



permanent mission of the principal ity of Liechtenstein
to the united nations

**THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE 2ND AND 3RD PERIODIC REPORT OF LIECHTENSTEIN
SUBMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF
ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Madame Chair, Honorable Members of the Committee

My delegation is pleased to be meeting here in New York with the Committee on the Elimination of

As already mentioned in the report, regional cooperation in the field of gender equality is of the utmost importance to Liechtenstein. The Office of Equal Opportunity has established a wide range of contacts with organizations working on gender equality in Switzerland and the neighboring Austrian province of Vorarlberg. These cross-border networks have the advantage that they constitute a valuable working and communication medium for officials, thereby facilitating their work and improving its quality, and the resulting contacts also generate new projects or make existing offerings more easily accessible. The social circumstances in Liechtenstein and its neighboring countries of Austria and Switzerland, especially in the border regions, are similar and largely comparable. In the case of Liechtenstein statistical data is o

On 21 June 2007 the Liechtenstein Parliament adopted the Victims Assistance Act. It will enter into force on 1 April 2008. The creation of the Victims Assistance Act concludes a three-phase overall project, which began with the amendment of sexual criminal law and was continued in the revision of the Code of Criminal Procedure with respect to victims' protection. Since most of the victims of the offenses to which these amendments are relevant are women or girls, the focus of this package of measures on improving the situation of victims constitutes an important step toward the actual realization of the principle of equality. The goal of the Victims Assistance Act, namely the best possible support for victims, will be achieved on the basis of the two pillars of "counseling" and "financial assistance". The appropriate care of victims and their families is the most important objective of victims' assistance. For this purpose, a Victims Counseling Office is being created. The Office will be staffed with the equivalent of one full-time position. Currently, concepts are being developed for the practical implementation of counseling services, which will take into account the needs of victims of criminal offences, along with the efficient use of existing resources and available know-how. The time period of nine months until the entry into force of the Victims Assistance will allow for thorough preparations to set up this new Office.

In the area of financial assistance, both comprehensive legal aid and rights of compensaTj152 4het3m(o)Tj10.02 0 C

horizontal and flanking measures in the areas of social security, education, environmental protection, gender equality, consumer protection, and worker protection. In all these areas, Liechtenstein has been adopting and implementing the same standards as the 27 EU member states. In the last 10 years, over 4400 EU legal acts have been adopted by Liechtenstein or implemented into Liechtenstein law. Important acts that Liechtenstein has adopted in the last two years in the area of gender equality include the directives on part-time work¹ the directive on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex² and the directive on parental leave³.

Within the framework of the EEA, Liechtenstein also participates on equal terms in about 30 EU programs in education, research and development, culture, emergency management, public health, equal opportunity, etc. In 2007, Liechtenstein participates in the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All" under the motto: "For Diversity! Against Discrimination!" with a series of activities throughout the year – e.g.: awareness raising with regard to the right of equality and non-discrimination as well as the problem of multiple discrimination; incentives for a debate on the possibilities of better integration of victims of discrimination as well as a well-balanced participation of men and women; facilitation and appreciation of diversity and equal treatment; promotion of a tolerant society. By the end of the year 2007, results on the following studies and surveys conducted by the Office of Social Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunity are expected: poverty study, survey on age discrimination, study on social discrimination against people with disabilities, survey on discrimination against homosexuals. A meeting on the topic of gender medicine and equal opportunity in the workplace is also planned by the Office of Equal Opportunity.

The surveys will contribute to improve the availability of statistical data in different areas. Since women are particular vulnerable to multiple discrimination the different studies and surveys will also deliver valuable results with regard to the situation of women. For example the first study on poverty in Liechtenstein conducted in 1996, found that absolute poverty as such does not exist in Liechtenstein, even though there are people who are comparatively disadvantaged and require State assistance. The study indicated that apart from the unemployed, single parents – which in most cases are women - are particularly dependent on social assistance. Since 1996 different measures have been introduced to improve the situation of single parents. The single-parent allowance and the rental subsidies, which single parents may also claim, were a specific reaction to the financial dangers single-parent families face. Upon introducing the rental subsidy in April 2001, the situation eased considerably. The percentage of single parents receiving income support decreased by 16 per cent in comparison to the previous year. Thanks to the rental subsidy, a number of single parents no longer required income support, or their support requirements decreased. The introduction of the rental subsidy also eased the burden of single parents and families with low incomes and helped some of them become independent of income support. This example shows that such studies can give importance guidance for new measures to be taken.

Since all the studies and surveys are still in the preparatory stage or have just started, it is too early to inform on any trends or results. However, the Liechtenstein Government will be happy to include the outcome of the relevant studies in the next report to the Committee.

I thank you.

¹ Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC - Annex : Framework agreement on part-time work (OJL L 14, 20. 1. 1998, p. 9).

² Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex (OJL L 14, 20. 1. 1998, p. 6).

³ Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC (OJL L 145, 19. 6. 1996, p. 4).