



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Ninetieth session

Summary record of the 2137th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 14 February 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Mikko (Vice-Chair)

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
(continued)

Sixth periodic report of Liechtenstein (continued)

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In the absence of Ms. Haidar, Ms. Mikko (Vice-Chair) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)

Sixth periodic report of Liechtenstein (continued) (CEDAW/C/LIE/6; CEDAW/C/LIE/QPR/6)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Liechtenstein joined the meeting.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation of Liechtenstein to continue replying to Committee members' questions.

Articles 7–9

3. **A representative of Liechtenstein**, replying to questions raised in the previous meeting (CEDAW/C/SR.2136), said that labour laws did not apply to migrant carers employed directly by private persons but did apply to people with the status of temporary workers. Steps were planned to ensure that the rules governing the minimum wage would be applicable to domestic workers.

4. Refugees from Ukraine were subject to the same treatment as all other persons with the same status. They received assistance with learning German and had access to apprenticeships and job coaching. They were allocated work permits by the Migration and Passport Office. Provided that they had a valid passport, they could travel to and from the Schengen area without being required to obtain any additional permit. They had the same right to apply for a residence permit as any other person with a foreign passport.

5. Men and women applicants for residence permits were treated equally, as were their family members. Stateless children were entitled to become nationals of Liechtenstein if they were born in the country and could prove that they had lived there for at least five years. The Migration and Passport Office could issue stateless persons with a travel document. Children who were nationals of Liechtenstein did not face any risk of becoming stateless, as they could not lose their nationality.

6. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that pensions were divided equally between couples after a divorce. As Liechtenstein was a very small country, many marriages were between people of different nationalities, and divorce proceedings were often conducted abroad. A new law was being drawn up to address situations in which a foreign State did not have a rule providing for the equal division of pensions.

7. The number of days of unpaid leave that an employee could take to care for a relative had been increased from three to five. A subsidy was provided to assist with the costs of long-term care for relatives. Half of the subsidy was provided by the Government and half by the municipality. In the majority of cases, care was provided partly by family members and partly by professional carers. Efforts to reform the judiciary were ongoing and a reform was expected to enter into force on 1 January 2026.

8. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that measures were taken to recruit more police officers and increase the number of officers trained to deal with domestic violence. All responses to reports of domestic violence were monitored so that the National Police could assess its ability to deal with such situations. External experts provided police officers with in-service training in ways of addressing domestic violence.

Articles 10–14

9. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that article 16 of the Constitution established that school attendance was compulsory for all children living in Liechtenstein and that education in public schools was free of charge. Consequently, there were no children who did not attend school. Almost all children attended a public school; only a very small percentage went to private schools. Currently, 4 per cent of the gross domestic product was spent on education. There were 4,500 children enrolled in school. Of those children, 2,600 attended primary school; some 55 per cent of high school students were girls.

10. There were more boys than girls in the special education system. The majority of girls with disabilities attended a mainstream school. The resources allocated to special education were mainly spent in mainstream schools, where tailored support was given to children with special needs. The process of moving from a system of separate schooling for children with special needs to an inclusive system had started 30 years previously and had been strengthened by the recent ratification by Liechtenstein of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

11. Language tuition was provided to children who spoke German as a second language. A working group was developing measures to enable the mainstream school system to absorb more children so that it would not be necessary for children with special needs to go to a separate school. Measures were taken to ensure the integration of children with a migrant background. Interpretation services were made available so that parents who did not speak German could participate in school life.

12. A new school curriculum introduced a few years previously raised students' awareness of different career options and enabled them to make informed decisions about the careers they wished to pursue. At the Next-Step employment fair, children could meet employers and start developing networks to assist them in their future search for employment. Some students had had the opportunity to undertake job shadowing with employers. An increasing number of girls undertook apprenticeships in areas traditionally dominated by men.

13. A report on careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects), published in 2024, contained valuable data that informed discussions and decisions within the Ministry of Education. More men than women studied STEM subjects, but the disparity disappeared if medicine was included as a science. A study had indicated that women might be better advised to study economics or law rather than STEM subjects, as there were more opportunities for well-paid employment in economics and law.

