

DARE CYPRUS-RESEARCH FOR LIECHTENSTEIN

"The EEA funding mechanism, known as EEA Grants, aims to address social and economic disparities within Europe. By allocating funds through the EEA Grants, the competitiveness of the participating countries in Europe is bolstered. In the medium term, this leads to the establishment of new trading partners and sales markets for the three EEA states: Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. Liechtenstein specifically prioritizes the program area of education and culture. The donor program partners for Liechtenstein, Iceland, and Norway are AIBA, Rannis, and HK-DIR, respectively."

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1. CSO's in Liechtenstein

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Liechtenstein can be established as associations and registered as such, without requiring any special recognition from the State. Every association in Liechtenstein possesses the right to pursue and represent its interests, including participation in the legislative process through consultations. Moreover, associations have the ability to exert targeted influence on legislation by initiating initiatives and referenda. It is worth noting that numerous associations, including NGOs, receive financial support from both the State and municipalities.

In Liechtenstein, the acronym CSO stands for Civil Society Organizations. These organizations encompass a range of initiatives working towards social, cultural, and environmental causes. Prominent examples include the Liechtenstein Red Cross, the Environmental Protection Association, the Women's Forum, and Caritas Liechtenstein. These organizations rely on donations and the dedication of volunteers to effectively carry out their work and create a positive impact on the community.

2. The civic sector In Liechtenstein

Below, we present further information regarding the status of civil society organizations in Liechtenstein and the process of identifying potential partners for cooperation. In addition to Iceland and Norway, the Principality of Liechtenstein also serves as a 'Donor State,' offering funds through the Active Citizens Fund - National Program.

Firstly, it is important to note that many civil society organizations in Liechtenstein, primarily in the form of associations or foundations, may have limited opportunities for international cooperation. This limitation arises from their focus on activities within the territory of Liechtenstein and their reliance on volunteer support.

Traditionally, Liechtenstein has been characterized by vibrant association activities, encompassing sports, culture, and social engagement. The civil society sector originated from associations operating in rural areas.

Civil society organizations in Liechtenstein can be established as associations and registered in the trade register without requiring special recognition from the State. Each association possesses the right to pursue and represent its interests, including participation in the legislative process through public consultation and hearings. Furthermore, associations have the ability to exert targeted influence on legislation by initiating actions and referenda. Additionally, many associations, including civil society organizations, receive financial support from the state and municipalities.

The majority of clubs and associations in Liechtenstein focus on sports, with notable examples such as the Alpine Club boasting a membership of almost 3,000 individuals. Some CSOs are engaged in the field of human rights, including Amnesty International (Liechtenstein), which addresses human rights issues in a general context. Other associations focus on specific human rights concerns, such as women's rights, LGBT+ rights, and the rights of foreigners. Notably, the Liechtenstein Women's Network comprises 17 different CSOs dedicated to women's rights.

The number of associations registered in the trade register has steadily increased in Liechtenstein since 2004, reaching a total of 326 associations in 2017 compared to 129 in 2004. However, it is worth noting that the actual number of existing associations is higher, as not all of them are included in the trade register and thus are not reflected in the statistics.

3. EEA Norway Grants- The importance of EEA NORWAY GRANTS

The two short videos below provide a concise overview of the EEA Norway Grants:

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_2WxloHs4k
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_z7BjnPbbw

The EEA and Norway Grants are jointly funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. These grants serve two main objectives: to contribute to a more equitable Europe in social and economic terms, and to strengthen the relations between Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and the 15 Beneficiary States in Europe.

The primary aim of the grants is to reduce social and economic disparities while fostering stronger bilateral relationships. By bolstering the internal market, these grants contribute to a more prosperous Europe.

Norway's contribution to the EEA and Norway Grants reflects its commitment to addressing social and economic disparities in Europe. These funds are allocated to finance projects in various fields and sectors, including the **environment, climate, health, education, research, and innovation**. During the funding period from 2014 to 2021, the EEA Grants amounted to €1.5 billion.

Bilateral research programs are currently underway in **Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Portugal**. Additionally, a joint program of cooperation exists among the three **Baltic states, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein**.

The EEA Grants are jointly funded by all three Donor States—Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway—with contributions based on their respective gross domestic product (GDP). Norway's contribution accounts for approximately 94.4%, while Iceland and Liechtenstein contribute 4.2% and 1.3% respectively. The Financial Mechanism Committee (FMC), comprising the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from the three countries, serves as the decision-making body for the EEA Grants.

Europe currently faces significant challenges, including Russia's unwarranted aggression against Ukraine, which not only affects Ukraine but also undermines our shared values of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rules-based international order.

