arising from the same event.

Although class action is possible under Liechtenstein law, the author knows of no case regarding discrimination, regardless of the ground. There are no specific provisions regarding class action in the sense of specific proceedings filed by an association on behalf of a group of identifiable individuals affected by the same discrimination. Referring to Articles 11 and 25 of the CCP, it is generally possible to have joint claimants (*Streitgenossen*), with or without a legal representative, in case law. However, certain conditions must be fulfilled. These are:

- the claimants must form a legal community with respect to the subject of litigation or they must be entitled in law or in fact on the same grounds;
- the claims of the claimants must be based on similar matters of law or facts which form the subject matter of the dispute, with jurisdiction allocated to the court for each individual claimant.

In this context, 'joint claimants' means that several persons may be taken to court jointly or take someone else to court jointly, where the subject matter of the litigation is a set of essentially similar claims or obligations. The law contains no details regarding opt-in or opt-out models.

In this sense, class actions are possible, but there is as yet no case law or any case pending which relates to this issue.

6.3 Burden of proof (Article 8 Directive 2000/43, Article 10 Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, national law requires a shift of the burden of proof from the complainant to the respondent.

This is valid in cases of direct and indirect discrimination as well as harassment on grounds of disability only. Article 26 of the AEPD, on burden of proof, states that:

- when a person claims to be discriminated against according to Arts. 5 to 10, this person shall make this claim credible;
- with reference to direct discrimination, it is obligatory for the defendant to prove that it is more likely in consideration of all circumstances that another reason claimed by him was crucial for the difference in treatment;
- when citing a reference to harassment as well as indirect discrimination, it is obligatory for the defendant to prove that in consideration of all circumstances it is more likely that the facts substantiated by him are truthful.

There has been hardly any case law regarding discrimination. There has not been a full shift of the burden of proof in those cases where information is publicly available. No case law was published regarding or in relation to this issue in 2020.

6.4 Victimisation (Article 9 Directive 2000/43, Article 11 Directive 2000/78)

In Liechtenstein, there are legal measures of protection against victimisation only for the ground of disability.

The AEPD states that any adverse consequence in reaction to a complaint or similar proceedings regarding the principle of equal treatment on grounds of disability (as defined by the AEPD) is forbidden. The complainant must not be penalised in response to a

complaint or to the launching of a legal process to secure a ban on discrimination. Similarly, anyone who appears as a witness or informant in court proceedings, or who supports a person affected by discrimination, must not be penalised or disadvantaged (Article 23(4) AEPD).

6.5 Sanctions and remedies (Article 15 Directive 2000/43, Article 17 Directive 2000/78)

a) Applicable sanctions in cases of discrimination – in law and in practice

Section 283(1) of the Criminal Code states that a person who publicly incites hatred or discrimination (first sentence) and a person who publicly denigrates or discriminates (fourth sentence) against a person or a group of persons on the grounds of race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation may be punished by imprisonment up to two years. The law is silent about any possibility of a fine in addition to the imprisonment.

Likewise, under the Criminal Code, anyone who publicly disseminates ideologies aimed at the systematic degradation or defamation of persons on account of their race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, disability, age or sexual orientation may be punished by imprisonment up to two years.

Article 23(1) of the AEPD states that, in any case, the person concerned is entitled to restitution of any financial losses incurred and to compensation for the personal detriment suffered. The victim can also request an injunction to ban or prevent the threat of future discrimination or to eliminate existing discrimination (Article 23(2)). In assessing the extent of compensation for the immaterial injury, the length of the period of discrimination, the seriousness of the act, the extent of the detriment and any indication of multiple discrimination, must, in particular, be taken into account (Article 23(3)). In cases where there has been a valid claim of discrimination on the ground of disability regarding reasonable accommodation, the court may order the defendant to carry out specific measures to fulfil their duty to provide reasonable accommodation.

Damages cannot be claimed on the basis of explicit legal regulations for grounds other than disability. Article 268 of the Code of Civil Procedure states that, if a decision in a case of civil litigation depends on the evidence and attribution of a criminal act, the judge shall be bound by the content of a final convicting decision of the Criminal Court. As the Criminal Code states in Section 283(1) that imprisonment for up to two years is to be imposed on anyone who publicly incites hatred or discrimination or who publicly denigrates or discriminates against a person or group of persons on the grounds of race, language, nationality, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation, judicial interpretation would be required to establish whether this would entitle those concerned to restitution for the personal detriment suffered. Since the amendment of the Criminal Code came into force in 2016, there has been no case law with regard to this issue as far as the author is aware.

b) Compensation – maximum and average amounts

Article 23(1) of the AEPD (discrimination on grounds of disability) states that, in any case, the person concerned is entitled to restitution of any financial losses incurred, and to compensation for the personal detriment suffered. No limit is stated in the law.

c) Assessment of the sanctions

Regarding the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities it can be said that the available sanctions are likely to be effective and proportionate, as required by the directives.¹³² As there is no data available regarding the effectiveness or proportionality of the given sanctions, and as almost no case law exists in this regard, it is not possible to give a final assessment as to whether the sanctions are dissuasive or not. So far, a very low number of victims actually bring their cases to court and, even for those who do so, there is no public data available about the details of the case and the ruling.

Article 23(1) of the AEPD (discrimination on grounds of disability) states that the person concerned is entitled, in any case, to restitution of any financial losses incurred and to compensation for the personal detriment suffered. No limit is stated in the law. Article 23(3) lists the criteria for evaluating the amount of non-pecuniary damages.

There are no provisions on the maximum amount of compensation with respect to other grounds of discrimination.

Since the amendment of the Criminal Code came into force in 2016, there has been no case law with regard to this issue as far as the author is aware.

¹³² The same is valid for the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

7 BODIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUAL TREATMENT (Article 13 Directive 2000/43)

- a) Body for the promotion of equal treatment irrespective of racial/ethnic origin according to Article 13 of the Racial Equality Directive

Given that Directive 2000/43 has not been transposed into Liechtenstein law, no equality bodies have been officially set up in accordance with Article 13. Nevertheless, Liechtenstein has two main official institutions that are entrusted with tasks concerning a broad spectrum of disadvantage and discrimination.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities (Liechtensteiner Behinderten-Verband – Büro für Gleichstellung)¹³³ was set up by the Government in accordance with Article 22 of the AEPD after the act entered into force in 2007. In implementation of the act, the office has been established as an independent institution integrated into the organisational set-up of the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities.

As successor to the Office of Equal Opportunities (Stabsstelle für Chancengleichheit),¹³⁴ the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (Verein für Menschenrechte, VMR)¹³⁵ was founded by 26 non-governmental organisations on 10 December 2016 as the independent national human rights institution in Liechtenstein. The status of this association and the relevant legal provisions had been laid down in a new law, the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (*Gesetz über den Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein*, VMLG).¹³⁶ This act entered into force on 1 January 2017, and the association became operational from that day. The VMR includes the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People, which was created in 2010 and acts as an independent, neutral, and universally accessible contact and complaints office on child and youth issues, as provided for by the Act on Children and Youth. One of its specific responsibilities is to monitor implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Where children's rights are violated, the Ombuds Office may conduct investigations, submit complaints to the competent bodies and suggest improvements. The following information on the VMR therefore also covers the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People.

The association acts independently and brings together various tasks which had previously been performed by different governmental offices and NGOs in Liechtenstein. These tasks are:

- advising authorities and private individuals on human rights issues;
- counselling people who feel violated in their rights and supporting victims of human rights violations;
- informing the public about the human rights situation in Liechtenstein;
- conducting investigations and recommending appropriate measures to authorities and private individuals;
- giving opinions on draft laws and regulations and on the ratification of international conventions;
- promoting dialogue and national/international cooperation with human rights bodies.