14. Girls could file a complaint if they were subjected to sexual harassment in school, and teachers had been issued with guidance on how to deal with the problem.

15. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that no plans were in place for Liechtenstein to join the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) or any other international organization or agency as a member State. As a small country with limited resources, Liechtenstein would struggle to meet the obligations that such membership would entail.

16. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that more women than men were enrolled in higher education courses. Many women studied in Switzerland, Austria, Germany and other foreign countries, and it was difficult to determine the number of women studying for a postgraduate degree. However, slightly more women than men had been enrolled for a Master's degree programme in the 2022/23 academic year. In the same academic year, the University of Liechtenstein had employed 5 female professors and 18 male professors. More men than women were also employed as teaching assistants and in science-based roles. In 2024, the University of Liechtenstein had established a new gender equality promotion system that would address the disparity in the number of men and women that it employed.

17. Liechtenstein had been involved in the Bologna Process since 1999 and had become a member of the European Higher Education Area. The Government was working to achieve the goals set out in the communiqué adopted in Tirana at the Ministerial Conference of the European Higher Education Area, one of which was to make the Area an inclusive educational space where all people had equal opportunities to access education at every stage of their lives. Women who wished to resume studying later in their lives would benefit from the lifting of the age limit that had previously been applied to applications for bursaries.

18. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that she wished to know whether the State party had measured the impact of its gender-neutral approach to educational policy on effective equal enjoyment of the right to education by women and girls. She would be interested to hear more about the scientific basis for assessments made about special education and children's behaviour.

19. **Ms. Hacker** said that she would be grateful to learn what proportion of the country's law and economics students in Liechtenstein and other countries were female.

20. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that in general, the Government adopted a gender-neutral approach to educational policy and would continue to do so. It would need to give careful consideration to whether it would be desirable to adopt a policy of positive discrimination to encourage greater participation by women and girls in STEM subjects.

21. Studies had shown that boys were more likely than girls to behave disruptively in school when experiencing mental health issues. Specially trained teachers who worked at a competence centre for sexual and reproductive health education were involved in developing the curriculum for that subject. While all schools had to teach sexual and reproductive health education, teachers could decide whether they wished to teach it themselves or request specialist assistance.

22. In the 2022/23 academic year, 187 female and 191 male students from Liechtenstein had been enrolled at polytechnic universities in Switzerland and 8 female and 9 male students from the country had been enrolled at such universities in Austria.

23. **Ms. Hacker** said that she wished to know what proportion of law and economics students from Liechtenstein were female, irrespective of where they were studying.

24. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she would be interested to learn whether the State party collected annual data on how many women sought abortions, both in Liechtenstein and in other countries. She wondered whether the Government planned to amend the abortion legislation to repeal all punitive measures imposed on persons who underwent or carried out that procedure, in line with paragraph 31 (c) of general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health. It would be useful to hear where women could find online information from official sources about sexually transmitted diseases. The Committee would like to know what steps the Government was taking to improve screening rates for cervical and breast cancer, which were low according to recent reports published by the European Union. It would be helpful to learn whether the country had any clinical guidelines for the treatment of intersex patients, whether the Government collected data on intersex persons and, if so, whether such data were reported. She would be grateful to learn what steps the State party was taking to ensure that women and girls with disabilities had access to information about how they could receive reproductive and other healthcare services.

25. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that no amendments to the abortion legislation had been made or planned since the country's report had been submitted. The delegation had no statistics on abortions, but it could request such information and submit it later.

26. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that preventive medical check-ups were provided to residents of Liechtenstein from birth. All residents were entitled to receive a general medical check-up from the age of 17, while women were entitled to receive a gynaecological check-up, which including screening for certain cancers, from the age of 20 and men were screened for prostate cancer from the age of 45. Letters were sent to residents to inform them that they were eligible to undergo such examinations.

27. It was likely that the data on screening rates was based on incomplete information provided by doctors. The Government was considering relying on medical insurance information as an alternative source of such data. All cancer cases in Liechtenstein were recorded in a cancer registry that was maintained in eastern Switzerland; the data were shared with international organizations for analysis. While she did not have information on the number of intersex persons in Liechtenstein, people in the country who had questions about lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual issues could contact the FLay organization for information. As a small country, Liechtenstein lacked facilities or specialists for providing gender-affirmative healthcare services and consequently did not collect data on the provision of such services; people wishing to receive such services had to do so in neighbouring countries. Conventional contraceptives could be bought in pharmacies and similar establishments.

