

LIECHTENSTEIN

Questionnaire for governments on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)

Part I Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The implementation of the Platform for Action was first published in Liechtenstein in 1998. Since then, the Government has annually approved a catalogue of measures for gender equality. The Ministry of Family Affairs and Gender Equality publishes the current implementation plan. Various governmental and non-governmental organizations are involved in the implementation of the national strategies and plans.

The situation in Liechtenstein – Looking back at implementation since 1998

Focus areas since 1998 have been, inter alia, politics, employment, compatibility of family and employment, violence against women, education and continuing education of girls and women.

Through the adoption of the *Gender Equality Act (1999)*, the legal basis was provided for the Gender Equality Commission and the Office of Gender Equality. A public campaign presented the core points of the Act to the population: The Act holds that employees may not be discriminated against on the basis of gender, either directly or indirectly, in particular also not on the basis of marital status, family situation, or pregnancy. This prohibition applies especially to hiring, assignment of duties, working conditions, remuneration, education and continuing education, promotions, and dismissals. The Gender Equality Act further contains a right of group action, a reversal of the burden of proof, a protection against revenge firings, and financial support for programs and counseling services. The provisions of the Gender Equality Act apply to all employment relationships under private and public law.

The brochure published in 1997 on sexual harassment at the workplace was revised in 2001 and newly issued. The brochure was sent to about 250 workplaces in Liechtenstein as part of the Campaign on the Gender Equality Act (2001).

Similarly, the *revised law on separation and divorce (1999)* was a significant measure for de facto gender equality. Legal rights to future pension payments were included for both parties. The division of rights to pension plans in the event of divorce was also included in the laws on employee pension plans (2001). This has eliminated indirect unequal treatment, especially for women. Furthermore, the legal age of marriage was harmonized for both women and men (1999).

Further milestones for an improved social position of women included the adoption by Parliament of the *law on sexual offenses (2001)* and the *law on protection from violence (2001)*. The revision of the law on sexual offenses primarily incorporated acts against sexual self-determination and other sexual offenses. New criminal offenses include rape in marriage and sexual harassment. The core of the *law on protection from violence* includes the right to expel

aggressors from the household and the prohibition of reentry. An interregional survey conducted in 2003 (Vorarlberg/Austria, Graubünden/Switzerland, and Liechtenstein, as part of an Interreg project) on violence in marriage and partnerships identified a number of fields of action for measures against violence in these areas. As part of the project, an awareness-raising campaign and information events were also held. A continuing education event for the nursing staff of the National Hospital in Liechtenstein was also conducted. At the end of the project in May 2004, a guideline for relatives and friends was published, including an emergency card in different languages.

The adoption of a Victims' Protection Act is in preparation and was considered by Parliament in first reading in April 2004.

The Second Liechtenstein Women's Congress (2001) was dedicated to the topics of "Family, Employment and Compatibility of Family and Employment". Like the first Congress in 1999 on 15 years of women's franchise, the second Congress was also a success, with about 150 participants.

At the beginning of 2004, parental leave and special leave in the event of illness or accident of relatives were introduced.

Education was the topic of a *Career Impulse Year (2000)*. The first part of the year focused on young women newly entering the workforce. The goal was to convey the importance of a good education and continuing education to young women and to enlarge their career spectrum with respect to gender-specific career choices. The awareness of parents and teachers was raised for equal opportunity in career counseling. The second part offered seminars on the topics of reentering the workforce and new career orientation, in cooperation with various organizations. An Interreg study (2001) analyzed the career choice behavior of girls in Liechtenstein, St. Gallen (Switzerland), and Vorarlberg (Austria). The empirical study "Optimal planning and execution of reentry into the workforce", conducted in 2001, led to the publication of a Guideline for Businesses (2002) and a Checklist for Women Reentering the Workforce (2002). The Gutenberg Educational House received financial support in 2003 pursuant to the Gender Equality Act for conducting a course for women in the family phase. The Educational Association for Women received financial support in 2001 for a situation analysis of young enterprises, conducted as part of a project on "Young Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen".