People from over 100 different countries live in Liechtenstein. Thus, the Liechtenstein population contains a great diversity in linguistic, cultural and ethnic terms. In order to

¹³³ Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities. See <http://www.lbv.li/Buero-Gleichstellung.php>.

¹³⁴ The former Office of Equal Opportunities, which was created under Article 22 of the AEW, was dissolved in 2016.

¹³⁵ Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein. See <https://www.menschenrechte.li/category/ueber-uns/>.

¹³⁶ Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, 4 November 2016.

ensure continued co-existence on the basis of common fundamental values and the rule of law, the governmental Office of Social Services¹³⁷ promotes measures that:

- contribute to intercultural tolerance in Liechtenstein;
- improve mutual understanding and respect;
- promote participation in the social life of migrants and combat any discrimination (on grounds of racial or ethnic origin or religion), xenophobia and racism.

As far as the author is aware, no specific steps have so far been taken to promote the rights of LGBT individuals.

With the founding of the VMR in Liechtenstein, the official tasks of the former Office of Equal Opportunities and the integration projects of the Office of Foreigners and Passports were transferred to the Office of Social Services. Thus, the Office of Social Services acts as the Government's specialist unit for issues of integration and equal opportunities.

b) Political, economic and social context of the body

By creating the VMR through the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, the Government actively committed itself to promoting and protecting human rights, and civil society's demand for an independent contact and advice centre was met. Furthermore, the act implemented the long-standing international recommendation for an independent human rights association, thus strengthening the credibility of Liechtenstein's foreign policy on human rights.

The VMR is politically independent and denominationally neutral, in accordance with Article 3 of the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (LGBl. 2016, No. 504). It acts on its own initiative, without any commitment to fulfil any requirements or instructions from the Government or from other authorities or interest groups. In a spirit of plurality, the association involves all civil society forces in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The VMR is financed by funds from the state (the budget awarded is approximately EUR 300 000 per annum (CHF 350 000)), membership fees and donations.¹³⁸

When the Disability Equality Act entered into force in January 2007, the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities was established as part of the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities, a non-governmental body. The office is politically independent and denominationally neutral. It acts on its own initiative, without any commitment to fulfil any requirements or instructions from the Government or from other authorities. The financial resources of the office are provided by a service agreement concluded between the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities and the Government. On this basis, the Office prepares an annual budget statement for the following year and submits it to the Government for review. After approval, the Government refers it to the Parliament with a request for legally binding approval. The underlying service agreement is currently being revised, and it is not published.¹³⁹ In a spirit of plurality, the office involves all civil society forces in the promotion of integration and equality for persons with disabilities.

¹³⁷ See <https://www.llv.li/#/117687/chancengleichheit>.

¹³⁸ See [Finanzen – Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein](#).

¹³⁹ The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities is organisationally and financially integrated into the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities. The membership fees, donations and state subsidies accruing to the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities as a whole amounted to approximately EUR 924 000 (CHF 940 000). The share that is used specifically for the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities is not shown separately in the annual financial statement of the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities.

In accordance with the Disability Equality Act, the state is charged with promoting the legal and factual equality of persons with disabilities in all areas of life. The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities is financed by funds from the state.

c) Institutional architecture

In Liechtenstein, the body forms part of a body with multiple mandates.

The legal status and tasks of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein were established according to the Paris Principles of the United Nations. On the basis of these principles, the association is recognised, promoted and reviewed as the key actor in the implementation and monitoring of human rights at national level and fulfils multiple mandates. It has a mandate as the national human rights institution and as the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People. Its most important characteristics are its independence (in its financing, its human resources and its legal basis), its sufficient resources and its broad mandate for the protection of human rights.

The Government mandated the private Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities (LBV) to set up the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities. The main task of the office is to advise public authorities and private individuals on the integration and equality of persons with disabilities and to assist in the drafting of legislation insofar as it is relevant to the integration and equality of persons with disabilities. However, assisting victims of disability discrimination is the responsibility of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities has a clear and focused mandate in relation to the integration and equality of persons with disabilities. It is a very active and well-known institution, promoting the integration and equality of persons with disabilities in all areas of life in Liechtenstein. The office focuses on public relations work to raise public awareness and on developing and implementing projects in cooperation with public and private organisations for persons with disabilities. The office is often contacted by private individuals seeking advice in relation to non-discrimination regarding persons with disabilities.

d) Status of the body – general independence

i) Status of the body

In accordance with the Paris Principles, the legal status and tasks of the VMR have been enshrined in the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein. Further details are set out in the articles of the association.¹⁴⁰ The organisation's legal form as an association guarantees the greatest possible independence. In addition, the association is a fundamentally democratic form of organisation, with equal rights and obligations for all members. The registration of the association in the commercial register is intended to ensure transparency.

The general assembly, which consists of all association members, appoints the board of directors for a period of four years. Re-election is permitted. The board of directors consists of seven members. It is independent, and its composition is balanced according to age, gender and origin. The members of the board of directors were selected on the basis of their professional competence in the areas of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, protection against violence, and integration, as well as according to their expertise in international law and human rights. The aim was to strike a balance between their practical experience and knowledge of the situation in Liechtenstein and their professional expertise and international experience.

¹⁴⁰ Statutes of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, available at: <https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statuten-VMR-definitiv.pdf>.

The VMR has legally defined income streams. These are:

- state contributions;
- membership fees;
- private donations; and
- income from their own services.

The VMR has a permanent office, which is supervised by the board of directors. The office is managed by a managing director, who is responsible for the operational management of the association. The managing director is appointed by the board of directors. The contract is preceded by a public invitation to tender. The substantive work of the association is monitored by the board of directors.

An external auditor must audit the annual financial statements and balance sheet and must prepare a written report to the board of directors on its findings for submission to the general assembly.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities operates in accordance with Article 22 of the Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities.¹⁴¹ The office is organisationally integrated into the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities, a private self-help organisation. The general assembly is the meeting of the association's members and its supreme organ. The board of directors consists of five to nine persons elected by the general assembly, who must also appoint the president and vice-president. All board functions are honorary and unpaid. The financial management of the association is carried out by the executive committee within the framework of a budget to be decided upon annually in advance.

In order to be able to offer diverse services and activities, the organisation depends on volunteers, financial donations including legacies and inheritances, ordinary membership fees, special collections within the association and public collections.

ii) Independence of the body

The VMR has a legal basis and a comprehensive mandate, as well as appropriate infrastructure and financing. These factors allow for a considerable degree of independence vis-à-vis the Government, as the association is only answerable to its members.¹⁴² The board members are selected on the basis of their professional competence in the areas of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, protection against violence, and integration, as well as their expertise in international law and human rights.

Nevertheless, the institution's activities are financed mainly by contributions from the Government. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, it was decided that the VMR would have its own section in the national budget and the power to decide on the use of its own financial resources.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities acts independently. Whether assistance can be provided or not depends on the office's financial and staff resources. As a non-governmental organisation, the office is largely dependent on volunteers and financial donors.

¹⁴¹ Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities, 25 October 2006, [2006243000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2006243000).

¹⁴² Members of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein can be private persons or NGOs or other associations whose membership may be open to the public.

e) Grounds covered by the body

The VMR has a broad mandate in promoting and acting for the implementation and monitoring of human rights at national level. It has a mandate as the national human rights institution. The corresponding legal act does not explicitly list the grounds covered; instead, it covers all areas of human rights and violations against them. Thus, there is no detailed regulation in the law in this regard. In accordance with its legal mandate, the VMR has decided to focus its work on specific grounds, as listed in the VMR strategy that is adopted annually. In the area of human rights promotion and protection there is a focus on vulnerable persons and groups of persons. For 2020/2021 the focus of the VMR has particularly been on:

- Persons with a migration background
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons with different sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBTI persons).