In this context, the EEA and Norway Grants play a crucial role. Many of the neighboring countries of Ukraine, which are also Beneficiary States of the EEA and Norway Grants, face challenges related to the massive influx of refugees and its consequences. To address this situation, some of the funds from the EEA and Norway Grants have been allocated to support Ukrainian refugees in these Beneficiary States. By the end of 2022, over EUR 13 million had been committed to projects and initiatives in this regard.

The overarching goal of the EEA and Norway Grants is to reduce social and economic disparities in Europe while safeguarding the fundamental values of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. These grants represent the largest single source of funding for civil society organizations working to promote these values in the Beneficiary States, which is particularly crucial given the shrinking civic space and increasing pressure on democracy and the rule of law witnessed in various European countries in recent years.

Moreover, by fostering strong bilateral partnerships, the grants contribute to building competence and capacity, creating networks, developing business ideas, and expanding market shares. The sustained efforts over time have yielded significant results.

The Status Report provided herein showcases some of these achievements, offering an overview of activities carried out under the EEA and Norway Grants until the end of 2022. It highlights the benefits

derived from collaborative efforts and provides insight into how Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway are working together to promote a greener, more competitive, and more inclusive Europe.

By the end of 2022, all 97 programs were being implemented, with over 6,000 projects having been signed within the framework of the Grants' total allocation of EUR 2.8 billion. Support has been provided to 1,056 companies, resulting in the creation of 3,976 jobs. Furthermore, over EUR 210 million has been allocated to civil society organizations, and 40% of all projects have donor partners. With program implementation set to continue until 2024, we anticipate witnessing further results in the years ahead.

During these uncertain times, it is of utmost importance to continue strengthening European values. The EEA and Norway Grants are one of the mechanisms employed by Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway to address these challenges. We eagerly anticipate sustaining our close cooperation with all Beneficiary States in the forthcoming year.

4. EA Norway Grants and which activities are supported

The EEA research programs encompass research activities conducted in both Norway and partner countries. These programs adhere closely to the guidelines of the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Horizon Europe - thereby enhancing the participants' expertise in the framework program.

The EEA research programs provide funding for bilateral research and development (R&D) projects involving Norwegian partners. The calls for proposals are administered by the Research Council's partner organizations. Relevant Norwegian partners primarily include research organizations, but the projects also involve trade and industry, civil society, and the public sector. It is a requirement for each project to have a project coordinator from the partner country, with at least one Norwegian partner involved.

Under the agreements for the periods 2009-2014 and 2014-2021, approximately 250 bilateral research projects have received funding from the EEA and Norway Grants.

Differentiating between the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants:

The Grants consist of two funding schemes - the EEA Grants and the Norway Grants. The main distinction lies in the funding sources and the recipient countries.

The EEA Grants are jointly funded by all three donor countries - Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. The contribution of each donor country is proportionate to its size and gross domestic product (GDP), with Norway providing approximately 95.8%, Iceland 3%, and Liechtenstein 1.2%. During the 2014-2021 funding period, the EEA Grants amount to €1.5 billion.

The EEA Grants are allocated to 15 countries in Europe, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

The decision-making body for the EEA Grants is the Financial Mechanism Committee, comprising representatives from the Foreign Ministries of Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway.

The Norway Grants, on the other hand, are solely funded by Norway and amount to €1.3 billion for the 2014-2021 funding period. The Norway Grants are allocated to the 13 countries that joined the European Economic Area (EEA) after 2004. As a result, Greece and Portugal do not receive funding from the Norway Grants. The decision-making body for the Norway Grants is the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It is important to note that an agreement on the Fund Operator for the Active Citizens Fund could not be reached between the Donors and Hungary in 2021. Consequently, no programs will be implemented in Hungary under the EEA and Norway Grants during the 2014-2021 funding period.

5. EEA NORWAY GRANTS: Donors from Lichtenstein

The **National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)** is a Donor Programme Partner for education programs in the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia. Additionally, AIBA is involved in research programs in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, as well as the Innovation program in Slovakia.

For more information, please visit AIBA's website at <https://www.eeagrants-li.com/>. The designated contact person at AIBA is Ms. Marion Kindle-Kühnis, who can be reached via email at marion.kindle-kuehnis@aiba.li or by telephone at +423 236 7226.

