

Submission to the Universal  
Periodic Review of the United  
Nations Human Rights  
Council

4<sup>th</sup> Cycle – 43<sup>rd</sup> Session

# Country Review: Liechtenstein

September 2022

by Vivien Kretz



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**Broken Chalk** is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 which focuses on monitoring and minimizing human rights violations in education all around the world. Our goal is to contribute to promoting universal and equal access to education for all.

Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support achieving societal peace by advocating for intercultural tolerance, preventing radicalism and polarization, and tackling inequalities in the field of education.

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## 0. Introduction

1. This report was drafted by Broken Chalk to contribute to the fourth Universal Periodic Review [UPR] of Liechtenstein. Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO focused on human rights violations in the field of education. Since Broken Chalk is an organization fighting inequalities and improving the quality of education worldwide, this report focuses on human rights, especially with regard to education.
2. This report first explores the main issues in education in Liechtenstein, the recommendations Liechtenstein received in the last review and its progress since 2018. Then, Broken Chalk offers some practical recommendations to Liechtenstein to further improve human rights in education.
3. In the last UPR cycle of 2018, Liechtenstein received 126 recommendations, out of which it accepted 84. Out of these recommendations 6%, meaning 4 recommendations, were linked to the 4<sup>th</sup> goal of the Sustainable Development Goals [SDG], namely ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.<sup>1</sup>
4. Quality education is a vital pillar of society: it enables long-term growth and development, helps minorities and foreigners' integration, and shapes future society.
5. The HMRI Rights Tracker of the Human Rights Measurement Initiative assesses how well a country could be using its financial resources when it comes to multiple factors. These factors include quality of life, one subsection being education, safety from the state, and empowerment. Unfortunately, there is no available data about Liechtenstein on the HRMI Rights Tracker. Therefore, one cannot assess if Liechtenstein's performance in education is rated 'very bad', 'bad', 'fair' or 'good'.<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Main issues in the educational field

6. It has been stated multiple times that gender equality and diversity should be aspired to and made part of Liechtenstein's agenda. UNESCO criticized a lack of focus on bringing visibility to the imbalances caused by gender.<sup>3</sup>
7. Furthermore, the recommendations given out during the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle concern accessibility issues for migrant workers and workers with disabilities. This can lead to the assumption of insufficient attention to those migrating to the country of Liechtenstein. Furthermore, this might also disclose that education is not as easily accessible to

<sup>1</sup> "OHCHR | Universal Periodic Review - Liechtenstein." n.d. OHCHR. Accessed September 26, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/li-index>.

<sup>2</sup> "Liechtenstein - HRMI Rights Tracker." n.d. Accessed September 27, 2022. <https://rightstracker.org>.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council. 2018. "Compilation on Liechtenstein Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights."

disabled people and migrants.

8. The *Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein* [VMR], an organization dedicated on improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in Liechtenstein, states clearly that there is a lack of focus and research on the matter by Liechtenstein.<sup>4</sup>
9. Even though the implementation of a voucher for those unable to afford adult education is praiseworthy, it must be asked if lowering the cost of education would be a more appropriate policy with stronger long-term positive effects.
10. Access to information on educational performance is a main issue concerning the country of Liechtenstein. Many data sources are outdated or cannot provide any data or statistical outcomes on Liechtenstein which means that Liechtenstein is not providing sufficient up-to-date data.

### Access to education

11. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR cycle, 40 countries recommended Liechtenstein to (consider) ratifying the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities [CRDP] of 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2006.<sup>5</sup> 24 of these countries required specific action. Broken Chalk commends Liechtenstein for having signed the CRDP on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, at the same time it urges Liechtenstein to ratify it, as soon as possible, and give legal effect to its provisions.<sup>6</sup> This convention binds State parties to take concrete measures to bring awareness about the struggles persons with disabilities face and to create an environment in which they can enjoy the entirety of their rights.
12. In Liechtenstein's body of law there is no reference to guaranteeing the right to education. Drawing from the fact that the literacy rate is 100%, it can be gathered that basic education is widely spread and accessible.<sup>7</sup> However, this is not legally and officially acknowledged. Therefore, both Kyrgyzstan and Korea have previously recommended Liechtenstein to "enshrine the right to education in its national legal framework, in the Constitution and in the School Act".<sup>8</sup>

### Quality of education

13. Liechtenstein follows a guideline by its *Schulamt*, meaning its Ministry of Education, in which the curriculum and the composition of schools are regulated.<sup>9</sup> There is a profound focus on ensuring that quality of education remains high.