Thus, the grounds that have been highlighted are gender, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.¹⁴³

Nevertheless, the VMR does not have a mandate to deal with integration agreements for migrants in Liechtenstein.¹⁴⁴

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities has a mandate to focus on discrimination on the ground of disability. All other grounds of discrimination fall outside the scope of the institution.

f) Competences of the body – and their independent exercise

i) Independent assistance to victims

In Liechtenstein, the bodies do have the competence to provide independent assistance to victims.

The VMR acts in an independent manner as an ombudsman; it can receive complaints from those affected and bring them to the courts on their behalf. It provides general information to victims of discrimination, advises them about the legal situation and their options and refers them to the relevant institutions.

In 2021, the VMR handled a total of 55 complaints.¹⁴⁵ Of these, 20 complaints concerned the specialised area of child protection (under the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People) and youth protection.

The 35 complaints from adults can be broken down according to the various rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as follows:

- Seven complaints referring to the right to life and liberty (of which two are in connection with COVID-19 measures and two concern non-refoulement, under Article 3 of the Declaration).

¹⁴³ See the Strategy of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, available at: https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2020-Webseite_Strategie-2020-2021-Hauptziele.pdf.

¹⁴⁴ The Office of Social Services is responsible for integration courses, public information, campaigning and other activities for the successful integration of migrants. However, in cases of discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or nationality, the Office of Social Services refers to the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein.

¹⁴⁵ VMR Annual Report, 2021, https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2021-VMR-Jahresbericht_GzD-final.pdf.

- Seven complaints referring to the prohibition of discrimination (two in relation to migration/integration (race/origin), two in relation to gender equality, and one case each concerning age, disability and gender identity, under Article 2).
- Four complaints referring to the right to asylum (two in conjunction with the right to social security and health, under Article 22).
- Four complaints referring to the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 25).
- Three complaints referring to the right to a fair trial (Article 10).
- Two complaints referring to the right of legal protection (Article 8).
- Two complaints referring to the protection of the individual's sphere of freedom (one concerning welfare placement in a nursing home and one data protection/privacy), under Article 12.
- One complaint referring to equality before the law (Article 7).
- One complaint referring to the right to work and equal pay (Article 23).
- Four referring to various different issues.

All complaints to the VMR are heard and examined with regard to possible human rights violations. In most cases, counselling and mediation were offered and no further action was requested by the person concerned. In six cases, the VMR contacted and intervened with the relevant authorities.

None of the bodies concerned, including the VMR, publishes details or any legal steps that the person concerned or a legal representative might have taken, including the detailed decisions regarding these complaints. *Details are not published for reasons of data protection regulations and the protection of personal rights.*

The VMR did not provide legal representation in court in 2021.

The complaints concerning the protection of children and minors mainly concerned violence in parenting, parental conflicts in connection with separation/divorce, and child negligence. In 2021, paediatricians and child psychotherapists working in Liechtenstein noted an increase in depression, anxiety disorders and behavioural problems. This may be related to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other things, but no independent study on this has been conducted in Liechtenstein.

The VMR received very few complaints regarding equality for persons with disabilities. This is due to the fact that the Liechtenstein Association for Persons with Disabilities and the Equality Office for Persons with Disabilities offer specific, independent counselling services in these areas.

As a contact and information centre, the VMR brings together knowledge and acts as a single point of contact for those affected. Since the office was established, it has used its competences in an independent way.

No competence-related budget exists within the association, so there are no specific resources allocated for assistance to victims except for the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities is run by the Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities (LBV), which was established as a private association under Articles 246 et seq. of the Personal and Company Act of 20 January 1926. The office provides general information about discrimination based on disability and refers individual cases to the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein or any other relevant institution (for example, the Office of Aid for Victims of Criminal Offences). In accordance with Article 22 of the AEPD, the Office has the task of advising public authorities and private individuals on issues relating to the integration and equality of persons with disabilities. However, the law is silent on any financial or legal support measures.

No particular financial budget or staff are allocated to the body to assist victims of discrimination, and that duty is carried out under the general budget of the institution.

ii) Independent surveys and reports

The VMR states in its statutes¹⁴⁶ that it has the task of carrying out investigations and can recommend suitable measures to authorities and private individuals. Associated with this, the association can carry out and publish independent surveys, reports and studies.

Based on the material, reports and surveys produced by the VMR, it can be said that the association produces surveys and reports in an independent manner without influence from the Government or governmental organisations.

In 2021, the VMR published a series of articles on '25 years of Liechtenstein's CEDAW membership', on the topic of multiple discrimination.¹⁴⁷

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities prepares recommendations and applications based on issues affecting persons with disabilities in order to improve their situations. In this role, the office can conduct independent surveys or reports.

In 2021 the implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies made it necessary to amend the Disability Equality Act. For this purpose, the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities published a statement for the attention of the Government. In addition, the Office published a proposal to amend Article 12, Paragraph 7 of the AEPD. This involved introducing a legally enshrined ability to make deviations from the applicable standards in the construction of publicly accessible buildings in individual cases, in consultation with the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, in order to achieve better solutions for the benefit of individual persons with disabilities.¹⁴⁸

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities also commissions surveys and reports from independent third parties with the necessary competence and experience, mainly because the office itself has limited resources. In addition to this, the office reports periodically to the Government on developments in the integration and equality of persons with disabilities and on the impact of the actions and projects undertaken, as required by law. Furthermore, the association responds to consultations on new laws relevant to persons with disabilities, having been officially invited to participate by the Government.

iii) Recommendations

In Liechtenstein, the bodies do have the competence to issue recommendations on discrimination issues.

The VMR states in its statutes¹⁴⁹ that it can recommend suitable measures to authorities in order to change the law, and it may offer opinions in the course of legislative hearings. This includes giving information about the legal situation and offering suggestions for improvement – for example, with regard to situations in private companies or by conducting workshops.

The VMR participated in the following consultations in 2021:¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Statutes of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, available at:

<https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statuten-VMR-definitiv.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ See [2021-08-31 Twitter CEDAW-Kampagne 02.png \(1307x880\) \(menschenrechte.li\)](#).

¹⁴⁸ Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities Annual Report, 2021, <https://www.lbv.li/00-Downloads/LBV-Jahresbericht-2021.pdf>.

¹⁴⁹ Statutes of the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, available at:

<https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Statuten-VMR-definitiv.pdf>.

¹⁵⁰ See VMR newsletter, February 2021, <https://mailchi.mp/3ce522ccbd39/vmr-newsletter-ausgabe-2021-2>.

- In May 2021, the State Court ruled that the ban on the adoption of stepchildren by those in registered partnerships was contrary to the Constitution, and it instructed the Government to enact a regulation in conformity with the Constitution within one year.¹⁵¹ In the context of the corresponding consultation on the amendments to the law submitted by the Government, the VMR issued a written statement to the Government, in which it expressed its support for the equality of same-sex couples and for dialogue in society as a whole on the right to family for all and in all forms.
- In connection with the introduction of compulsory certification as a Government measure in the COVID-19 pandemic, the VMR formulated recommendations, which the Government has implemented.¹⁵² Overall, the VMR judges the Government's measures to be proportionate and in conformity with human rights, although not every single measure and every possible individual case could be examined. In its short public statement, the VMR did not refer to any specific discrimination issue.

