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**Liechtenstein** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell); [Template:IPA-de](/wiki/Template:IPA-de)), officially the **Principality of Liechtenstein** ([Template:Lang-de](/wiki/Template:Lang-de)),[[1]](#cite_note-1) is a [doubly landlocked](/wiki/Landlocked_country#Doubly_landlocked) [German](/wiki/German_language)-speaking [microstate](/wiki/Microstate) in [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe).[[2]](#cite_note-2) It is a [constitutional monarchy](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) with the rank of [principality](/wiki/Principality), headed by the [Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Monarchy_of_Liechtenstein).

Liechtenstein is bordered by [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland) to the west and south and [Austria](/wiki/Austria) to the east and north. It has an area of just over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and an estimated population of 37,000. Divided into [11 municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Liechtenstein), its capital is [Vaduz](/wiki/Vaduz) and its largest municipality is [Schaan](/wiki/Schaan).

Economically, Liechtenstein has the third [highest gross domestic product per person in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita) when adjusted by [purchasing power parity](/wiki/Purchasing_power_parity),[[3]](#cite_note-3) after [Qatar](/wiki/Qatar) and [Luxembourg](/wiki/Luxembourg), and the highest [when not adjusted by purchasing power parity](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)_per_capita). The [unemployment rate](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_unemployment_rate) is one of the lowest in the world at 1.5%.

An [alpine country](/wiki/Alpine_states), Liechtenstein is mainly mountainous, making it a [winter sport](/wiki/Winter_sport) destination. Many cultivated fields and small farms are found both in the south (Oberland, *upper land*) and north (Unterland, *lower land*). The country has a strong [financial sector](/wiki/Financial_services) centered in Vaduz. Liechtenstein is a member of the [European Free Trade Association](/wiki/European_Free_Trade_Association), and while not being a member of the European Union, the country participates in both the [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area) and [European Economic Area](/wiki/European_Economic_Area). It also has a [customs union](/wiki/Customs_union) and a [monetary union](/wiki/Monetary_union) with Switzerland.

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Gutenberg_Castle,_Balzers,_Liechtenstein.jpg)[Gutenberg Castle](/wiki/Gutenberg_Castle), Balzers, Liechtenstein. [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Schlossvaduz.jpg)[Vaduz Castle](/wiki/Vaduz_Castle), overlooking the capital, is home to the [Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Hans-Adam_II,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Johann_Josef_I_von_Liechtenstein.jpg)[Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Johann_I_Joseph,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) from 1805 to 1806 and 1814 to 1836.

### Early history[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

The oldest traces of hominid existence in Liechtenstein date back to the [Middle Paleolithic](/wiki/Middle_Paleolithic) era.<ref name = Early>[History](https://web.archive.org/web/20100419174957/http://www.swissworld.org/en/history/prehistory_to_romans/prehistoric_times/). swissworld.org. Retrieved on 2009-06-27</ref> [Neolithic](/wiki/Neolithic) farming settlements were founded in the valleys around 5300 BC.

[Hallstatt](/wiki/Hallstatt_culture) and [La Tène cultures](/wiki/La_Tène_culture) flourished during the late [Iron Age](/wiki/Iron_Age) from around 450 BC possibly under some influence from the [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) and [Etruscan](/wiki/Etruscan_civilization) civilisations. One of the most important tribal groups in the Alpine region were the [Helvetii](/wiki/Helvetii). In 58 BC, at the [Battle of Bibracte](/wiki/Battle_of_Bibracte), [Julius Caesar](/wiki/Julius_Caesar) defeated the Alpine tribes, bringing the region under closer control of the [Roman Empire](/wiki/Roman_Empire). By 15 BC, [Tiberius](/wiki/Tiberius), who was destined to be the second Roman emperor, and his brother [Drusus](/wiki/Nero_Claudius_Drusus) conquered the entire Alpine area. Liechtenstein was integrated into the [Roman province](/wiki/Roman_province) of [Raetia](/wiki/Raetia). The area was maintained by the Roman military, which maintained a large legionary camp called [Brigantium](/wiki/Bregenz) (Austria) near [Lake Constance](/wiki/Lake_Constance) and at [Magia](/wiki/Maienfeld) (Swiss). A [Roman road](/wiki/Roman_road) ran through the territory. In 259/60 Brigantium was destroyed by the [Alemanni](/wiki/Alemanni), a [Germanic people](/wiki/Germanic_people) who settled in the area in around 450.