<sup>4</sup> "Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen – Verein für Menschenrechte in Liechtenstein." n.d. Accessed September 26, 2022. <https://www.menschenrechte.li/rechte-von-menschen-mit-behinderungen/>.

<sup>5</sup> "UPR Info's Database." n.d. Accessed September 30, 2022. <https://upr-info-database.uwazi.io/>.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection. 2022. "15. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities." 2022. [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=\\_en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=_en).

<sup>7</sup> World Population Review. 2022. "Literacy Rate by Country 2022." 2022. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/literacy-rate-by-country>.

<sup>8</sup> UPR Info's Database." n.d. Accessed September 30, 2022. <https://upr-info-database.uwazi.io/>.

<sup>9</sup> Rosmarie, Wohlgennant. n.d. "Qualitätssicherung Und -Entwicklung," 148.

14. The country of Liechtenstein comprises 9 public high schools and one public university, the University of Liechtenstein.<sup>10</sup>
15. The number of university students keeps rising, marking 692 students in the winter semester of 2021/22.<sup>11</sup>
16. University education fees are comparable to those of the Netherlands or Germany for EU/EEA and Swiss students, amounting to 950 CHF per semester, however, they are comparably low for international students with respect to other neighboring countries, amounting to 1,250 CHF.<sup>12</sup>
17. Broken Chalk praises Liechtenstein for having a literacy rate of 100%.<sup>13</sup>
18. In 2019/2020, Liechtenstein's Foundation for Adult Education (*Stiftung für Erwachsenenbildung*) created a voucher system for those earning lower than a certain amount of money to access adult education. The voucher, for which one can apply, is equal to 500 CHF.<sup>14</sup>
19. According to the Ministry of Education (*Schulamt*) of Liechtenstein, there is a clear plan of contributory measures to support those in pedagogical and psychological need. This comprises "besondere schulische Massnahmen [BSM], pädagogisch-therapeutische Massnahmen [PTM], sozialpädagogische Massnahmen [SPM], Schulpsychologischer Dienst [SPD] and Begabtenförderung [BF]."<sup>15</sup> This means that there are special school measures, pedagogical-therapeutic measures, social pedagogical measures, school psychology services, and support for students who need it. This concept was developed in 2020 and, according to its structure, there is a stark focus on those who experience struggle with studying.
20. Liechtenstein's educational performance does not appear on the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results of 2018.<sup>16</sup> There is no record of the quality of education in Liechtenstein in this report. The PISA test is a very powerful tool for understanding how well a country is performing on an educational level, by assessing the performance of 15-year-old students in multiple subjects (reading, mathematics, science) and therefore is valuable for understanding how the quality of education is in different countries.

<sup>10</sup> "Education in Liechtenstein." 2021. In *Wikipedia*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Education\\_in\\_Liechtenstein&oldid=1059454536](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Education_in_Liechtenstein&oldid=1059454536).

<sup>11</sup> "Number of Students at the University of Liechtenstein Grows." n.d. Accessed September 26, 2022.

[https://www.liechtenstein.li/en/liechtenstein\\_news/zahl-der-studierenden-der-universitat-liechtenstein-wachst](https://www.liechtenstein.li/en/liechtenstein_news/zahl-der-studierenden-der-universitat-liechtenstein-wachst).

<sup>12</sup> "Universität Liechtenstein." n.d. University of Liechtenstein. Accessed September 26, 2022.

<https://www.uni.li/de/universitaet-liechtenstein>.

<sup>13</sup> World Population Review. 2022. "Literacy Rate by Country 2022." 2022. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/literacy-rate-by-country>.

<sup>14</sup> "Developments: New Voucher System and an Increase in Funding." 2020. EAEA Countryreport. November 23, 2020.

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<sup>15</sup> Landesverwaltung Fürstentum Liechtenstein. n.d. "Schulamt (SA) - Schulamt." Accessed October 1, 2022.