In the assessment of the author, the association effectively exercises its ability to give recommendations on discrimination issues.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities prepares recommendations and applications independently. It advises authorities on integration and equality issues based on its own assumptions and recommendations and issues opinions within the framework of legislative hearings. Advice to private individuals is given in a general manner by means of public relations work to raise public awareness and promote dialogue between employers and employees, and through mediation on discrimination issues. The office provides a platform for promoting social dialogue and promotes cooperation with public and private institutions.

In 2021, Liechtenstein was set to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In order to determine how barrier-free Liechtenstein society already is, the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, together with the Association for Persons with Disabilities and the VMR, carried out a special campaign. Persons with disabilities went on a tour through all of Liechtenstein's municipalities. They tested accessibility and drew attention to their rights in discussions with the heads of the municipalities. On 3 December 2021, International Disability Day, a special theme week started. The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities organised a radio day and interviews in the national newspapers.

From the authors' perspective, the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities effectively exercises its duty to report periodically to the Government on developments in the integration and equality of persons with disabilities and on the impact of the actions and projects undertaken.

iv) Other competences

The VMR has the following additional competences in relation to the protection and promotion of human rights:

- supporting victims of human rights violations;
- informing the public about the human rights situation in Liechtenstein;
- carrying out investigations and recommending appropriate measures to public authorities and private individuals;

¹⁵¹ The decisions of the State Court are binding on all authorities of the Principality of Liechtenstein including the municipalities and all courts. If decisions of the State Court are subject to enforcement, the provisions of the Act on the General Administration of the Country shall apply. See Act on the State Court (*StGHG*), LGBl. 2004, No. 32, <https://erlasse.rechtportal.li/showdocument.aspx?lrnr=173.10&showHTML=1&zusatz=&autoresetcache=1>.

¹⁵² See <https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/2021-09-20-Empfehlungen-3G-und-Umsetzung.pdf>.

- delivering opinions on draft laws and regulations and on the ratification of international conventions insofar as they are relevant to human rights;
- promoting dialogue between national and international bodies with human rights mandates;
- acting as an independent ombudsman for children and young people in accordance with Article 96(2) of the Children and Youth Act.

The Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities is also mandated:

- to carry out public relations work to raise public awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities;
- to promote social dialogue between employers and employees with a view to promoting the implementation of the principle of equal treatment;
- to promote dialogue with non-governmental organisations involved in combating discrimination;
- to ensure cooperation with public and private institutions.

g) Legal standing of the body

The VMR has legal standing to:

- bring discrimination complaints on behalf of identified victims to court;
- bring discrimination complaints *ex officio* to court;
- intervene in legal cases concerning discrimination, including in the capacity of *amicus curiae*.

The VMR may, with the consent of a victim of a human rights violation, participate in judicial and administrative proceedings, either on behalf of the victim or in support of the victim, who can be represented by an external lawyer contracted by the association. The legal basis for the association is set out in Article 5 of the Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (LGBI. 2016, No. 504).

No relevant case law is known to the author.

h) Quasi-judicial competences

In Liechtenstein, the relevant bodies are not quasi-judicial institutions.

The VMR and the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities are not judicial bodies. None of their roles can be interpreted as being quasi-judicial. Their statements have no binding legal character, and they do not automatically trigger a right of action (in court).

i) Registration by the body of complaints and decisions

In Liechtenstein, only the VMR registers the number of complaints of discrimination that are made.

In 2021 the VMR received seven complaints in relation to discrimination (in 2020 there had been three complaints). These contacts concerned discrimination in various areas. Among them were issues related to race and origin, age and disability.¹⁵³

None of the bodies, including the VMR, publishes the decisions regarding these complaints in detail. This data is not available to the public.

¹⁵³ Information from a written response by VMR, dated 10.3.2022, in response to a request by the author. The VMR's 2021 annual report has not yet been published at time of writing.

k) Roma and Travellers

Roma and Travellers are not a priority issue, since there is no Roma minority living in Liechtenstein, nor are there Travellers. There are no specific problems that need to be addressed concerning Roma and Travellers at this time.

8 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

8.1 Dissemination of information, dialogue with NGOs and between social partners

- a) Dissemination of information about legal protection against discrimination (Article 10 Directive 2000/43 and Article 12 Directive 2000/78)

The dissemination of information concerning legal protection against discrimination is not directly promoted by state organs. However, the state supports private agencies that are active in this regard.

During the process of developing new legal provisions, there are regular consultations (*Vernehmlassung*). Relevant social groups are invited to make comments and statements on draft bills. These eventually have an impact on the final version of an act.

- b) Measures to encourage dialogue with NGOs with a view to promoting the principle of equal treatment (Article 12 Directive 2000/43 and Article 14 Directive 2000/78)

Through its agencies, the Government promotes dialogue with non-governmental organisations in the field of human rights. This takes place in the form of regular exchanges (including through an integration group of persons with disabilities) or concrete projects to improve the human rights situation, in which the various parties take part.

In 2021, independently of the implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, the Disability Equality Act (BGIG) was amended on the basis of an exchange between the responsible ministry and the Liechtenstein Disability Association and Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities. In the future, the possibility of granting an exception from accessibility requirements for publicly accessible buildings in individual cases (provided that it is proportionate) should also exist in cases of conversion into a publicly accessible building and facility (e.g. in the case of a conversion from a privately used flat into a physiotherapy practice). At the suggestion of the Liechtenstein Disability Association (LBV) and the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, this proposal involves granting legal permission, in individual cases and in consultation with the LBV and the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, to make deviations from the standards in force in the construction of publicly accessible buildings in order to achieve better solutions in individual cases.¹⁵⁴ This proposal is not a general relaxation of the legal provisions, but rather a legally enshrined option for granting proportionate concessions in individual cases, which have to be examined individually, and with concessions being granted only with the consent of the organisations concerned.

The Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities gives assistance to persons with disabilities in many ways. Much of the public information work is done via the Liechtenstein daily newspapers. Information on websites is important as well, and the association runs its own website. Links to various websites related to one or another aspect of disability may be found at <http://www.lbv.li/Links-FL.php#>.

Flay is an organisation for gay people. It provides information about legal protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Currently, the author knows of no specific project or platform whereby the Government is maintaining regular dialogue with this organisation.

¹⁵⁴ Press release from the Liechtenstein Government, <https://www.serviceportal.li/de/medienmitteilungen/regierung-verabschiedet-bericht-und-antrag-betreffend-barrierefreien-zugang-zu-websites-und-mobilen-anwendungen-oeffentlicher-stellen>.

There are several other organisations that campaign against discrimination and for education on discrimination. They also provide information on legal protection and rights in cases of discrimination.

- c) Measures to promote dialogue between social partners to give effect to the principle of equal treatment within workplace practices, codes of practice, workforce monitoring (Article 11 Directive 2000/43 and Article 13 Directive 2000/78)

When it comes to the role of the state as an employer, the objective is to act as an employer with responsibility, taking into account the needs of underprivileged groups such as persons with disabilities or women (Article 4 AEPO).

To a large extent, the state leaves negotiations between the employees' association and the employers to the social partners themselves. State interventions are restricted mainly to the monitoring of the relevant laws. The SAVE foundation, which was founded in December 2007, is jointly supported by the Liechtenstein Employees' Association and the Chamber of Commerce. SAVE has set up a central parity commission (*Zentrale Paritätische Kommission*) in order to monitor collective labour agreements (*Gesamtarbeitsverträge*).¹⁵⁵

The Liechtenstein Employees' Association¹⁵⁶ provides information and support for both members and non-members. However, the association is rather weak: only a small share of workers are members of the association, and thus it lacks financial and staff resources.

- d) Addressing the situation of Roma and Travellers

There are no specific problems that need to be addressed concerning Roma and Travellers at this time. Currently, there is no Roma community living in Liechtenstein. Therefore, no specific body or organ is appointed to carry out such work.

