

# Liechtenstein

(20<sup>th</sup> session)

## (a) Introduction by the State party

144. In introducing the report, the representative of Liechtenstein noted that *de jure* equality between women and men in Liechtenstein had been achieved later than in many other countries. In 1992, a constitutional amendment stating that women and men had equal rights provided the basis for a 1996 law that guaranteed gender equality.

145. The representative indicated that since 1996 the focus of the Government had been on achieving *de facto* equality between women and men in all spheres of life. Implementation of legal and other measures in compliance with the Convention formed part of an overall strategy that also incorporated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Liechtenstein had submitted to the United Nations the national action plan for the implementation of the Platform and had ratified several regional and international human rights treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Liechtenstein had also accepted the communications procedures of the first optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and strongly supported the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

146. The representative indicated that there had been an increase in the proportion of women represented at all levels of education, but that at the tertiary level male students still constituted two thirds of all students. Male students also predominated in such disciplines as law and economics and in technical studies, including computer studies. Female students were well represented in the humanities.

147. The representative reported that while there had been an increase in the number of women in positions of leadership in communes and commissions since acquiring the right to vote in 1984, women were still under-represented at all levels of governance. She noted that although there was no system of quotas, the Government remained committed to achieving equal representation of women in senior leadership positions.

148. The representative informed the Committee that non-governmental organizations, many of which received financial support from the Government, played an active role in measures to promote the advancement of women.

They were involved in such activities as the facilitation of networking and the provision of day-care centres for children as well as a women's shelter for battered women and children.

149. The representative noted that the Government's focus was now on the achievement of *de facto* equality for women through a variety of programmes. These had included a 1997 exhibition on the theme: "Girls with a head on their shoulders get down to work", which had sought to motivate girls to expand their choice of occupations. Currently, the educational curriculum was being revised to incorporate the principle of equality and the practical involvement of women and men in the achievement of that principle.

150. The representative indicated that the proposed equal rights act would prohibit discrimination at the workplace, provide protection against retaliatory dismissal and the right to bring legal claims, including class action complaints, and reduce the burden of proof. The proposed act would also provide the Government with a legal basis to give financial support to companies in order to enable them to enact positive measures for the promotion of women at the workplace.

## **(b) Concluding comments of the Committee**

### **Introduction**

151. The Committee commends the Government of Liechtenstein for the timely submission of its initial report, one year after its accession to the Convention. It welcomes the report, especially the well-structured and informative oral update, which provided frank and clear information on the situation of women. Together with the exhaustive replies provided to the Committee's numerous questions, the presentation provided a comprehensive view of the efforts undertaken by the Government in order to achieve full compliance with its obligations under the Convention.

152. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Liechtenstein for its high-level delegation, headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is also the Minister for Family Affairs and Equality between Men and Women. This enabled the Committee to obtain a realistic picture of the progress made and of challenges that lay ahead in the achievement of equal rights of women and men.

### **Positive aspects**

153. The Committee welcomes the Government's withdrawal of its reservation to the Convention.

154. The Committee notes with satisfaction the establishment of a national machinery to implement the Convention and to follow up and implement the commitments of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

155. The Committee commends Liechtenstein on its accession to numerous regional and international human rights instruments.

156. The Committee also commends Liechtenstein for its rapid progress in removing discriminatory laws.

### **Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention**

157. The Committee notes that the persistence of deep-seated social and cultural attitudes which impede the implementation of the Convention and inhibit the attainment of de facto equality.

### **Principal areas of concern and recommendations**

158. The Committee expresses concern that patriarchal patterns of behaviour persist and thereby compromise *de jure* equality between women and men that has been achieved.

159. The Committee expresses deep concern at the persistence of de facto inequality between women and men, which is particularly reflected in the low participation of women in public life and decision-making, in the economy and in their under-representation in tertiary education.

160. The Committee urges the Government to ensure that the proposed equality rights act not only covers working life, but extends to all spheres of life, in order to accelerate equality in both public and private life.

161. The Committee urges the Government to improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex in order to provide strong factual information on the situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention, and on the

progress made in its implementation over time. Such information will provide the basis for the design of appropriate policies and programmes to accelerate the achievement of equality.

162.The Committee is concerned about the situation of women in employment and work. It expresses its concern about the highly segregated labour market, and the concentration of women in low-paid employment and part-time work.

163.The Committee recommends that the Government avail itself of the existing body of research and practice on equal pay for work of equal and comparable value in order to overcome pay inequity. The Committee also recommends that the Government review the existing system of social security, particularly with regard to marginal part-time work and the law on parental leave, with a view to ensuring that the system, including in its effects, does not discriminate against women.

164.While commending the initiative of the Government to subsidize the employment of women in private enterprises, the Committee notes the inadequacy of measures, including temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men and affirmative action to address the situation of women in all areas.

165.The Committee urges the Government to implement temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention in order to accelerate the advancement of women in all areas. Temporary special measures to promote women have been successful in addressing structural discrimination against women in politics and employment and in accelerating de facto equality for women.

166.The Committee encourages the Government to realize gender equality and requests that it include in its next report detailed information on the impact of policies and programmes aimed at implementing the Convention and achieving gender equality.

167.The Committee expresses serious concern regarding the issue of violence against women, in particular the lack of comprehensive information on its incidence.

168.The Committee recommends that the Government review its policies and measures with regard to violence against women, taking into consideration general recommendation 19 on violence against women. It also recommends that a review be made of the law relating to prostitution to ensure that prostitutes are not penalized.

169.The Committee notes the high number of children born out of wedlock. It recommends the development of studies and indicators to determine the impact of laws and policies on women, since linkages between the strict anti-abortion law and the high incidence of children born out of wedlock might be revealed. The Committee urges the Government to institute measures to prevent single mothers from facing the financial and social risks of poverty.

170.The Committee requests the Government of Liechtenstein to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

171. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Liechtenstein of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Liechtenstein, and in particular its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure *de jure* and de facto gender equality and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the conventions, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.