In the [Early Middle Ages](/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages), the [Alemanni](/wiki/Alemanni) had settled the eastern [Swiss plateau](/wiki/Swiss_plateau) by the 5th century and the [valleys of the Alps](/wiki/Valleys_of_the_Alps) by the end of the 8th century. Liechtenstein was at the eastern edge of Alemannia. In the 6th century, the entire region became part of the [Frankish Empire](/wiki/Frankish_Empire) following [Clovis I's](/wiki/Clovis_I) victory over the Alemanni at [Tolbiac](/wiki/Tolbiac) in 504.<ref name = Nationsencyclopedia>[Switzerland history](http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Europe/Switzerland-HISTORY.html) Nationsencyclopedia.com. Retrieved on 2009-11-27</ref><ref name = Nationsonline>[History of Switzerland](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/History/Switzerland-history.htm) Nationsonline.org. Retrieved on 2009-11-27</ref>

The area that later became Liechtenstein remained under Frankish hegemony ([Merovingian](/wiki/Merovingians) and [Carolingian](/wiki/Carolingian_Empire) dynasties) until the empire was divided by the [Treaty of Verdun](/wiki/Treaty_of_Verdun) in 843 AD following the death of [Charlemagne](/wiki/Charlemagne).<ref name = Early/> The territory of present-day Liechtenstein belonged to [East Francia](/wiki/East_Francia) until it was reunified with [Middle Francia](/wiki/Middle_Francia) under the [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) around 1000 AD.<ref name = Early/> Until about 1100, the predominant language of the area was [Romansch](/wiki/Romansh_language), but thereafter [German](/wiki/German_language) gained ground, and in 1300 an Alemannic population called the Walsers (originating in [Valais](/wiki/Valais)) entered the region. In the 21st century, the mountain village of [Triesenberg](/wiki/Triesenberg) still preserves features of Walser dialect.[[4]](#cite_note-4)

### Foundation of a dynasty[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

By 1200, dominions across the Alpine plateau were controlled by the Houses of [Savoy](/wiki/House_of_Savoy), [Zähringer](/wiki/Zähringer), [Habsburg](/wiki/Habsburg), and [Kyburg](/wiki/House_of_Kyburg). Other regions were accorded the [Imperial immediacy](/wiki/Imperial_immediacy) that granted the empire direct control over the mountain passes. When the Kyburg dynasty fell in 1264, the Habsburgs under [King Rudolph I](/wiki/Rudolph_I_of_Habsburg) (Holy Roman Emperor in 1273) extended their territory to the eastern Alpine plateau that included the territory of Liechtenstein.<ref name = Nationsencyclopedia/> This region was [enfeoffed](/wiki/Feoffment) to the [Counts of Hohenems](/wiki/Hohenems) until the creation of the [Liechtenstein dynasty](/wiki/Liechtenstein_dynasty) in 1699.

In 1396 Vaduz (the southern region of Liechtenstein) was raised to the status of "imperial immediacy" and as such made subject to the Holy Roman Emperor alone.[[5]](#cite_note-5) The family, from which the principality takes its name, originally came from [Liechtenstein Castle](/wiki/Liechtenstein_Castle) in Lower Austria which they had possessed from at least 1140 until the 13th century (and again from 1807 onwards). The Liechtensteins acquired land, predominantly in [Moravia](/wiki/Moravia), [Lower Austria](/wiki/Lower_Austria), [Silesia](/wiki/Silesia), and [Styria](/wiki/Duchy_of_Styria). As these territories were all held in [feudal tenure](/wiki/Fee_(feudal_tenure)) from more senior feudal lords, particularly various branches of the [Habsburgs](/wiki/House_of_Habsburg), the Liechtenstein dynasty was unable to meet a primary requirement to qualify for a seat in the Imperial diet ([parliament](/wiki/Parliament)), the [*Reichstag*](/wiki/Imperial_Diet_(Holy_Roman_Empire)). Even though several Liechtenstein princes served several Habsburg rulers as close advisers, without any territory held directly from the Imperial throne, they held little power in the Holy Roman Empire.