8.2 Measures to ensure compliance with the principle of equal treatment (Article 14 Directive 2000/43, Article 16 Directive 2000/78)

- a) Compliance of national legislation (Articles 14(a) and 16(a))

The legal system of Liechtenstein demands that laws are in accordance with the Constitution and relevant international law; regulations have to be in harmony with the respective laws and the Constitution. Thus, any laws, regulations or administrative provisions that are contrary to the principle of equal treatment in Article 31 of the Liechtenstein Constitution can be abolished, and any complaints to the courts could ultimately result in the Constitutional Court declaring a provision null and void.

- b) Compliance of other rules/clauses (Articles 14(b) and 16(b))

Liechtenstein is not a member of the EU, so Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC have not been transposed to EEC law and therefore to national law in Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein has nevertheless taken the necessary measures to ensure compliance with the ratified International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which have been ratified.

Regarding discrimination on the ground of disability, Article 10 of the AEPD states that no one may be directly or indirectly discriminated against in connection with an employment relationship under private or public law or in the other world of work. Thus, the necessary regulations regarding disability have been put in place to ensure that contracts and collective agreements are in accordance with the principle of equal treatment. Thus, if an

¹⁵⁵ See <http://www.zpk.li/>.

¹⁵⁶ Workers Association of Liechtenstein (ArbeitnehmerInnenverband, LANV). See <http://www.lanv.li>.

individual employment contract included a clause in violation of the AEPD, the individual employee would be entitled to take legal action against this discrimination under the AEPD.

9 COORDINATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

The legal competence for anti-discrimination law is distributed among different levels of government. The following Government departments are responsible for dealing with issues or coordinating matters regarding non-discrimination:

- the Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture;¹⁵⁷
- the Ministry of Home Affairs, Economy and Environment;¹⁵⁸
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport;¹⁵⁹
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Justice.¹⁶⁰

The various ministries are involved in different aspects of discrimination. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture is responsible for the social security system (including old age and surviving dependents insurance and health insurance), health policies (including public health services in Liechtenstein) and family policy (in particular concerning children and adolescents). A further area of focus within the Ministry of Social Affairs is equal opportunities. This encompasses equality in all areas of life between men and women as well as between persons with disability and other groups in society. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture actively strives to combat social deprivation and is thus the leading ministry within the Government with regard to discrimination. The Equal Opportunities Department, reporting to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture, is committed to promoting equal opportunities in the areas of gender equality, disability, migration and integration, social protection and sexual orientation.¹⁶¹ The Ministry is responsible for the social policy of Liechtenstein,¹⁶² and one of its main tasks is to provide social assistance and social insurance, which cover the grounds of age, disability and gender. Other grounds are not explicitly mentioned in the corresponding laws. Thus, no regulations exist stating that issues of sexual orientation, for example, fall within the Ministry's remit.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport is in charge of Liechtenstein's commitment to the further development and improved application of international law and, in particular, human rights. The Office of Foreign Affairs, among other bodies, is subordinate to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport. Its task is to ensure the ongoing domestic implementation of Liechtenstein's human rights obligations, and it is also responsible for compliance with the reporting obligations under human rights conventions.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Economy and Environment has responsibility for public safety, civil protection, political rights, state and municipal citizenship, civil status and the law on foreigners.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Justice is responsible for all areas of law (civil law, criminal law, the penal system, victim assistance, the coordination of official liability, etc.). The remit of the Justice Department covers civil law, criminal law, procedural law, the penal system, victim support and the coordination of public liability.

Cooperation between the different ministries is quite close since, according to the Constitution, the Government is collegiate, and decisions are taken collectively.

¹⁵⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs and Culture. See <https://www.regierung.li/ministries/ministry-of-social-affairs-and-culture/>.

¹⁵⁸ Ministry of Home Affairs, Economy and Environment. See <https://www.regierung.li/ministries/ministry-of-home-affairs-economy-and-environment/>.

¹⁵⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport. See <https://www.regierung.li/ministries/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-education-and-sport/>.

¹⁶⁰ Ministry of Infrastructure and Justice. See <https://www.regierung.li/ministries/ministry-of-infrastructure-and-justice/>.

¹⁶¹ Other grounds, such as age, religion and racial or ethnic origin are not explicitly mentioned.

¹⁶² The Ministry was newly created when the new Government took office in 2013 and has taken over responsibilities from three previously existing ministries, the Ministries of Social Affairs, Health and Family and Equal Opportunities.

Finally, the independent national Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein promotes human rights in areas that mainly affect the weakest groups in Liechtenstein society (persons with disabilities, children, single mothers, asylum seekers, undocumented foreigners, etc.) and coordinates activities with respect to equal opportunities. Additionally, it is tasked with the implementation of an interdepartmental anti-discrimination policy.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ Act on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein, 4 November 2016. Government report for consultation, <http://www.llv.li/files/srk/vnb-scg.pdf>.

10 CURRENT BEST PRACTICES

On 18 June 2019, the Government decided to create an internal administrative working group on human rights, with the aim of improving the follow-up of recommendations made by international human rights bodies, coordinating data collection and reporting to these bodies. The working group's tasks include the preparation of relevant Government decisions, ongoing monitoring of implementation and exchanges with internal and external bodies. The working group is composed of representatives from the Office of Foreign Affairs (including the head of the working group), the Office of Justice, the Office of Social Services, the Office of Statistics, the Office of National Economy, the Office for Foreigners and Passports, the National Police and the Office of Education.

The Liechtenstein Association of Persons with Disabilities and the Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, together with the VMR, started a pilot project to identify how barrier-free Liechtenstein society really is. Persons with disabilities went on a tour through all of Liechtenstein's municipalities. They tested accessibility and raised awareness of their rights in order to increase support for the speedy ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In 2021, an action plan headed 'Integration in Liechtenstein: Socio-economic potentials and areas of tension' was commissioned by the Government and presented to the public. It contains suggestions for improvement based on the constitutional principle of equal treatment of all people residing in Liechtenstein. With reference to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, four essential areas of responsibility and accountability have been defined:¹⁶⁴

1. The central basis of integration efforts is equal treatment and thus equal opportunities.
2. The national and municipal administrations shall take a pioneering role and oppose all forms of structural and institutional racism or structural and institutional discrimination.
3. State and municipal staff are made aware of all forms of discrimination and unequal treatment and are encouraged to recognise and avoid them in their processes.
4. Incidents of racism, discrimination and multiple disadvantages are examined.
5. Incidents of racism, discrimination and multiple disadvantages (intersectionality) are investigated and measures for targeted elimination are created.

No best practices can be identified with regard to the use of artificial intelligence to improve the effective implementation of national antidiscrimination legislation.

¹⁶⁴ Integration Strategy of the Ministry of Society and Culture. Available at: <https://www.regierung.li/files/attachments/Jahresplanung-2022-Integrationsmassnahmen-637823506608119823.pdf?t=637829399046608206>.

11 SENSITIVE OR CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

11.1 Potential breaches of the directives at the national level

Directive 2000/43/EC has not been transposed completely in national law (except in terms of Annex XVIII, which has been adopted to EEC law and therefore to national law in Liechtenstein). No further attempts have been made so far to incorporate the directive into the EEA Agreement or national law.

Directive 2000/78/EC was not incorporated into the EEA Agreement, based on the fact that the legal background of the directive was not declared compatible with the EEA Agreement. The directive is based on the former Article 13 of the EEC Treaty (now Article 19 TFEU), which was brought into the EC Treaty by the Amsterdam Treaty. A similar legal basis does not exist in the EEA Agreement. Therefore, it was concluded that the directive did not fall within the territory covered by the EEA Agreement. Liechtenstein has refrained from implementing the directives autonomously. However, regulations with regard to disability have been transposed from the directive into national law.