The goal of the expert conference on "Girl's Rooms – Boy's Dreams" (2002) was to motivate kindergarten teachers and early primary school teachers with respect to gender-sensitive instruction. In 2003, the lecture series "Neither macho nor sissy" was conducted for parents and teachers. A survey on job sharing in kindergartens and primary schools was also conducted (2002) and a guideline on job sharing in kindergartens and primary schools published (2003). A survey on separate education of girls and boys in kindergarten, primary schools, and continuing schools followed in 2003.

The promotion of *balanced representation* of women in all political organs was supported with a wide variety of measures. In 2000, a study on women in politics in Liechtenstein was conducted. The goal of the study was to make factors apparent that encourage or discourage women with

respect to entering politics. A catalogue of measures was drafted based on the findings of the study. Implemented recommendations include courses (media, “power training”, government, politics), a checklist for parties (2002), and a campaign for motivating women to run for political office and for raising the awareness of male and female voters (2001). A mentoring program (2003) was also made available. The program targeted women active in municipal executive bodies or considering a campaign for a municipal council.

To promote gender equality, the *Equal Opportunity Award* was created and has been granted each year since 2000. Alternating annually, either an organization or an enterprise in Liechtenstein is awarded the prize. Individuals may also compete for the award. The objective of the award is: raising the awareness of the public for women’s issues and family work; motivating enterprises to create conditions friendly to women and families; honoring private initiatives leading to the improvement of the situation of women and of equal opportunities; recognizing individuals who are personally or scientifically engaged on gender quality issues; and documenting the active engagement of the Government on behalf of gender equality.

The following organizations and enterprises have been awarded the prize so far: The project “Women Migrants” of the Information and Contact Office for Women (2000); the project “Young Women Entrepreneurs and Businesswomen” of the Educational Association for Women (2001); the project APIS (AIDS Prevention in the Sex Industry) of the Liechtenstein AIDS Center (2002); Swarovski AG as the enterprise most friendly toward women and families in Liechtenstein (2003); and the project “Family circus contrastino” of the Contrast Institute (2004). The next award will be announced in September 2004. For the second time, this year’s award will be granted to an enterprise in Liechtenstein.

An important topic has been the *networking of women’s organizations* (women in governmental and non-government organizations and parties). The Liechtenstein Women’s Network now encompasses 16 organizations and meets regularly to exchange information about its work, to organize projects like the Women’s Congress, the International Day of Women or also to prepare the 20th anniversary in 2004 of women’s franchise in Liechtenstein. Opinions on draft legislation are also discussed jointly.

Networking across borders is also pursued intensively. The Office of Gender Equality organized the conferences (1998 and 2003) of the gender quality women of Eastern Switzerland and Liechtenstein and a continuing education conference on “*Mentoring*” in 2002. An example of the successful, and also interregional, networking of women’s organizations and NGO’s is the website www.3laenderfrauen.org.

Part II: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the BPA and the further initiatives and actions identified in the 23rd special session of the General Assembly

Many of the topics mentioned above are continuously being addressed and developed.

Areas such as the balanced representation of *women in politics* are particularly urgent again in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2005. A (transnational – Vorarlberg and Liechtenstein) *politics course* for women is being offered. The target audience is women who are active in institutions, chambers, parties, public bodies, organizations, clubs, or initiative groups or who would like to become involved in the future. The politics course aims to provide the skills and encouragement necessary for women to bring their concerns and potential before political bodies and the public. The participants receive support in their social-political engagement and political work. They are given information on the day-to-day workings of politics and become acquainted with basic political knowledge and rules. Their self-confidence is strengthened and argumentation techniques are trained. Mentoring points in Liechtenstein and Vorarlberg aim to bring together “learning women” who are politically interested, but not yet experienced, with politically experienced women.