For this reason, the family sought to acquire lands that would be classed as *unmittelbar* ("unintermediated"), or held without any intermediate feudal tenure, directly from the [Holy Roman Emperor](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor). During the early 17th century [Karl I of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Karl_I,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) was made a *Fürst* (prince) by the Holy Roman Emperor [Matthias](/wiki/Matthias,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) after siding with him in a political battle. [Hans-Adam I](/wiki/Hans-Adam_I,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) was allowed to purchase the minuscule *Herrschaft* ("Lordship") of [Schellenberg](/wiki/Schellenberg) and county of [Vaduz](/wiki/Vaduz) (in 1699 and 1712 respectively) from the Hohenems. Tiny Schellenberg and Vaduz had exactly the political status required: No feudal lord other than their [comital](/wiki/Count) sovereign and the [suzerain](/wiki/Suzerainty) Emperor.

### Principality[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

On 23 January 1719, after the lands had been purchased, [Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor](/wiki/Charles_VI,_Holy_Roman_Emperor), decreed that Vaduz and Schellenberg were united and elevated the newly formed territory to the dignity of *Fürstentum* ([*principality*](/wiki/Principality)) with the name "Liechtenstein" in honour of "[his] true servant, [Anton Florian of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Anton_Florian,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein)". It was on this date that Liechtenstein became a sovereign member state of the [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire). It is a testament to the pure political expediency of the purchase that the Princes of Liechtenstein never visited their new principality for almost 100 years.

By the early 19th century, as a result of the [Napoleonic Wars](/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars) in Europe, the Holy Roman Empire came under the effective control of France, following the crushing defeat at [Austerlitz](/wiki/Battle_of_Austerlitz) by [Napoleon](/wiki/Napoleon) in 1805. Emperor [Francis II](/wiki/Francis_II,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) abdicated, ending more than 960 years of feudal government. Napoleon reorganized much of the Empire into the [Confederation of the Rhine](/wiki/Confederation_of_the_Rhine). This political restructuring had broad consequences for Liechtenstein: the historical imperial, legal, and political institutions had been dissolved. The state ceased to owe obligation to any feudal lord beyond its borders.

Modern publications generally attribute Liechtenstein's sovereignty to these events. Its prince ceased to owe obligation to any [suzerain](/wiki/Suzerain). From 25 July 1806, when the [Confederation of the Rhine](/wiki/Confederation_of_the_Rhine) was founded, the Prince of Liechtenstein was a member, in fact a vassal, of its hegemon, styled *protector*, the French Emperor Napoleon I, until the dissolution of the confederation on 19 October 1813.

Soon afterward, Liechtenstein joined the [German Confederation](/wiki/German_Confederation) (20 June 1815[Template:Spaced ndash](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash)24 August 1866), which was presided over by the [Emperor of Austria](/wiki/Emperor_of_Austria).

In 1818, [Prince Johann I](/wiki/Johann_I_Joseph,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) granted the territory a limited constitution. In that same year [Prince Aloys](/wiki/Aloys_II,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) became the first member of the House of Liechtenstein to set foot in the principality that bore their name. The next visit would not occur until 1842.

Developments during the 19th century included:

* 1836, the first factory, for making ceramics, was opened.
* 1861, the Savings and Loans Bank was founded along with the first cotton-weaving mill.
* 1868, the Liechtenstein Army was disbanded for financial reasons.
* 1872, a railway line between Switzerland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was constructed through Liechtenstein.
* 1886, two bridges over the Rhine to Switzerland were built.

### 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

Until the end of [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I), Liechtenstein was closely tied first to the [Austrian Empire](/wiki/Austrian_Empire) and later to [Austria-Hungary](/wiki/Austria-Hungary); the ruling princes continued to derive much of their wealth from estates in the Habsburg territories, and they spent much of their time at their two palaces in Vienna. The economic devastation caused by this war forced the country to conclude a [customs](/wiki/Customs_union) and [monetary union](/wiki/Monetary_union) with its other neighbour, Switzerland.