6. The Project DEMOCRACY IN LIFE – LIFE IN DEMOCRACY

Project Facts:

- Project Promoter: Association Of Children’s Friends Board of District Branch (PL)
- Project Number: PL-ACTIVE CITIZENS-NATIONAL-0471
- Status: Currently in implementation
- Initial Project Cost: €30,000
- Donor Project Partners: Capital Youth Association (CYA) e.V. (LI)
- Other Project Partners: Association of Polish Local and Regional Televisions (PL)
- Program: Civil Society

Additional Project Description:

According to the findings of the ‘Diagnoza społeczna’ study, despite 85% of young people in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie province showing interest in public affairs, the majority of them do not actively engage in such activities. Our research indicates that only 10% of young individuals are involved in NGOs or volunteer work. This lack of participation can be attributed to insufficient soft skills, particularly in communication, a lack of agency and local identity, and a deficiency in leadership qualities and motivation to mobilize others.

The primary objective of this project is to address these challenges by increasing civic engagement and enhancing knowledge about democracy among 100 young individuals from grades 4-8 in primary schools within our province. The project aims to achieve this through various initiatives, such as organizing competitions and street games that provide participants with opportunities to explore their neighborhood within the context of social activities. Additionally, workshops on democracy and democratic processes will be conducted, and meetings will be arranged with representatives from our partner organization, the Capital Youth Association. This organization, based in Liechtenstein, will share their best practices in working with youths. Moreover, the project will facilitate the participation of young individuals from other European Union countries, creating an opportunity to discuss civic engagement and democracy across Europe.

Our second partner, the Polskie Telewizje Lokalne i Regionalne Association, will support the project by promoting its activities and facilitating debates for youths, with a specific focus on recording and broadcasting.

By making these revisions, the passage provides a clearer and more detailed explanation of the project objectives and activities, thereby enhancing its academic suitability for publishing.

7. Gender Equality

At the national level, the Liechtenstein Government actively promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women through a dedicated national mechanism and financial resources allocated for this specific purpose. In 1996, Liechtenstein established the Office of Gender Equality, which was later renamed the Office of Equal Opportunities in 2005 to better align with its core objectives. The office now focuses on empowering women through political engagement, conducting seminars to enhance women's self-awareness, and overseeing the implementation of relevant legislation and information campaigns.

Recognizing the vital role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in advancing gender equality, the Liechtenstein Government has fostered a conducive environment for their operation. Civil Society Organizations have historically played a significant role in shaping Liechtenstein's gender equality policies and continue to contribute actively.

By creating an enabling environment for NGOs and actively engaging in initiatives such as political participation, self-awareness seminars, legislative oversight, and information campaigns, the Liechtenstein Government prioritizes the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

8. Sustainable Development and Millennium Development Goals

Sustainable development is a key priority for the Liechtenstein government. For many years, Liechtenstein has been taking targeted action to promote sustainable economic growth, the careful use of natural resources, the conservation of nature and the landscape, a peaceful, just, and inclusive society, and to ensure the rule of law.

At the international level, Liechtenstein displays a consistent commitment to promoting sustainable development, whether through protecting and advancing human rights, strengthening the rule of law, fighting impunity for the most serious violations of human rights and international law, and through its commitment to environmental protection. Multilateralism is of prime importance to Liechtenstein, particularly when it comes to problems that can only be resolved through international cooperation. That is why Liechtenstein was actively involved in the negotiation process leading up to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and called for it to be of a comprehensive nature. Liechtenstein also advocated an effective review mechanism for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Voluntary reporting to the High-Level Political Forum is an important instrument of this review.

The private sector and civil society also take sustainability very seriously, as shown by a survey that was carried out within the scope of this report. There is a general desire for close involvement in the implementation of the SDGs.

Within the framework of international solidarity, Liechtenstein makes a substantial contribution to the implementation of SDGs in developing countries. It supports projects relating to almost all the SDGs, with a focus on education, advancing the rule of law and migration.

Environmental protection-climate change

The Liechtenstein government is dedicated to adopting an environmentally friendly approach to agriculture, recognizing the potential risks posed by climate change to the agricultural sector. As part of its commitment, Liechtenstein aims to reduce carbon emissions by 40% compared to 1990 levels (SDG 13). It acknowledges that an active climate policy can incentivize the development and utilization of climate-friendly, sustainable, and innovative technologies (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2019).

Promoting access to clean, modern, and affordable energy is a key priority for Liechtenstein (SDG 8). To achieve this goal, the government is currently formulating a 2050 Energy Vision. Additionally, stronger incentives have been introduced to encourage more efficient and environmentally conscious resource management. The implementation of environmental taxes has shown some impact on consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2019).

