

WOMEN'S HOME

Liechtenstein

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Office for Foreign Affairs

Esther Schindler

Heiligkreuz 14

9490 Vaduz

Schaan, July 2006

Comments on the 3rd country report pursuant to the CEDAW Convention

Dear Madam, dear Sir:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit comments on the 3rd country report pursuant to article 18 of the CEDAW Convention.

We are pleased to accept this offer, but we will limit our comments to the topic of the Women's Home. For lack of time and resources, we are unfortunately unable to submit more extensive comments.

On page 32, the report says the following about the Women's Home:

"The Women's Home, run by the Association for the Protection of Abused Women and their Children, was established in 1991 and offers a place to stay for victims of violence. The Government supports the Liechtenstein Women's Home as part of a performance agreement with an annual contribution of CHF 320,000. Most of the nine women who came to the Women's Home in 2005 were migrants. Eight women live in Liechtenstein, one in the neighboring canton of St. Gallen. The use of the Women's Home has decreased since 2001. One explanation is that the women and children from neighboring cantons of Switzerland are not referred to the Liechtenstein Women's Home as frequently as before in crisis situations."

The report correctly states that the cited explanation is simply one explanation. It is one of many explanations, but the other explanations should not be ignored, so that a balanced and correct picture of the current situation can be obtained

As an additional, very significant explanation for the decrease in numbers but also for the purpose of a better understanding of the work of the Women's Home in general, we politely

request that you include the following comments in the report:

The decrease in the occupancy rates in the Liechtenstein Women's Home is due to the new legal framework in relation to the neighboring Swiss cantons (the previously unproblematic referral of clients to the Liechtenstein Women's Home is now only possible if the equivalent women's homes in neighboring Switzerland are full), the concomitant improvement in processing times in the neighboring cantonal women's homes, the possibility of barring the aggressor from the immediate surroundings of the victim, and not least of all also the changing needs of women affected by violence. It is a social reality that Liechtenstein women are much more able to rely on a social network of family and friends to cover their immediate need for a place to stay in times of crisis.

However, these women need and demand – to the same extent or even more so – professional, anonymous, and targeted counseling and care in their process of reorientation and planning. This explains the jump in the number of counseling cases outside the Women's Home from three cases in 2000 to 21 cases in 2005. The care team of the Liechtenstein Women's Home has been dealing with the issue of women affected by violence and their children for years, and it draws on a combined pool of diverse experience. This experience allows it to provide assistance to its clients in these often existential crises and to offer appropriate care and support in an absolutely protected and anonymous area run by women.

As also explained in the report, the education and prevention measures on the topic of violence against women in Liechtenstein have been massively strengthened, which automatically results in a new need for counseling on the part of the "implementing" institutions, such as the police, teachers, lawyers, etc., which must be covered in each individual case.

We are happy to be at your service at any time for questions or clarifications, and we would be pleased to receive a copy of the 3rd country report once it has been completed.

Yours faithfully

[signed]

Martina Herberstein
Director of the Women's Home