At the time of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it was argued that Liechtenstein, as a fief of the Holy Roman Empire, was no longer bound to the emerging independent state of [Austria](/wiki/First_Austrian_Republic), since the latter did not consider itself as the legal successor to the empire. This is partly contradicted[Template:OR](/wiki/Template:OR) by the Liechtenstein perception that the dethroned Austro-Hungarian Emperor still maintained an abstract heritage of the Holy Roman Empire.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Franz_I_von_Liechtenstein.jpg)[Franz I, Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Franz_I,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) from 1929 to 1938.

In 1929, 75-year-old [Prince Franz I](/wiki/Franz_I,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein) succeeded to the throne. Franz had just married [Elisabeth von Gutmann](/wiki/Elisabeth_von_Gutmann), a woman from Vienna, who was wealthy because her father was a Jewish businessman from Moravia. Although Liechtenstein had no official Nazi party, a Nazi sympathy movement arose within its National Union party. Local Liechtenstein Nazis identified Elisabeth as their Jewish "problem".[[6]](#cite_note-6) In March 1938, just after the [annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany](/wiki/Anschluss), Prince Franz named as regent his 31-year-old first cousin twice removed and heir-presumptive, [Prince Franz Joseph](/wiki/Franz_Joseph_II,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein). Franz died in July that year, and Franz Joseph succeeded to the throne. Franz Joseph II first moved to Liechtenstein in 1938, a few days after Austria's annexation.[[5]](#cite_note-5) During [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II), Liechtenstein remained officially neutral, looking to neighboring Switzerland for assistance and guidance, while family treasures from dynastic lands and possessions in [Bohemia](/wiki/Bohemia), [Moravia](/wiki/Moravia), and [Silesia](/wiki/Silesia) were taken to Liechtenstein for safekeeping. At the close of the conflict, [Czechoslovakia](/wiki/Czechoslovakia) and [Poland](/wiki/Poland), acting to seize what they considered to be German possessions, expropriated the entirety of the Liechtenstein dynasty's properties in those three regions. The expropriations (subject to modern legal dispute at the [International Court of Justice](/wiki/International_Court_of_Justice)) included over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of agricultural and forest land (most notably UNESCO listed [Lednice–Valtice Cultural Landscape](/wiki/Lednice–Valtice_Cultural_Landscape)), and several family castles and palaces.

Liechtenstein gave asylum to about 500 soldiers of the [First Russian National Army](/wiki/First_Russian_National_Army) (a collaborationist Russian force allied to the German [Wehrmacht](/wiki/Wehrmacht)) at the close of World War II. About 200 of the group somewhat voluntarily agreed to return to the USSR. They departed in a train to Vienna and nothing was ever heard of them again. The remainder stayed in Liechtenstein for another year, resisting, with support from Liechtenstein, further pressure by the Soviet government to participate in the repatriation programme. (In contrast, due to agreements made during the [Yalta Conference](/wiki/Yalta_Conference), the western Allies [repatriated Soviet citizens](/wiki/Operation_Keelhaul).) Eventually the government of Argentina offered asylum and about a hundred people left. This is commemorated by a [monument](/wiki/Russian_Monument_(Liechtenstein)) at the border town of [Hinterschellenberg](/wiki/Hinterschellenberg). It is also the theme of the French television documentary *Le dernier secret de Yalta* (*Yalta's last secret*) by Nicolas Jallot.

However, it was revealed in 2005 that Jewish labourers from the [Strasshof](/wiki/Strasshof_an_der_Nordbahn) [concentration camp](/wiki/Concentration_camp), provided by the [*SS*](/wiki/Schutzstaffel), had worked on estates in [Austria](/wiki/Austria) owned by Liechtenstein's Princely House.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Citizens of Liechtenstein were forbidden to enter Czechoslovakia during the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War). More recently the diplomatic conflict revolving around the controversial post-war [Beneš decrees](/wiki/Beneš_decrees) resulted in Liechtenstein not sharing international relations with the [Czech Republic](/wiki/Czech_Republic) or [Slovakia](/wiki/Slovakia). Diplomatic relations were established between Liechtenstein and the Czech Republic on 13 July 2009,[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[10]](#cite_note-10) and with Slovakia on 9 December 2009.[[11]](#cite_note-11)