11.2 Other issues of concern

With regard to housing, the ratification of the CRPD means that it must be ensured that persons with disabilities have the opportunity, on an equal basis with others, to freely choose where they live and with whom they live and are not obliged to live in special forms of housing, so that persons with disabilities are also granted an effective 'right to home'. Thus, there is an obligation for the Government to deinstitutionalise, meaning to provide an adequate range of living arrangements for persons with disabilities so that they are effectively enabled to have freedom of choice and are not directly or indirectly forced into housing and care structures that are currently still dominant. This freedom of choice has not yet been fully established in Liechtenstein, as institutionalised forms of housing dominate, and therefore there are, if not legal, then de facto constraints that lead persons with disabilities to live predominantly in such housing and care structures.

The ratification of the CRPD means not so much an adjustment of the legal basis in Liechtenstein, but rather a challenge to ensure that the existing legal framework is applied in practice in the sense of promoting freedom of choice. Furthermore, the necessary human and material resources require to be made available to enable people to effectively and autonomously determine their place of residence and domicile.

A further concern is the continuing absence of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation covering all prohibited grounds for discrimination. Liechtenstein was issued a recommendation, following the review by the UN Human Rights Council in 2018,¹⁶⁵ to continue taking measures towards creating comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that would include all prohibited grounds for discrimination. The stated position of the Liechtenstein Government is that, on the basis of existing laws, Liechtenstein provides comprehensive protection against discrimination. However, the introduction of a general anti-discrimination law would contradict the liberal economic order of the country and could provoke possible conflicts with the principle of freedom of contract. No further action has been taken by the Government in 2021.

A relevant education structure is in place to integrate children with disabilities into regular schools. In practice, however, many young persons with disabilities attend the Special Education Centre (HPZ), especially those with intellectual impairment. According to some DPOs, the inclusion effort should be expanded in order to integrate children with disabilities in regular schools in a much more comprehensive way. In the area of tertiary education, no measures or policies at a state level are in place.

¹⁶⁵ Human Rights Council (2018), A/HRC/38/16.

A key concern of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the area of education is the inclusion of persons with disabilities in bodies that develop, decide on or evaluate educational measures. Their inclusion in bodies such as a school board or a children's and youth advisory board is still not assured in Liechtenstein. In the context of an inclusive education system, performance assessment must address the needs of persons with disabilities. In addition to assessment using the classic grading system, another assessment procedure must be created and applied.

Article 29 of the CRPD guarantees persons with disabilities equal enjoyment of political rights. This includes both the right to vote and the right to stand for election. The Convention prohibits disability-specific exclusions from the right to vote.

An exclusion from the right to vote may only be maintained if it is based on reasons laid down by law and if these reasons are objective and reasonable. Thus, based on the legal provisions, a court cannot base exclusion from the right to vote on a disability per se. For this purpose, the individual capacity of the person concerned must be determined in a court procedure. These proceedings are governed by the Non-Contentious Disputes Act (*Ausserstreitgesetz, AussStrG*).¹⁶⁶ Article 131 f. stipulates that the person concerned has to bear the costs of the proceedings himself/herself. This provision constitutes discrimination against persons with a disability, as they are put at a financial disadvantage due to the disability that is the subject of the proceedings. This provision is therefore considered by Liechtenstein legal experts to be contrary to the Convention, and requires deletion given the context described above.¹⁶⁷

The Principality of Liechtenstein is closely linked to the Roman Catholic Church. Roman Catholicism is the state religion and enjoys the protection of the state. Nevertheless, the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Against this background, the Islamic Community of the Principality of Liechtenstein asked the Government to support it in finding suitable premises for the practice of the Muslim faith. On 10 August 2021 the Community submitted a petition to the Parliament headed 'Equal rights for Muslims in Liechtenstein', which the Parliament referred to the Government on 1 September 2021. In addition to finding suitable premises for the practice of its faith, the Community would like to see a cemetery for Muslims in Liechtenstein. The petition is still pending.

Furthermore, statistical data and information are lacking for Liechtenstein. One recommendation is therefore to conduct statistical research to help understand the situation of young persons with disabilities and to support them in an effective and useful way.

To the best knowledge of the author, no issues of concern regarding the regulation of artificial intelligence were identified in Liechtenstein in 2021.

¹⁶⁶ *Gesetz über das gerichtliche Verfahren in Rechtsangelegenheiten ausser Streitsachen (Ausserstreitgesetz; AussStrG)*, 25.11.2010.

¹⁶⁷ Schwärzler Attorneys at Law, Liechtenstein. Link: [Liechtenstein beschliesst Ratifikation der UNO-Behindertenrechtskonvention 0.pdf \(s-law.com\)](#).

12 LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN 2021

12.1 Legislative amendments

An amendment to the Code of Civil Procedure was made in 2021 regarding litigation support for victims. If a victim has been granted legal assistance in criminal proceedings, this shall also apply, at his or her request, to civil proceedings conducted between him or her and the accused in the criminal proceedings, if the subject matter of the civil proceedings is factually related to the subject matter of the criminal proceedings and insofar as this is necessary to safeguard the procedural rights of the victim with the greatest possible consideration for his or her personal involvement. This is to be assessed by the victim assistance office. The same applies if the victim is to be heard as a witness on the subject matter of the criminal proceedings.

On 7 May 2021, the Liechtenstein Parliament passed amendments to the Social Assistance Act and other laws on welfare accommodation and institutional care.

This concerned the current legal provisions regarding the forced admission or placement of persons against their will in institutions or psychiatric clinics, which are partly incomplete and outdated. There was also a need for regulations covering residence in residential or nursing homes, as restrictions on freedom of movement during such a stay were not regulated by law.

On 31 August 2021, the Government adopted a report and motion for the attention of the Parliament on the amendment of the Disability Equality Act to implement Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.

Websites and mobile applications of public bodies must comply with the legally defined requirements for accessibility. They must be perceptible, operable, understandable and robustly designed. All public bodies are affected by these regulations: the Government, municipalities and 'bodies of general interest' – i.e. bodies with legal personality established for the specific purpose of fulfilling tasks of a non-commercial nature in the general interest, which are financed predominantly by the community or other bodies of general interest or which are subject to management supervision by them, or whose administrative, management or supervisory body is made up of a majority of members appointed by the community or other bodies of general interest.

At its meeting of 26 May 2020, the Liechtenstein Government decided to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On 8 September 2020, Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, Liechtenstein's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, signed the Convention on behalf of the Government. From 2021, the ministries concerned have been investigating the necessary legislative adjustments that are required before ratification can take place. To this end, the Government has already taken concrete steps to initiate the necessary legislative amendments, although it has not yet completed the process. At the time of writing this report, the Convention has not been incorporated into national law in Liechtenstein.

There were no further relevant legislative amendments with regard to discrimination in 2021.

12.2 Case law

In 2021, there were three convictions under Section 283 of the Criminal Code, one on each of the following grounds of discrimination:¹⁶⁸

- race, nationality or ethnicity;
- gross trivialisation of genocide and other crimes against humanity, namely the Holocaust and the persecution, internment and systematic murder of other population groups during the Nazi era;
- sexual orientation.

Relevant discrimination grounds: race, nationality or ethnicity

Name of the court: Ordinary Court (Landgericht)

Date of decision: 23 March 2021

Name of the parties: N/A

Reference number: (not yet published)

Link: N/A

Brief summary: On 23 March 2021, a man living in Liechtenstein had to appear before the Ordinary Court in relation to racially hostile statements and sexual harassment. He had verbally assaulted two passengers on a public bus with xenophobic statements. As a result, he was accused of discrimination, exhibitionism and sexual harassment by the public prosecutor.