28. **Ms. Stott Despoja** said that she wished to know what steps the State party was taking to ensure that vulnerable women, particularly women with disabilities, had access to

information about reproductive and other healthcare services and were supported in obtaining access to such services. If it was the case that the State party lacked clinical guidelines for the treatment of intersex patients, she wondered how intersex babies were treated and what clinical options for their treatment were available.

29. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that methods for collecting data on cancer screening, vaccinations and other medical procedures had been undergoing modification in recent years with the aim of eliminating bias. However, such efforts had been hindered by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the small size of the Office of Public Health.

30. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that she would be interested to learn how the State party improved outcomes for investors by encouraging greater representation of women in the investment management profession. She wondered what steps it was taking to support the development of guidance for investors – including public pension funds, sovereign wealth funds, development finance institutions and small and medium-sized investment firms – on respecting human rights and gender equality in all of their investment activities, including in relation to fiduciary duties, broader sustainability and environmental, social and governance investing. It would be helpful to hear how the State party pursued due diligence by seeking to ensure that its investments were compatible with human rights, including those of women and persons living in poverty who were part of the global ecosystem of its fund industry and other financial investments. She would appreciate it if the delegation could provide information on the trickle-down effect of its investor funds around the world and in the country's 11 municipalities.

31. She would welcome information on the nature of the assistance that the Government provided to poor women and women with disabilities under article 25 of the Constitution and would like to know whether it planned to update the language in that document. Was the State party considering adding part-time employment such as childcare and eldercare to the types of employment that generated entitlement for allowances under the social security legislation?

32. She wished to know how businesses were integrating the country's Vision 2025 into their policies to ensure the compatibility of career and family, especially in relation to women working in the investment industry. What had the ratio of male to female sport coaches been in 2024, and what was it currently? Could the delegation provide information on the availability of State-supported programmes for women in the arts?

33. **Ms. Tisheva** said that there was an absence of laws in Liechtenstein that explicitly provided for protection against multiple and intersecting discrimination. She would thus be grateful to learn how the State party upheld the rights and provided for the needs of women and girls who were exposed to or at risk of discrimination of that nature, especially women with disabilities. It would be of interest to hear whether the Government intended to adopt anti-discrimination laws, measures and policies in the future. Given the virtual absence also of case law regarding intersecting forms of discrimination, she wondered how the State party collected data about women facing such discrimination and would like to receive information on the situation of migrant women and women with disabilities in particular in political, public and economic life. It would be helpful to learn what protection the country's law provided to migrant workers in the domestic care sector and what measures the State party was taking to eliminate religious discrimination in employment and elsewhere and to ensure the religious freedom of all women.

34. She would welcome an explanation as to how the State party ensured that migrants had access to legal aid. It would be interesting to learn whether the State party planned to become a member of the International Labour Organization and how, should it not intend to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), it would ensure that its labour standards in that area met the minimum international requirements. The Committee had not yet heard when the State party planned to adopt a protocol or specific guidelines for questioning women asylum-seekers, with a view to preventing acts of gender-specific persecution against them. In which languages was official State information made available about services accessible to women? What steps had the State party taken to ensure that

lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women in particular were safe from online hate speech?

35. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that a delegation from the International Monetary Fund had recently conducted its first review of her country since it had become a member. Although men dominated leadership positions in investment funds, specialized positions had been established to provide investment advice to women. Efforts would be made to increase the number of women in leadership positions and to comply with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, as part of a general push towards greater equality.

36. Liechtenstein was committed to the international Finance against Slavery and Trafficking initiative. There was no specific evidence of a trickle-down effect from global investments around the world or in the 11 municipalities. Although the Constitution provided that the municipalities were responsible for the care of orphans, in practice such support was mainly provided by the Office of Social Services.

37. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that her Government integrated into the national legislation the sustainability, human rights and due diligence requirements set out in the Agreement on the European Economic Area.

38. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that, on National Future Day, children were encouraged to observe workers in professions not traditionally associated with their gender. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry had launched an initiative to promote work-life balance through its diversity officer. Private companies interested in diversity and inclusion took into account the need to counter religious discrimination. In addition, the Government had developed an integration strategy providing for annual plans to eliminate such discrimination, including measures such as interfaith round tables. Discrimination could also be reported to the Association for Human Rights.

39. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that the labour law applied to domestic workers employed by agencies, but not to workers employed directly by private individuals. The Government was developing a model contract for domestic workers, which would include minimum wage provisions.

40. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that gender was taken into consideration in asylum cases, especially in cases involving gender-based persecution. Female asylum-seekers were interviewed by women staff.

41. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that her Government worked closely with the private sector to ensure that the financial industry did not support modern slavery or trafficking in persons and that it used its resources to combat such phenomena and to ensure that victims could achieve redress.

42. **Ms. de Silva de Alwis** said that, given the State party's position as a global centre of wealth management, it was vital to monitor how investment funds were affecting human rights and gender equality, in line with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

43. **Ms. Hacker** said that she would be interested to receive statistics on poverty rates disaggregated by marital status, citizenship and gender. Did women have access to subsidized or free childcare for children up to the age of 12?

44. **Ms. Tisheva** said that she would like to know how migrant victims of domestic violence were protected. She noted that the State party had filed a reservation to article 59 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which contained provisions on autonomous residence permits and the suspension of expulsion proceedings. What happened to victims whose residence status depended on their spouse? If Liechtenstein joined the International Labour Organization, the Government would gain access to tools relating to unpaid domestic and care work.

45. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that from the end of maternity leave, women had access to childcare during working hours. Measures to support working women had also been taken within the school system. Benefits were available to support working women.

New free trade agreements always included a chapter on trade and sustainable development, including provisions addressing gender equality and inclusive development.

46. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that the reservation to article 59 of the Istanbul Convention did not lead to victims of domestic violence having their permits revoked, even if they were dependent on their spouses' residency status. However, being a victim of domestic violence did not automatically grant the person the right to stay in the country. Her Government was working towards harmonization with Swiss law in the area of domestic violence and residence status.

47. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that the Government had produced a report on poverty in 2023, which it would provide to the Committee.

Articles 15 and 16

48. **Ms. Hacker** said that she would appreciate statistics on child custody arrangements and child support payment over the previous five years. She wondered how judges, in decisions on custody and child support, considered the parental division of labour during marriage, whether alimony was provided to women after separation and if so, the duration and amount of alimony. Were career assets recognized for the purpose of compensating women for their contribution to family income through unpaid care work?

49. She would be interested to hear about any planned studies on the economic consequences of divorce for spouses and their children and the reason no such study had been conducted to date. She wished to learn about entitlements to legal aid and to find out whether potential beneficiaries actually received such assistance. It would be useful for the delegation to provide statistics on legal aid for family law cases. Were couples referred for mediation in domestic violence cases, and if so, were the mediators trained to identify and address such violence?

50. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that career-related advantages of men and career breaks of women were taken into account for the calculation of post-divorce alimony, the distribution of household assets and provisions for retirement. Ex-spouses who faced financial constraints owing to divorce could be entitled to State support, such as legal assistance to challenge settlements, advances on alimony, increased children's benefits and reduced health insurance premiums. All single parents were entitled to additional childcare benefits, and low-income families were entitled to social benefits, including rental subsidies. Jobseekers were entitled to support for vocational training.

51. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that the Information and Counselling Centre for Women, which received State and private funding, had government contracts to provide women with free legal consultations, including for divorce or separation cases. Although mediation was available in domestic violence cases, the Government was aware of the critical view of such mediation taken by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe.

52. **A representative of Liechtenstein** said that mediation for custody and child support disputes had been available since 2015.

53. Her Government recognized the ongoing challenge of achieving equality for women and girls and looked forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations, which would serve as a valuable tool for driving change.

54. **The Chair** thanked the delegation for the constructive dialogue, which had provided further insight into the situation of women in the State party.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.