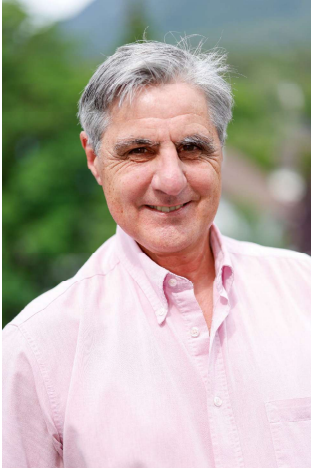


Editorial

Dear reader



The current political situation poses a serious threat to human rights and international law. The Council of Europe and Amnesty International are urgently warning of an increasing erosion of the principles of the rule of law in many parts of the world. Alarming is the development in the United States, where rule of law institutions that were considered immovable for centuries are being undermined. At the same time, we are witnessing a worrying trend in Europe where decisions of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) are being openly called into question, thereby shaking the foundations of our common judicial area.

In order to counteract these trends, it is essential that states comply with their obligations under international law and that political decision-makers publicly stand up for the protection of human rights achievements. Civil society also has a crucial role to play. With their broad networks, many organizations and activists form a lively counterweight to those forces that seek to undermine human rights and democratic values. Freedom of expression is fundamental to this. It is the backbone of democracy and protects those who courageously stand up for human rights and counter authoritarian tendencies. Through the free and unhindered exchange of ideas and criticism, grievances can be exposed, democratic debates can be kept alive and social developments can be reflected upon.

Our association has a duty to protect these values and to stand up for human rights in Liechtenstein. This monitoring report takes a critical look at the current human rights situation. It identifies shortcomings and documents the joint efforts of the state and civil society towards a free and just society.

I hope you find it interesting reading!

Schaan, August 2025



Wilfried Marxer, President

Human rights milestones 2024

Association for Human Rights

The independent Association for Human Rights (VMR) has three legal mandates:

NMRI National Human Rights institution	OSKJ Ombudsman's office for children and young peo- ple	MOBE Disability Monitoring Office
<p>The NHRI protects and promotes human rights. It is the independent monitoring and advisory body for human rights in Liechtenstein.</p>	<p>The OSKJ protects and promotes the rights of children and young people. It is the independent monitoring and advice center for children's rights in Liechtenstein.</p>	<p>MOBE protects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities. It is the independent monitoring and advice center for disability rights in Liechtenstein.</p>

With this report, the Association is fulfilling its legal mandate to publish an annual report on the development of the human rights situation in Liechtenstein. In 2024, the VMR recorded the following groundbreaking developments in the protection and promotion of human rights:

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities enters into force

On January 17, 2024, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came into force for Liechtenstein. This marks the start of a far-reaching reform of disability policy towards comprehensive legal protection and the participation of people with disabilities in all areas of life. Now it is time for the major implementation work, which is being coordinated by the government's Equal Opportunities Division. (More on this in the chapter "People with disabilities").

Paid parental leave is decided

After several years of waiting and preparation, the state parliament passed the law introducing paid parental leave in the fall. Parental leave is a key element in the more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work between both genders and is therefore an important prerequisite for equal rights and gender equality. It enables children to be cared for by their parents in the first few months of their lives and thus supports the child's right to the best possible development and stable relationships. Although only from 2026 - but retroactively to the reporting year - each parent is now entitled to a total of four months of parental leave. Two of these months are remunerated at 80% of the average relevant monthly salary. (More on this in the "Gender equality" section).

Marriage for all becomes a reality

The law introducing marriage for all was passed by parliament in March. This represents a milestone for the legal equality of homosexual couples and their recognition. As a result, homosexual couples now have the



same rights in the adoption process, tax law, inheritance and pension and social security entitlements. In addition to this legal level, "marriage for all" also has a strong symbolic meaning, as it shows that love and partnership are of equal value regardless of sexual orientation and receive the same recognition in society. The law introducing marriage for all will come into force in Liechtenstein from January 2025. (More on this in the chapter "Sexual orientation and gender identity").

Li-Pride 2024: Ein fröhliches, vielfältiges und offenes Fest für alle Menschen



Unter dem Motto «I säg jo» lud die Li-Pride 2024 am Samstag zu einem bunten Fest im Lindahof ein. Der Verein Flay wollte mit dem Motto den Fokus auf die Bedeutung der

zivilrechtlichen Ehe für gleichgeschlechtliche Paare legen, die sich ab 2025 auch in Liechtenstein das Ja-Wort geben dürfen. Auf dem Programm standen neben dem Feiern

und dem Beisammensein auch Referate sowie eine Podiumsdiskussion zum Thema. Regierungsrat Manuel Frick hielt eine Ansprache.

Bilder: Tatjana Schnalzer

Figure: A reason to celebrate at Pride: Marriage for all has been in force in Liechtenstein since 2024. Photo: Liechtensteiner Vaterland.



