

Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein Human Rights Association

International accreditation status and SCA recommendations

The Liechtenstein Human Rights Association is a non-accredited, associate member of ENNHRI since September 2019.

It was founded in December 2016 by 26 non-governmental organisations through the Liechtenstein Human Rights Association Act. It serves as an Ombuds body with a broad mandate to protect and promote human rights in Liechtenstein. The institution also acts as the Ombuds Office for Children and Young People.

ENNHRI will be supporting the Institution to seek accreditation by reference to the UN Paris Principles.

Impact of 2020 rule of law reporting

Follow-up by State authorities

The Liechtenstein Human Rights Association (LHRA) is not aware of any follow-up action of state authorities with regard to the issues reported in the 2020 ENNHRI rule of law report

Independence and effectiveness of the NHRI

Changes in the regulatory framework applicable to the Institution

There have not been any changes in the regulatory framework applicable to the LHRA on the past year.

Enabling space

The LHRA considers that state authorities sufficiently ensure an enabling space for the association to independently and effectively carry out its work.

Human rights defenders and civil society space

The LHRA Office has received a few individual complaints regarding the impact of Covid-19 measures on individual freedoms. Our internal assessment concluded that the principles of proportionality, transparency, non-permanency and non-discrimination of the state measures were respected. Besides, all measures were based on a satisfactory legal foundation (Epidemics Law).

Therefore, the LHRA did not initiate a legal assessment of the measures. However, the association recommended a society-wide evaluation of Covid-19 protection measures in 2021, including human rights impacts, and offered to co-finance the evaluation.

Checks and balances

While the LHRA did not yet have the opportunity and capacity to follow-up on these issues, it considers the level of trust amongst citizens and between citizens and the public administration as very high.

The LHRA is regularly included in legislative consultation processes, and has not encountered particular obstacles in that respect. The data situation is good in general but not too specific, as the case numbers are often too small to allow generalization and ensure anonymization.

Functioning of the justice system

The LHRA has not found evidence of any laws, measures or practices that restrict access to justice and/or effective judicial protection in Liechtenstein.

Media pluralism and freedom of expression

The LHRA has not observed practices that could restrict a free and pluralist media environment, however it has not yet had the opportunity to examine this issue in detail.

The Association launched in 2020 a campaign named "respect please" to promote pluralism and stand up against hate speech in the very popular section of our national newspapers: "readers' letters"(letters to the editor).

Corruption

The LHRA found no evidence of laws, measures or practices relating to corruption, however it has not yet had the opportunity for an in-depth analysis of this issue.

Impact of measures taken in response to COVID-19 on the national rule of law environment

Most significant impacts of measures taken in response to the COVID-19 outbreak on the rule of law and human rights protection

The LHRA's general assessment of the measures taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic is positive. The regular legislative process could be maintained throughout the pandemic as the parliament was able to follow and control the government thanks to duly and extraordinarily scheduled meetings almost every month since the beginning of the pandemic outbreak.

In its current publication, the independent research centre "Liechtenstein Institute" reviewed the legal basis for the government's Corona protection measures. It found challenges but no shortcomings in these measures. (Schiess, Patricia (2021): The Protection of Health and Public Health. The measures to combat coronavirus under Liechtenstein law. In: Jusletter 15 February 2021.)

After the first Covid-19 wave, the LHRA launched and published a survey of organisations working with vulnerable groups to assess the impact of the state measures on vulnerable groups and provided recommendations to address the issues identified.

The LHRA also advocated for:

transparent and easily accessible official information about the pandemic and protective measures (translations of government information in migration languages, in plain language, and in sign language). funding for quarantine measures for care migrants.

Most important challenges due to COVID-19 for the NHRI's functioning

The LHRA was able to continue its monitoring mission even without physical visits to government agencies or institutions. Individual consultations were possible at any time (partly by telephone). Few projects had to be postponed.

