

# Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein is a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament. Doubly landlocked between Switzerland and Austria, it has an estimated population of 35,000.

Constitution and government	Education and children's rights	Family, community, society, religious courts and tribunals	Freedom of expression advocacy of humanist values
<u>There is systematic religious privilege</u> <u>There is an established church or state religion</u> <u>State-funding of religious institutions or salaries, or discriminatory tax exemptions</u>	<u>There is state funding of at least some religious schools</u>	<u>Discriminatory prominence is given to religious bodies, traditions or leaders</u>	
	<u>State-funded schools offer religious or ideological instruction with no secular or humanist alternative, but it is optional</u>		
			<u>No fundamental restrictions on freedom of expression or advocacy of humanist values</u>

Legend

## Constitution and government

The constitution and other laws and policies protect freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as freedom of opinion and expression. However, the constitution makes the Catholic Church the "National Church" of the country.

The constitution and other laws and policies protect freedom of religion or belief. The criminal code prohibits any form of discrimination against or debasement of any religion or its adherents. However, according to the constitution, Roman Catholicism is the state religion "with full protection from the state." As such, it receives higher government subsidies than other religious organizations, holds a guaranteed role in education and religious teaching in schools, and has a voice in the political and legal decision-making process.

Liechtenstein has one of the most politically powerful unelected monarchs in Europe. The prince, as hereditary head of state, has the power to appoint the prime minister on recommendation of parliament, to veto legislation and the outcome of national referendums, as well as to nominate judges, dismiss the government, and dissolve the parliament.

<[freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/liechtenstein](http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/liechtenstein)>

## **Religious funding**

The government gives money not only to the Catholic Church, but also to other denominations. Catholic and Protestant churches receive regular annual contributions from the government in proportion to membership as determined in the 2000 census; smaller religious groups are eligible to apply for grants for associations of foreigners or specific projects.

## **Education and children's rights**

Religious education is part of the curriculum at public schools. Catholic or Protestant religious education is mandatory in all primary schools, but exemptions are routinely granted. Islamic religious classes have been introduced in some primary schools since 2008. The curriculum for Catholic confessional education is determined by the Roman Catholic Church with only a minor complementary supervisory role by the municipalities. At the secondary school level, parents and pupils choose between traditional confessional education organized by their religious community and the non-confessional (secular) subject "Religion and Culture." Since its introduction in 2003, 90 percent of Catholic pupils have chosen the non-confessional subject.

## **Family, community and society**

According to the 2015 census, 73.4 percent of the population of Liechtenstein is Catholic, 6.3 percent is Protestant and 5.9 percent is Muslim.

<[state.gov/documents/organization/281170.pdf](http://state.gov/documents/organization/281170.pdf)>

Other figures suggest that atheism has doubled in recent years, to 5.4 percent of the population.

<[worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-liechtenstein.html](http://worldatlas.com/articles/religious-beliefs-in-liechtenstein.html)>

It is illegal to refuse service, or membership of any association, for a person based on his or her "religious affiliation".

<[state.gov/documents/organization/269078.pdf](http://state.gov/documents/organization/269078.pdf)>

## **Abortion**

Section 96 of the Liechtenstein Penal Code bans abortion under all circumstances except if there is risk to life or serious harm to health of the pregnant woman or "if she was unmarried and not yet 14 years of age at the time of conception (provided the procedure is performed by a physician)".

<[loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/liechtenstein-no-to-legalized-abortion/](http://loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/liechtenstein-no-to-legalized-abortion/)>

Abortions carried out by a physician with the consent of the pregnant woman are therefore unlawful, and are punishable by up to one year of imprisonment for both physician and patient.

<[un.org/esa/population/publications/abortion/profiles.htm](http://un.org/esa/population/publications/abortion/profiles.htm)>

On 18 September 2011, the "Help Instead of Punishment" referendum to legalize abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, or in case the child would be severely disabled, was narrowly defeated (52.3 percent of the electorate voted for the status quo).

In a speech delivered the month previously, Prince Alois had indicated his opposition to the law and threatened to veto the proposal in case it passed.

## **LGBTI+ rights**

Same-sex registered partnerships were passed by the parliament in March 2011. The law was to take effect on 1 September 2011, unless a referendum took place. The Vox Populi collected enough signatures to hold a referendum, which took place in June 2011. Voters approved the law (68.8 percent) and it went into effect on 1 September 2011

<[vaterland.li/importe/altdaten/vermishtes/Partnerschaftsgesetz-Doch-noch-Widerstand;art477,73556](http://vaterland.li/importe/altdaten/vermishtes/Partnerschaftsgesetz-Doch-noch-Widerstand;art477,73556)>

However, same-sex couples are not allowed to make joint adoptions.

Prince Hans-Adam II has publicly espoused his opposition to adoption rights for same-sex couples.

## **Ethnic and religious discrimination**

A 2006 UNESCO report pointed out the persistence of “xenophobia and intolerance against persons of different ethnic origin or religion, particularly against Muslims” in the country.

According to the Liechtenstein Institute, Muslims often face difficulties in renting prayer facilities due to social discrimination, as well as discrimination in the labor market.

<[state.gov/documents/organization/281170.pdf](http://state.gov/documents/organization/281170.pdf)>

## **Freedom of expression, advocacy of humanist values**

The constitution guarantees freedoms of expression and the media, and these freedoms are respected in practice. Freedoms of assembly and association are also protected and respected in practice.

The law prescribes criminal penalties for public incitement to hatred towards a religious group, religious discrimination, or – more worryingly – the “debasement” of any religion by spoken, written, visual, or electronic means, however there is no evidence that this last provision could be used in the absence of incitement to hatred and therefore does not function as a quasi-blasphemy law.

Denial, trivialization, and justification of genocide and other crimes against humanity are also prohibited. Penalties may include a prison sentence of up to two years.