### Financial centre[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

Liechtenstein was in dire financial straits following the end of the war in Europe. The Liechtenstein dynasty often resorted to selling family artistic treasures, including the portrait "[Ginevra de' Benci](/wiki/Ginevra_de'_Benci)" by [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci), which was purchased by the [National Gallery of Art](/wiki/National_Gallery_of_Art) of the [United States](/wiki/United_States) in 1967 for $5 million ($[Template:Inflation](/wiki/Template:Inflation) million in 2016 dollars), then a record price for a painting.

However, by the late 1970s it used its low [corporate tax](/wiki/Corporate_tax) rates to draw many companies to the country, becoming one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

The [Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Prince_of_Liechtenstein) is the world's sixth [wealthiest monarch](/wiki/List_of_the_richest_royals) with an estimated wealth of 5 billion [USD](/wiki/United_States_dollar).[[12]](#cite_note-12) The country's population enjoys one of the [world's highest standards of living](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita).

## Government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[thumb|The centre of government in](/wiki/File:Regierungsviertel_Liechtenstein_2.jpg) [Vaduz](/wiki/Vaduz). [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Hans-Adam_Prince_of_Liechtenstein_(1974)_by_Erling_Mandelmann.jpg)[Hans-Adam II, Prince of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Hans-Adam_II,_Prince_of_Liechtenstein), as pictured by [Erling Mandelmann](/wiki/Erling_Mandelmann) in 1974.

Liechtenstein has a constitutional monarch as Head of State, and an elected parliament which enacts law. It is also a direct democracy, where voters can propose and enact constitutional amendments and legislation independent of the legislature. The [Constitution of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Constitution_of_Liechtenstein) was [adopted in March 2003](/wiki/Liechtenstein_constitutional_referendum,_2003), replacing the previous 1921 constitution which had established Liechtenstein as a constitutional monarchy headed by the reigning prince of the Princely House of Liechtenstein. A parliamentary system had been established, although the reigning Prince retained substantial political authority.

The reigning Prince is the head of state and represents Liechtenstein in its international relations (although Switzerland has taken responsibility for much of Liechtenstein's diplomatic relations). The Prince may veto laws adopted by parliament. The Prince can call [referenda](/wiki/Referendum), propose new legislation, and dissolve parliament, although dissolution of parliament may be subject to a referendum.[[13]](#cite_note-13) Executive authority is vested in a collegiate government comprising the head of government (prime minister) and four government councilors (ministers). The head of government and the other ministers are appointed by the Prince upon the proposal and concurrence of parliament, thus reflecting the partisan balance of parliament. The constitution stipulates that at least two members of the government be chosen from each of the two regions.[[14]](#cite_note-14) The members of the government are collectively and individually responsible to parliament; parliament may ask the Prince to remove an individual minister or the entire government.

Legislative authority is vested in the unicameral [Landtag](/wiki/Landtag_of_Liechtenstein) made up of 25 members elected for maximum four-year terms according to a proportional representation formula. Fifteen members are elected from the "Oberland" (Upper Country or region) and ten members are elected from the "Unterland" (Lower Country or region).[[15]](#cite_note-15) Parties must receive at least 8% of the national vote to win seats in parliament, i.e. enough for 2 seats in the 25-seat legislature. Parliament proposes and approves a government, which is formally appointed by the Prince. Parliament may also pass votes of no confidence in the entire government or individual members.

Parliament elects from among its members a "Landesausschuss" (National Committee) made up of the president of the parliament and four additional members. The National Committee is charged with performing parliamentary oversight functions. Parliament can call for referenda on proposed legislation. Parliament shares the authority to propose new legislation with the Prince and with the number of citizens required for an initiative referendum.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Judicial authority is vested in the Regional Court at Vaduz, the Princely High Court of Appeal at Vaduz, the Princely Supreme Court, the Administrative Court, and the State Court. The State Court rules on the conformity of laws with the constitution and has five members elected by parliament.