The accused confessed to discrimination in court. With regard to the other two charges, however, he denied any guilt.

The court subsequently convicted the accused of an offence against Section 283 of the Criminal Code (discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity and nationality).

Relevant discrimination grounds: sexual orientation

Name of the court: State Court

Date of decision: 10 May 2021

Name of the parties: Regulatory control application by the Princely Ordinary Court to the State Court

Reference number: StGH 2020/097

Link: https://www.gerichtsentscheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=MNSBoaHb7nz3AAOK-DYenZj_aCQXnFs4QLmZbra_v0enA-0XSvq25d13gKCYG8OWYn-bCjQT6IAutDZOqRmEF9kg0

Brief summary: On 10 May 2021, the State Court (StGH 2020/097)¹⁶⁹ ruled that Article 25 of the Act of 16 March 2011 on the Registered Partnership of Same-Sex Couples (the Partnership Act; PartG, LGBl. 2011, No. 350), must be judged as contrary to the ECHR and the Constitution and must therefore be repealed. This was justified on the part of the State Court by the fact that the inadmissibility of stepchild adoption for same-sex couples according to the current legal situation in Liechtenstein was unconstitutional. The given legal situation in Liechtenstein violates the prohibition of discrimination in Article 8, in conjunction with Article 14, of the ECHR, because the adoption of stepchildren in Liechtenstein is only possible for heterosexual couples, not for same-sex couples. The legal effect of the repeal of this provision was postponed for one year after promulgation, which took place on 13 July 2021. On 21 September 2021, the Government adopted a consultation report on the implementation of the aforementioned ruling of the State Court

¹⁶⁸ Upon request, the court provides statistical data but does not publish individual court decisions. The decision on whether the court cases mentioned will be published on the court website is pending. See <https://www.gerichtsentscheidungen.li/default.aspx?z=QnJOWTtoUI12nYEPvvRZOQ2>. Reference can be made to the 2021 annual report of the Liechtenstein Association of Human Rights, where the same data is published. See https://www.menschenrechte.li/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2021-VMR-Jahresbericht_GzD-final.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ Article 25 of the Act on the Registered Partnership of Same-Sex Couple: stepchild adoption; equality of rights (StGH 2020/097), [Entscheidungen der liechtensteinischen Gerichte \(gerichtsentscheidungen.li\)](https://www.gerichtsentscheidungen.li/Entscheidungen-der-liechtensteinischen-Gerichte).

and tabled amendments to the Partnership Act as well as to the CCC. This is intended to enable the adoption of stepchildren for registered partners and cohabitants. The consultation period ended on 21 December 2021.

There is no case law in respect of Roma. As of the date of this report, there are very few Roma in Liechtenstein.

ANNEX 1: MAIN TRANSPOSITION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION

Country: Liechtenstein
Date: 1 January 2022

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| <p>Title of the Law: Act on Equality of Persons with Disabilities (Gesetz über die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderungen; Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz) Abbreviation: AEPD/BGIG Date of adoption: 15.12.2006 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2016.273, 01.01.2017 Entry into force: 01.01.2007 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2006243000?version=4 Grounds covered: disability Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil/administrative law Material scope: all sectors Principal content: equality of persons with disabilities; prohibition of discrimination; support for persons with disabilities; reasonable accommodation for persons with disability; pilot projects for integration into work environment</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Act on Disability Insurance (Invalidenversicherung) Abbreviation: IVG Date of adoption: 04.02.1960 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2021.215, 07.07.2021 Entry into force: 01.01.1960 (entered into force retroactively) Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1960005000?version=41 Grounds covered: disability Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil/administrative law Material scope: insurance; goods; assistance; employment Principal content: financial support for persons with disabilities; direct and indirect assistance to improve living and working conditions; support of care homes and sheltered workshops</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Act on Civil Union for Same-Sex Couples (Gesetz vom 16 März 2011 über die eingetragene Partnerschaft gleichgeschlechtlicher Paare) Abbreviation: ACUSSC/PartG Date of adoption: 01.09.2011 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2016.348, 01.01.2017 Entry into force: 01.09.2011 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2011350000?version=2 Grounds protected: sexual orientation Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law Material scope: same-sex registered partnership Principal content: official Recognition of same-sex partnership/same-sex couples</p> |
| <p>Title of the Law: Common Civil Code (Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch) Abbreviation: CCC/ABGB Date of adoption: 01.06.1811 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2018 Nr. 15 Entry into force: 18.12.1812 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1003001000?version=76 Grounds covered: nationality, pregnancy Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law Material scope: general Principal content: civil rights</p> |

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| <p>Title of the Law: Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch) Abbreviation: StGB Date of adoption: 22.10.1988 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2019.124, 01.10.2019 Entry into force: 01.01.1989 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1988037000?version=51 Grounds covered: race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation Civil/administrative/criminal law: criminal law Material scope: penalties Principal content: prohibition of racial discrimination by threat of punishment</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Act on Foreigners (Ausländergesetz) Abbreviation: AuG Date of adoption: 15.12.2008 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2021.314, 21.10.2021 Entry into force: 01.01.2009 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2008311000?version=18 Grounds covered: integration (nationality, race, ethnic origin) Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law Material scope: regulation regarding foreigners in Liechtenstein Principal content: specific regulation in context to nationality</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Constitution of the Principality of Liechtenstein (Verfassung des Fürstentums Liechtenstein) Abbreviation: LC Date of adoption: 24.10.1921 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2020.357, 01.02.2021 Entry into force: 24.10.1921 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1921015000?version=44 Grounds covered: national origin Civil/administrative/criminal law: all Material scope: regulation equal treatment of all Liechtenstein citizens Principal content: Specific regulation in context to religion and belief</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Law on the Association for Human Rights in Liechtenstein (Gesetz über den Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein) Abbreviation: VMRG Date of adoption: 23.12.2016 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2016.504, 01.01.2017 Entry into force: 01.01.2017 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2016504000?version=1 Grounds covered: race, language, national origin, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age or sexual orientation Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law Material scope: promotes human rights Principal content: promotion of human rights</p> |
| <p>Title of the law: Act on Equality between Women and Men (Gesetz über die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann) Abbreviation: GLG (AEWM) Date of adoption: 05.05.1999 Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2021.257, 01.01.2022 Entry into force: 05.05.1999 Web link: https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2006243000?version=4 Grounds covered: equal treatment of men and women Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law</p> |

Material scope: equal treatment of men and women
Principal content: equal treatment of men and women

Title of the law: Act on the National Old Age and Widow's /Widower's Pension (Gesetz über die Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung)

Abbreviation: AHVG
Date of adoption: 31.12.1952
Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2021.214, 07.07.2021
Entry into force: 01.01.1954
Web link: <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/1952029000?version=55>
Grounds covered: age, disability
Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law
Material scope: social protection, social advantages
Principal content: pension insurance

Title of the law: Children and Youth Act (*Kinder- und Jugendgesetzes*)

Abbreviation: KJG
Date of adoption: 28.01.2009
Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2021.224, 01.09.2021
Entry into force: 01.02.2009
Web link: <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2009029000?version=8>
Grounds covered: age, disability
Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law
Material scope: education
Principal content: education

Title of the law: Act on Employment of Public Officials (*Gesetz über das Dienstverhältnis des Staatsappersonals, Staatsappersonalgesetz; StPG*)