Liechtenstein is committed to global environmental protection and nature conservation, actively participating in regional cooperation within Europe. Measures to conserve biodiversity (SDG 15) have been implemented or are planned for the future. In 2017, the country initiated the 'Waterfootprint Liechtenstein' project, which promotes drinking tap water and donating drinking water (SDG 6). The project aims to ensure access to high-quality water for all residents of Liechtenstein, thereby improving the living conditions of approximately 38,000 people in need. To date, a total of 22,009 'water footprints' have been activated in Liechtenstein (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2019).

The government has established an Interdisciplinary Working Group led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Justice, and Culture. The group is responsible for conducting a gap analysis of SDG implementation, reviewing data availability for monitoring progress, and ensuring effective SDG action (UN HLPF, 2019). Moreover, the government has incorporated the SDGs as one of the strategic guidelines for its work, in alignment with the 2017-2021 Government Programme, aiming for comprehensive SDG action (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2019).

Liechtenstein submitted a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the United Nations in 2019.

The National Statistical Office (Amt für Statistik) maintains a national indicator system for sustainable development, which comprises 55 indicators and is published annually. However, the current system is not directly based on the SDGs (Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, 2019).

Social Inclusion of migrants and Refugees

713 immigrants arrived in Liechtenstein in 2020, with the majority originating from Switzerland and EEA countries. The primary reasons for immigration were family reunification (371) and work opportunities (326). Among the immigrants, 282 were citizens of EEA states, followed by 176 Liechtenstein nationals and 112 Swiss nationals. In terms of emigration, a total of 432 individuals left Liechtenstein in 2020. Of these, 47% were Liechtenstein citizens, 31% were from EEA countries, and 9.5% were Swiss nationals. The majority of emigrants relocated either to Switzerland or another EEA country, while 6.9% settled in the United States.

Irregular migration in Liechtenstein is minimal. The presence of robust public infrastructure, well-established social structures, a regulated labor market, as well as strict border controls, serve as deterrents to irregular migration. In 2021, only 55 third-country nationals were discovered to be residing illegally in Liechtenstein. Out of these, 65 were issued orders to leave, and 35 individuals were

subsequently returned following the order. Furthermore, since 2015, no third-country national has been denied entry into Liechtenstein.

9. Promoting and Protecting Basic Human Rights

Liechtenstein has established several institutions dedicated to the promotion of human rights. In 2005, the inter-office Equal Opportunity Commission was among the first bodies created. Concurrently, the Government decided to expand the Office of Gender Equality, transforming it into the Office of Equal Opportunity (Stabsstelle Chancengleichheit, SCG).

The protection and promotion of human rights hold a significant position in Liechtenstein's foreign policy. Liechtenstein actively participates in relevant bodies within the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE. Additionally, through development cooperation, Liechtenstein strives to support targeted organizations and initiatives aimed at enhancing the implementation and promotion of human rights.

Liechtenstein maintains a general framework that is relevant to the protection and promotion of human rights within its jurisdiction. The country is committed to fostering effective equality, intercultural awareness, and respect for diversity in society (e.g. Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Liechtenstein, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, etc.).

Acceptance of international human rights norms

Liechtenstein, as a member of the United Nations and the Council of Europe, demonstrates its commitment to international human rights norms by ratifying various international and European agreements on the protection of human rights. The Liechtenstein Government follows a practice of ratifying agreements once the necessary legal and practical conditions have been established at the domestic level. This approach ensures that the agreements can be effectively applied domestically upon entry into force.

Role of civil society

Civil society plays a crucial role in Liechtenstein, with a significant emphasis on the multitude of associations operating within the country. The establishment of associations is allowed as long as their purpose is not unlawful, and both the State and municipalities provide support, including financial assistance, for their formation.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are free to establish themselves as associations in Liechtenstein, and there are numerous associations actively involved in the field of human rights. Amnesty International (Liechtenstein) is one notable association with a broad focus on human rights. Other associations concentrate on specific human rights issues, such as women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and migrant rights. Notably, women's rights NGOs are well-organized, with the Liechtenstein Women's Network comprising 17 different NGOs.

Since 2009, the Office for Foreign Affairs has organized an annual human rights dialogue with NGOs, inviting approximately 20 to 30 organizations actively engaged in human rights work. This dialogue platform, established following a recommendation made to Liechtenstein by the Human Rights Committee during the Universal Periodic Review, facilitates the exchange of ideas among NGOs and with the Office for Foreign Affairs. Its aim is to foster discussions on ways to enhance participation in

human rights protection. NGOs also have the opportunity to exert influence through consultations on draft legislation. For any proposed laws related to human rights, NGOs can submit comments to shape the legislation. In cases where their concerns are not addressed during the legislative process, NGOs retain the freedom to initiate initiatives or referenda to advocate for their causes.

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