On 1 July 1984, Liechtenstein became the last country in Europe to grant women the right to vote. The [referendum on women's suffrage](/wiki/Liechtenstein_women's_suffrage_referendum,_1984), in which only men were allowed to participate, passed with 51.3% in favor.[[17]](#cite_note-17)

### New constitution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

In a [national referendum](/wiki/Liechtenstein_constitutional_referendum,_2003) in March 2003, nearly two-thirds of the electorate voted in support of Hans-Adam II's proposed new constitution to replace the 1921 version. The proposed constitution was criticised by many, including the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), as expanding the powers of the monarchy (continuing the power to veto any law, and allowing the Prince to dismiss the government or any minister). The Prince threatened that if the constitution failed, he would, among other things, convert some of the royal property for commercial use and move to Austria.[[18]](#cite_note-18) The princely family and the Prince enjoy tremendous public support inside the nation, and the resolution passed with about 64% in favour.[[19]](#cite_note-19) A proposal to revoke the Prince's veto powers was rejected by 76% of voters in a [2012 referendum](/wiki/Liechtenstein_constitutional_referendum,_2012).[[20]](#cite_note-20) Few national constitutions provide a right of secession, but municipalities in Liechtenstein are entitled to secede from the union by majority vote.[[21]](#cite_note-21)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Rhein_bei_Balzers_-_Blick_auf_Gonzen.JPG) [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine): border between Liechtenstein and Switzerland (view towards the [Swiss Alps](/wiki/Swiss_Alps)). [thumb|Fields in Balzers seen from Gutenberg Castle](/wiki/File:Fields_of_Balzers_from_Gutenberg_Castle.jpg) Liechtenstein is situated in the Upper [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine) valley of the European [Alps](/wiki/Alps) and is bordered to the east by Austria and to the south and west by Switzerland. The entire western border of Liechtenstein is formed by the Rhine. Measured south to north the country is about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long. Its highest point, the [Grauspitz](/wiki/Grauspitz), is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Despite its Alpine location, prevailing southerly winds make the climate of Liechtenstein comparatively mild. In winter, the mountain slopes are well suited to [winter sports](/wiki/Winter_sport).

New [surveys](/wiki/Surveying) using more accurate measurements of the country's borders in 2006 have set its area at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), with borders of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[22]](#cite_note-22) Thus, it was discovered in 2006 that Liechtenstein's borders are [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) longer than previously thought.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Liechtenstein is one of only two [doubly landlocked countries](/wiki/Doubly_landlocked_country) in the world[[24]](#cite_note-24)—being a landlocked country wholly surrounded by other landlocked countries (the other is [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan)). Liechtenstein is the [sixth-smallest](/wiki/List_of_countries_and_dependencies_by_area) independent nation in the world by land area.

The principality of Liechtenstein is [divided into 11 communes](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Liechtenstein) called *Gemeinden* (singular *Gemeinde*). The Gemeinden mostly consist only of a single town or village. Five of them ([Eschen](/wiki/Eschen), [Gamprin](/wiki/Gamprin), [Mauren](/wiki/Mauren), [Ruggell](/wiki/Ruggell), and [Schellenberg](/wiki/Schellenberg)) fall within the electoral district *Unterland* (the lower county), and the remainder ([Balzers](/wiki/Balzers), [Planken](/wiki/Planken), [Schaan](/wiki/Schaan), [Triesen](/wiki/Triesen), [Triesenberg](/wiki/Triesenberg), and [Vaduz](/wiki/Vaduz)) within *Oberland* (the upper county).

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|Looking southward at Vaduz city centre](/wiki/File:3202_-_Vaduz_-_Äulestrasse.JPG)

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Despite its limited natural resources, Liechtenstein is one of the few countries in the world with more registered companies than citizens; it has developed a prosperous, highly industrialized free-enterprise economy and boasts a financial service sector as well as a living standard that compares favourably with those of the urban areas of Liechtenstein's much larger European neighbours.