Abbreviation: AEPO (StPG)
Date of adoption: 18.06.2008
Latest relevant amendments: LGBl. 2020.316, 01.01.2021
Entry into force: 01.07.2008
Web link: <https://www.gesetze.li/konso/pdf/2008144000?version=11>
Grounds covered: gender
Civil/administrative/criminal law: civil law
Material scope: dismissal
Principal content: deployment

ANNEX 2: INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Country: Liechtenstein
Date: 31 December 2021

| Instrument | Date of signature | Date of ratification | Derogations/ reservations relevant to equality and non-discrimination | Right of individual petition accepted? | Can this instrument be directly relied upon in domestic courts by individuals? |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| European Convention of 4 November 1950 for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), including Protocols 1-12 and 14 | 23 November 1978 ¹⁷⁰ | 8 September 1982 | Art. 64 and Art. 6(1): Regarding publicity of trials, several existing national legal provisions that might limit publicity shall remain valid. | Yes | Yes |
| Revised European Social Charter | Not signed ¹⁷¹ | Not ratified | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) | 16 December 1966 ¹⁷² | 10 December 1998 | Declaration concerning Article 3 ¹⁷³ Reservation concerning Article 14(1) ¹⁷⁴ Reservation concerning Article 17(1) ¹⁷⁵ | Yes | Yes |

¹⁷⁰ European Convention on Human Rights (Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention), LGBl. 1982 No. 60/1, [1982060001 \(gesetze.li\)](http://www.gesetze.li/1982060001).

¹⁷¹ Source: <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=163&CM=7&DF=26/10/2008&CL=ENG>.

¹⁷² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Internationaler Pakt vom 16 Dezember 1966 über bürgerliche und politische Rechte), LGBl. 1999 No. 58, [1999058000 \(gesetze.li\)](http://www.gesetze.li/1999058000).

¹⁷³ 'The Principality of Liechtenstein declares that it does not interpret the provisions of Article 3 of the Covenant as constituting an impediment to the constitutional rules on the hereditary succession to the throne of the Reigning Prince.'

¹⁷⁴ 'The Principality of Liechtenstein reserves the right to apply the provisions of Article 14, para. 1 of the Covenant, concerning the principle that hearings must be held and judgments pronounced in public, only within the limits deriving from the principles at present embodied in the Liechtenstein legislation on legal proceedings.'

¹⁷⁵ 'The Principality of Liechtenstein makes the reservation that the right to respect for family life, as guaranteed by Article 17, para. 1 of the Covenant, shall be exercised, with regard to aliens, in accordance with the principles at present embodied in the legislation on aliens.'

| Instrument | Date of signature | Date of ratification | Derogations/reservations relevant to equality and non-discrimination | Right of individual petition accepted? | Can this instrument be directly relied upon in domestic courts by individuals? |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | Reservation concerning Article 26 ¹⁷⁶ Declaration concerning Article 41 ¹⁷⁷ | | |
| Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities | No signature. Direct Ratification ¹⁷⁸ | 18 September 1997 | Declaration ¹⁷⁹ | No specific regulation is given within the framework ¹⁸⁰ | No signature. Direct Ratification |
| European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages as of 5 November 1992 | No signature. Direct Ratification | 1 March 1998 | Declaration ¹⁸¹ | No specific regulation is given within the framework ¹⁸² | Yes |
| International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR) | No signature. Direct Ratification | 10. December 1998 ¹⁸³ | No derogations. | Yes | Yes |

¹⁷⁶ The Principality of Liechtenstein reserves the right to guarantee the rights contained in Article 26 of the covenant concerning the equality of all persons before the law and their entitlement without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law only in connection with other rights contained in the present Covenant.

¹⁷⁷ 'The Principality of Liechtenstein declares under Article 41 of the Covenant to recognise the competence of the Human Rights Committee, to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State party claims that another State party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant.

¹⁷⁸ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Rahmenübereinkommen vom 1. Februar 1995 zum Schutz nationaler Minderheiten), LGBl. 1998 No. 10, [1998010000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

¹⁷⁹ Declaration that no national minorities are present in Liechtenstein and that the ratification has to be seen as an act of solidarity with the goals of the Convention.

¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless Article 3 is accepted, saying that 'persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights flowing from the principles enshrined in the framework Convention individually as well as in community with others'.

¹⁸¹ Declaration: The Principality of Liechtenstein declares, in accordance with Art. 2 para. 2 and Art. 3 para. 1 of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 5 November 1992, that at the time of ratification there are no regional or minority languages in Liechtenstein within the meaning of the Charter.

¹⁸² Nevertheless Article 3 is accepted, saying that 'persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights flowing from the principles enshrined in the framework Convention individually as well as in community with others'.

¹⁸³ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Internationaler Pakt vom 16. Dezember 1966 über wirtschaftliche, soziale und kulturelle Rechte), LGBl. 1999 No. 57, [1999057000 \(gesetzte.li\)](#).

| Instrument | Date of signature | Date of ratification | Derogations/ reservations relevant to equality and non-discrimination | Right of individual petition accepted? | Can this instrument be directly relied upon in domestic courts by individuals? |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) | No signature. Direct Ratification | 1 March 2000 ¹⁸⁴ | Declaration concerning Art. 14 ¹⁸⁵ | Yes | Yes ¹⁸⁶ |
| ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination | Not Signed ¹⁸⁷ | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) | 30 September 1990 | 22 December 1995 | 1 October 2009 ¹⁸⁸ | Yes | Yes |
| Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) | 8 September 2020 | N/A- | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment | 12 September 1990 | 2 December 1990 | Declaration concerning Article 21(1) ¹⁸⁹ | Yes | Yes |

¹⁸⁴ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Internationales Übereinkommen zur Beseitigung jeder Form von Rassendiskriminierung), LGBl. 2000, No. 80, [2000080000 \(gesetze.li\)](https://www.gesetze.li/2000080000).

¹⁸⁵ In accordance with Article 14 of the International Convention of 21 December 1965 on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Principality of Liechtenstein recognises the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within the jurisdiction of Liechtenstein claiming to be victims of a violation by Liechtenstein of any of the rights set forth in the Convention. The Principality of Liechtenstein recognises that competence on the understanding that the said Committee shall not consider any communication without ascertaining that the same matter is not being considered or has not already been considered under another international procedure of investigation or settlement.

¹⁸⁶ Pursuant to Article 14, para. 2 of the Convention, the Constitutional Court has been designated as competent to 'receive and consider petitions from individuals and groups of individuals within the jurisdiction of Liechtenstein who claim to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention'.

¹⁸⁷ Liechtenstein is not an ILO Member State.

¹⁸⁸ On 1 October 2009, the Government of Liechtenstein informed the Secretary-General that it had decided to withdraw the declaration concerning Article 1 and the reservation concerning Article 7 made upon ratification of the Convention. The text of the declaration withdrawn reads as follows: 'According to the legislation of the Principality of Liechtenstein children reach majority at 20 years of age. However, Liechtenstein law provides for the possibility to prolong or to shorten the duration of minority.' The text of the reservation withdrawn reads as follows: 'The Principality of Liechtenstein reserves the right to apply the Liechtenstein legislation according to which Liechtenstein nationality is granted under certain conditions.'

¹⁸⁹ The Principality of Liechtenstein recognises the competence of the Committee against Torture to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that another State Party is not fulfilling its obligations under this Convention.

| Instrument | Date of signature | Date of ratification | Derogations/ reservations relevant to equality and non-discrimination | Right of individual petition accepted? | Can this instrument be directly relied upon in domestic courts by individuals? |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| | | | Declaration concerning Article 22(1) ¹⁹⁰ | | |

¹⁹⁰ The Principality of Liechtenstein recognises the competence of the Committee against Torture to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of individuals subject to its jurisdiction who claim to be victims of a violation by a State Party of the provisions of the Convention.

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