Men in the gender equality process are a further ongoing topic. In order to achieve a redistribution of paid and unpaid work, men must be motivated to become involved in work in the family. At the same time, companies must be encouraged to offer more part-time positions (both qualified and unqualified) for men. Through an engaged participation of men in family work, it is to be expected that family work will become more appreciated. In collaboration with the Office of Gender Equality, the project group “Images of Men” has been working since 2002 on the topics of health and psychological health, family and work, role images and identity, and spirituality and religion. A focus so far has certainly been the organization of an expert conference in 2003 on the “Compatibility of Family and Employment”. Experts from the business and scientific communities discussed future scenarios, role expectations, needs and obstacles for family-friendly business management from the perspective of employers and employees, as well as individual work distribution, using the example of a couple.

Gender mainstreaming is being introduced step-by-step in the National Administration. A steering committee on implementation has been formed, with the Government mandate to develop an implementation plan. The steering committee has been mandated to review the areas of politics, education, business and culture, to recommend implementation options, and to present a plan to the Government. The first implementation area is “Parity of women and men in National Commissions”. As a first step, the updating of statistics and an investigation with persons in key positions was decided. By the end of 2006, the proportion of women in National Commissions should increase to 30%, and by the end of 2010 to 50%. The first evaluation will be undertaken the beginning of 2007 and the second evaluation the beginning of 2011.

On the topic of income, no current figures are available providing information on *income equality* or inequality between women and men. The plan is to compile income statistics beginning in 2005 to answer questions on income equality.

Part III: Institutional Development

The adoption of the Gender Equality Act (1999) provided the legal basis for the Gender Equality Commission and the Office of Gender Equality. Since 1 August 2003, the *Office of Gender Equality* has been staffed with full-time positions.

Cooperation with different Government offices and non-governmental organizations is a key topic for gender equality work. Close collaboration is ongoing with the Liechtenstein Women's Network, but also interregionally with the gender equality offices of Switzerland and Vorarlberg (Austria), with the project group "Images of Men", and Government offices.

As a permanent advisory organ of the Government, the Gender Equality Commission has the following responsibilities: Developing its own recommendations or requests to the Government on measures concerning gender equality; issuing opinions on draft legislation affecting gender equality; drafting opinion papers on the request of the Government or individual Ministers; public relations work, i.e., reporting on the work of the Commission and on topics and events dealing with gender equality; observing the development of gender equality, following up on measures adopted, and periodic reporting to the Government. The central topic for the Commission continues to be "Women and Politics".

The Permanent Working Group on the Promotion of Gender Equality in the National Administration has dealt inter alia with developing guidelines to improve the representation and professional position of women in the National Administration. The guidelines have been in force since 1998. The Working Group also initiated child-care for employees of the National Administration. Since 2002, a *day-care center* has been made available to employees of the National Administration

Part IV: Main challenges and actions to address them

Stronger representation of women in politics will continue to be a major topic. Despite all efforts of the Commission, the Office of Gender Equality, and the women's organizations, women are still underrepresented in the political bodies of Liechtenstein: 12% in Parliament, barely 30% in municipal councils, 20% in the Government, and 20% in National Commissions.

An Interreg project (Vorarlberg, St. Gallen, Liechtenstein) to support the implementation of the *gender mainstreaming strategy* is also being planned.

The problem of *violence* against women in marriage and partnerships continues to be prioritized as an important topic. The Victims' Protection Act should already be circulated for consultations this year.

Promoting the participation of men in the gender equality process will continue to be a current topic. In collaboration with the Gender Equality Conference of the cantons of Eastern Switzerland, the traveling exhibition "Family and Career in Balance" was created. It will be shown in Liechtenstein for the first time in September 2004. The exhibition will be accompanied by side-events (lectures, panel discussions, family breakfast, etc.).

The *Equal Opportunity Award* will continue to be granted each year.

A further planned measure is the introduction of a gender equality audit in the National Administration.

Upon application, financial assistance granted pursuant to the Gender Equality Act supports counseling offices/NGOs in the implementation of larger projects such as expanding legal counseling for women.

The questioning of *traditional role images* (*school, businesses, etc.*), the raising of awareness for a gender-appropriate use of *language*, measures to enhance the compatibility of family and employment, conveying equality-related topics in businesses, and the promotion of part-time positions will be further topic areas.