Advice center for migrants opens its doors

With the introduction of the advice center for migrants (integration.li), the government created a central integration service and successfully implemented an urgent recommendation from the report by the Council of Europe's Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). Another important step towards improving information and access to integration was the revision of the integration.li information platform - expanded and multilingual, it opens the door to information and integration offers for everyone. (More on this in the chapter "Migration and integration").



Figure: In June, the advice center for migrants was opened by Minister of Society Manuel Frick - a milestone for integration in Liechtenstein. Photo: Gregor Meier

First ageing strategy is adopted

In a broad-based participatory process, the government developed and adopted an ageing strategy for the first time as the basis for a sustainable and human rights-based ageing policy. By focusing on self-determined ageing, social participation, barrier-free living and care as well as comprehensive advice and integration, the ageing strategy strengthens the rights and protection of older people and establishes their dignity, autonomy and participation as central concerns of social policy. Now it's time for implementation! (More on this in the chapter "Health and social rights")

A national psychiatry concept is presented

After several years of preparation, the government presents a national psychiatry concept for Liechtenstein for the first time in spring. It marked the beginning of an important systematic examination of gaps in care, particularly in the care of children and adolescents. In October, the first concrete measure announced was an improvement in child and adolescent psychiatric services: additional specialists are to facilitate access, as there has been a lack of local and timely support to date. In November, workshops were held with representatives of institutions and specialist agencies to develop proposals for further implementation.

53 Recommendations for the improvement of human rights

In 2024, the VMR makes the following recommendations to the state to improve human rights.

Liechtenstein should ...

Implementation of international recommendations

- 1 Take the lead in following up and prioritizing recommendations from international human rights bodies. Create a transparent implementation process that involves all stakeholders, including civil society.

Civil liberties and the rule of law

- 2 Adopt a law on religious communities that comprehensively protects religious freedom and the ban on discrimination.
- 3 Urgently resume efforts to create faith-compliant burial sites for Muslims.
- 4 Urgently create a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.
- 5 Take stronger preventive measures against racism, extremism and radicalization tendencies on the Internet.
- 6 Establish additional rules for MEPs to deal with conflicts of interest, confidential information, secondary employment, contacts with third parties and the acceptance of gifts.
- 7 Urgently take concrete measures to remedy the fundamental rights violations of persons under US sanctions in Liechtenstein.
- 8 Develop an action plan against human trafficking that focuses on protecting victims and raising awareness among vulnerable groups. Train judges, migration authorities and the police on human trafficking.
- 9 Make the national reporting office for human trafficking at the state police better known and firmly institutionalize the exchange between the Round Table on Human Trafficking and non-governmental specialist agencies.
- 10 Abolish the statute of limitations for torture in the Criminal Code and introduce appropriate penalties.
- 11 Make audio or video recordings of all police interrogations. Minors should always and automatically be provided with a trusted person and legal counsel during questioning.
- 12 Create an independent body to investigate torture.
- 13 Start a strategic process to expand the state prison to address infrastructure, education and employment deficiencies.

- 14 Introduce rules on the right of children to have contact with parents in custody or on remand.
- 15 Check whether the guidelines for movement-restricting measures are implemented in all social facilities.
- 16 Create a legal basis for an independent complaints office for residents of care homes and social institutions and their relatives.
- 17 Establish a psychological emergency service or introduce a qualification, advice or support system for doctors in psychological emergencies.
- 18
- 19 Revise the legal regulations on victim protection so that victims do not have to pay back legal aid.
- 20 Introduce a right of appeal for recognized organizations and associations in the area of human rights.
- 21 When implementing the new AI laws, place particular emphasis on the protection of human rights and develop a national regulation that extends European laws to the private sector and national security.

Asylum and refugee affairs

- 22 Quickly conclude a new service agreement between the government and Refugee Aid, which also clarifies the issue of independent representation of the association's interests.
- 23 Replace aid organization representation in asylum proceedings with free legal representation for asylum seekers.
- 24 Create a positive protection status instead of provisional admission for persons in need of protection who are not recognized as refugees.
- 25 Adapt the age limit in Art. 9 of the Asylum Ordinance to the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Migration and integration

- 26 Provide more resources for the implementation of the government's integration strategy.
- 27 Extend the range of interpreting services in doctors' surgeries to all healthcare services and other areas of society. Standardize funding and make the service better known.
- 28 Introduce a hardship provision for family reunification in the Foreign Nationals Act and withdraw the reservation to Art. 10 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 29 Urgently introduce a standard employment contract for 24-hour care in private households.