<https://www.llv.li/inhalt/11631/amtstellen/schulamt>.

<sup>16</sup> "Publications - PISA." n.d. Accessed September 30, 2022. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/pisa-2018-results.htm>.

## Representation

21. When looking at the website of the University of Liechtenstein, it becomes apparent that there is a clear lack of representation of diversity. The website mainly holds pictures of able-bodied people of white ethnicity. As has been criticized before, there is no representation of persons with disabilities and very little representation of persons of immigrant background.<sup>17</sup>

## Discrimination and violence in education

22. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the so-called Istanbul Convention, is aimed at ensuring the safety of women in both a domestic and public context.<sup>18</sup> In the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, four countries recommended Liechtenstein to ratify said Convention. Broken Chalk commends Liechtenstein for having ratified it, the treaty entered into force for Liechtenstein the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2021.<sup>19</sup>

## II. Recommendations

23. Based on the above analysis of the issues in Liechtenstein's education, Broken Chalk would like to encourage Liechtenstein to continue its efforts to improve the access and quality of education, upscale its current projects and address the issues that are not yet dealt with. In particular, Broken Chalk would like to present the following recommendations to Liechtenstein:

### Access to education

24. Broken Chalk approves of Liechtenstein's work on increasing its university student numbers and wishes that Liechtenstein keeps up its standard of accessibility of tertiary education.
25. Broken Chalk urges Liechtenstein to focus on practical ways to help persons with disabilities to be able to attend school and university, both psychologically and physically.
26. Broken Chalk recommends Liechtenstein to make education culturally, economically and physically accessible to all groups, not just those of white middle- or upper-class backgrounds. This can be achieved both by increasing the representation of marginalised groups in learning materials on the curriculum and in advertisements of, for example, university and high schools.
27. Broken Chalk urges Liechtenstein to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as soon as possible. Ensuring to fulfil the needs of persons with disabilities is

<sup>17</sup> "Universität Liechtenstein." n.d. University of Liechtenstein. Accessed September 26, 2022.

<https://www.uni.li/de/universitaet-liechtenstein>.

<sup>18</sup> Think Tank European Parliament. 2021. "The Istanbul Convention: A Tool for Combating Violence against Women and Girls | Think Tank | European Parliament." 2021.

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<sup>19</sup> Council of Europe. n.d. Accessed October 03, 2022. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treatyid=210>

a vital factor in creating a strong, non-discriminatory, and modern state.

28. Broken Chalk agrees with the recommendations made by Korea and Kyrgyzstan and urges Liechtenstein to officially acknowledge the right to education in a legal framework. It is highly important to make every citizen aware of the right to education and to not merely assume it as a given.
29. Broken Chalk urges Liechtenstein to participate in research concerning its performance and contribute data to the HMRI Rights Tracker. Without Liechtenstein's participation, it cannot be assessed how well Liechtenstein provides access to education.

### Quality of education

30. Broken Chalk congratulates Liechtenstein on its literacy rate of 100 percent and recommends the country maintain this standard by ensuring that the quality of education remains consistent.
31. Broken Chalk criticises Liechtenstein's missing appearance on multiple reports on assessing educational performance and quality of education, e.g., the PISA report. Without Liechtenstein's participation in the studies, it cannot be accurately evaluated if their education has an as high standard as the country claims it to be.

### Discrimination and violence in education

32. Broken Chalk recommends Liechtenstein create a clearer focus on those at the margins of society. One way to do this is by creating a representation of those who stand outside of privilege, meaning migrants, women and persons with disabilities. Broken Chalk would appreciate more representation of diversity not only in campaigns for schools and education but also on the websites of the schools and the university. This could be easily done, and many studies show that representation truly matters. It is significant for those who feel excluded in society to be represented through several media outlets.
33. Broken Chalk wants to congratulate Liechtenstein on ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Valuing women and therefore ensuring their safety and comfort is a vital pillar in the scheme of working towards a stronger Europe.
34. Broken Chalk recommends Liechtenstein increase its awareness of the needs of students with immigrant background. It is vital for Liechtenstein to be more inclusive in regard to the right to education, which is a right that all should enjoy.

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