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Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the OSCE

**STATEMENT BY THE  
PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN AT THE OSCE CONFERENCE  
ON RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION**

Vienna, 4-5 September 2003

**Session 1: Legislative, institutional mechanisms and governmental action,  
including law enforcement**

Liechtenstein has 34,000 inhabitants. Thirty per cent of the resident population are foreigners. Around 13,000 self-employed persons and employees commute daily to Liechtenstein from abroad. Consequently, more than 60 per cent of jobs are filled by foreigners. The foreigners living and working in Liechtenstein come for the large part from the neighbouring countries of Switzerland and Austria as well as from Germany and Italy. The peaceful way in which the various cultures coexist is part of everyday life in Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein's village structure and rural character prevent the segregation of foreign communities. Fortunately, there are neither xenophobic political parties nor anti-Semitic or other racist movements in Liechtenstein.

The fairly restrictive naturalization policy was relaxed at the end of the 1990s. Among other things, a simplified naturalization procedure was introduced for foreigners who had lived in Liechtenstein for a long time. As a result of Liechtenstein's membership of the European Economic Area, the non-discriminatory rules of the Community patrimony (*acquis communautaire*), and thus freedom of movement for persons, apply under Liechtenstein law. Likewise, equal treatment for non-EU citizens is guaranteed in Liechtenstein, for example through the relevant regulations for the issue of work permits or by specialized qualifications required for employment.

In March 2000, Liechtenstein ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and introduced into the national legislation an anti-racism clause making racist behaviour, the incitement thereto and the dissemination of racist material a punishable offence. The first case of legal proceedings under this clause is currently in progress. In 2002, Liechtenstein submitted its first country report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The Committee's recommendations are currently being incorporated into the national action plan against racism.

In spring 2003, the Parliament of Liechtenstein agreed on the introduction of the individual right of appeal under Article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms

of Racial Discrimination. The State Court is to assume the function of the National Court of Appeal. The changes to the law required for this purpose will be expected to be taken up by Parliament in autumn 2003.

A delegation from the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) visited Liechtenstein in spring 2002 and held intensive talks with members of the Government, the administration and civil society. The report on Liechtenstein met with a positive response and the recommendations and suggestions for improving the situation were also incorporated into the national action plan against racism.

Liechtenstein played an active role in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban (South Africa) in summer 2001 and in the preparations in Geneva. Following the Conference, the Liechtenstein Government established a working group to draw up and implement a national action plan against racism. This plan is based on the results of the World Conference and its purpose, in particular, is to implement the recommendations of the ECRI as well as those of the CERD. This year, the programme is focusing on making the public more aware of these issues through relevant work in the media and through human rights education in schools, in the administration and in the police force. For 2004 and beyond, the emphasis will be on preparing a comprehensive national integration model and concept. A comprehensive law against discrimination is also being considered as part of this action plan, but it is not a political priority at the present time.

At the end of the 1990s, a group of radical right-wing youth drew attention to themselves through various actions in public. The incidents were in fact harmless, but the Government took note of the signals: a special group to combat right-wing radicalism was established within the police force. Thanks to the co-ordinated, problem-oriented and preventive measures in schools and in work with young people, there have been no further incidents and the special group could in the meantime be dissolved.

Liechtenstein is taking measures to combat and prosecute racially discriminatory behaviour and is concentrating its efforts particularly on prevention.