Health and social justice

- 30 Revise the Ordinance to the Health Insurance Act (KVV) so that emergency treatments are defined and benefits not available during the deferral period are not counted as debts through full premiums.
- 31 Create a Reproductive Medicine Act and consider ratifying the Council of Europe's Biomedicine Convention.
- 32 Examine the causes, risk factors and consequences of poverty in greater depth in order to develop a national action plan against it.
- 33 When implementing the ageing strategy, pay particular attention to the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, such as older people with a migration background. In addition, provide sufficient financial and human resources for implementation.

Children's rights

- 34 Implement the urgent recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in a coordinated manner, in particular the creation of strategies for the prevention of violence and the inclusion of children with disabilities.
- 35 Implement the recommendations of the 2023 custody working group on the revision of child custody law. In particular, the introduction of mandatory and ordered parental counseling and greater consideration of the best interests and will of the child in proceedings relating to divorce, custody and visitation rights.
- 36 Take immediate measures to ensure the protection of children and young people in the unaccompanied use of digital school devices.
- 37 Take targeted measures to increase the number of BA apprenticeships. In doing so, the state administration, municipalities and state-affiliated companies should lead the way.
- 38 Develop prevention programs to strengthen the mental health of children and young people, with a focus on disadvantaged children and young people.
- 39 Swiftly complete work on a concept for the implementation of a juvenile penal system in Switzerland and abolish detention under immigration law for persons under the age of 18.

People with disabilities

- 40 Rapidly draw up an action plan to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 41 Quickly tackle the collection and publication of internationally comparable data and make it accessible to all.
- 42 Consistently drive forward the implementation of accessible websites and mobile applications.
- 43 Quickly introduce a silent and barrier-free emergency call for people at risk.
- 44 Make voting documents and electoral processes accessible and inclusive. Adapt the procedures for exclusion from voting and electoral rights to the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Equality between women and men

- 45 Provide more resources and a national violence protection strategy to implement the Istanbul Convention. Revise the procedure for removal and prohibition of entry in cases of domestic violence. Carry out broad-based further training on the Istanbul Convention for the judiciary, police and governmental and non-governmental specialist agencies.
- 46 Carry out a statistical survey of care work and its distribution.
- 47 Integrate the successful measures of the "Diversity in politics" project for the balanced representation of women and men in political bodies into the national gender equality strategy.
- 48 Decriminalize abortion and provide access to safe abortion and aftercare services for women and girls. Abolish the information ban on abortion.

Sexual orientation and gender identity (LGBTIQA+)

- 49 Implement the ECRI recommendation on the scientific survey of the situation of LGBTIQA+ in Liechtenstein.
- 50 Introduce a modern civil status law that makes it possible to enter a third gender category in the civil register and other official documents.
- 51 Prohibit sex reassignment surgery for children born intersex without medical necessity and without an informed decision and investigate the medical counseling and treatment practice of children born intersex as part of the planned study on the situation of LGBTIQA+.
- 52 Examine rehabilitation and compensation for persons who were prosecuted in Liechtenstein in the past on account of their sexual orientation.

Human rights and sustainability

- 53 Align sustainability indicators with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set concrete targets for 2030 and show greater determination and commitment to implementing the goals. Involve civil society in the development of implementation plans and through funding programs for sustainability projects.



International recommendations

The visits, reports and recommendations of international expert bodies of the UN and the Council of Europe are invaluable for Liechtenstein, as they provide independent, well-founded and comparable assessments of the implementation of human rights and thus enable targeted improvements. Through their recommendations, they promote the continuous development of human rights. The regular exchange with these expert bodies promotes and enriches cooperation within the country as well as the transfer of knowledge between governmental and non-governmental specialist bodies, creating synergies for the protection of human rights. Without this external impetus, progress in human rights protection would be much slower and less effective.

Current reports

In the reporting year, the [report of the Council of Europe's Commission of Experts on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women \(GREVIO\)](#) and the [report of the Committee of Experts under the UN Convention against Torture \(CAT\)](#) on Liechtenstein were published. These reports as well as all state reports ("country reports") to the respective bodies are available on the website of the Office for Foreign Affairs. The reports of the OCR and civil society ("shadow reports") are published on the website of the OCR.

On January 22, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights visited the country and discussed the human rights situation with the authorities and civil society. From March 5-7, the Group of Experts under the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) reviewed the situation in Liechtenstein. On April 15-19, the evaluation team of the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) visited the country and on June 18, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, which examines respect for human rights and the rule of law at local and regional level, was in the country. With the exception of the visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the results of these visits will be included in the respective audit reports for Liechtenstein. These are expected in 2025.



Figure: The exchange with international expert bodies strengthens the protection of human rights. In the picture: UN High Commissioner Volker Türk with civil society organizations in Liechtenstein. Photo: VMR

"Freedom of expression is
the foundation of human rights,
the source of humanity
and the mother of truth.
Those who stifle freedom of expression
trample on human rights,
humanity and truth."

Liu Xiaobo (1955 - 2017) Writer,
human rights activist and Nobel Prize winner, China

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