Very low business taxes (lowest in Europe after Andorra's 10% maximum tax rate)—the corporate tax rate is a flat 12.5%[[25]](#cite_note-25)—as well as easy [Rules of Incorporation](/wiki/Rules_of_Incorporation) have induced about 73,700 holding (or so-called "letter-box") companies to establish registered offices in Liechtenstein - or twice as numerous as its 36,000 residents. This provides about 30% of Liechtenstein's state revenue. Liechtenstein also generates revenue from *Stiftungen* ("foundations"), which are financial entities created to hide the true owner of nonresident foreigners' financial holdings. The foundation is registered in the name of a Liechtensteiner, often a lawyer. This set of laws makes Liechtenstein a popular [tax haven](/wiki/Tax_haven) for extremely wealthy individuals and businesses attempting to avoid or [evade taxes](/wiki/Tax_evasion) in their home countries.[[26]](#cite_note-26){| class="wikitable" |- !Religion[[37]](#cite_note-37) !! 2010 !! 2000 !! 1990 |- | Catholics || 75.9% || 78.4% || 84.9% |- | Protestants || 8.5% || 8.3% || 9.2% |- | Christian-Orthodox Churches || 1.1% || 1.1% || 0.7% |- | Other Christian Churches || 0.3% || 0.1% || 0.2% |- | Muslims || 5.4% || 4.8% || 2.4% |- | Other religions || 0.8% || 0.3% || 0.2% |- | No religion || 5.4% || 2.8% || 1.5% |- | Undeclared || 2.6% || 4.1% || 0.9% |}

## Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:University_of_Liechtenstein.JPG)[University of Liechtenstein](/wiki/University_of_Liechtenstein) The literacy rate of Liechtenstein is 100%.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In 2006 [Programme for International Student Assessment](/wiki/Programme_for_International_Student_Assessment) report, coordinated by the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development), ranked Liechtenstein's education as the 10th best in the world.[[38]](#cite_note-38) In Liechtenstein, there are four main centers for higher education:

* [University of Liechtenstein](/wiki/University_of_Liechtenstein)
* [Private University in the Principality of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Private_University_in_the_Principality_of_Liechtenstein)
* [Liechtenstein Institute](/wiki/Liechtenstein_Institute)
* [International Academy of Philosophy, Liechtenstein](http://www.iap.li/)

Secondary education institutions include:

* [Liechtensteinisches Gymnasium](/wiki/Liechtensteinisches_Gymnasium) in Vaduz.
* [Realschule](/wiki/Realschule) Vaduz and [Oberschule](/wiki/Oberschule) Vaduz, in the [Schulzentrum Mühleholz II](/wiki/Schulzentrum_Mühleholz_II) in Vaduz<ref name=WeiterSchaan>"[Weiterführende Schulen Schaan](http://www.schaan.li/CFDOCS/cmsout/admin/index.cfm?GroupID=53&MandID=3&meID=6044&)." Commune of Schaan. Retrieved on May 12, 2016. "Realschule Schaan Duxgass 55 9494 Schaan" and "Sportschule Liechtenstein Duxgass 55 9494 Schaan" and "Realschule Vaduz Schulzentrum Mühleholz II 9490 Vaduz" and "Oberschule Vaduz Schulzentrum Mühleholz II 9490 Vaduz"</ref>
* Realschule Schaan and Sportschule Liechtenstein in [Schaan](/wiki/Schaan)<ref name=WeiterSchaan/>

## Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

There are about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of paved roadway within Liechtenstein, with [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of marked bicycle paths. [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Hubschrauberlandeplatz_Balzers_Liechtenstein.jpg)[Balzers Heliport](/wiki/Balzers_Heliport)

A [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) railway connects Austria and Switzerland through Liechtenstein. The [country's railways](/wiki/Rail_transport_in_Liechtenstein) are administered by the [Austrian Federal Railways](/wiki/Austrian_Federal_Railways) as part of the route between [Feldkirch](/wiki/Feldkirch,_Vorarlberg), [Austria](/wiki/Austria), and [Buchs](/wiki/Buchs,_St._Gallen), [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland). Liechtenstein is nominally within the Austrian Verkehrsverbund Vorarlberg[[39]](#cite_note-39) tariff region. There are four stations in Liechtenstein, namely [Schaan-Vaduz](/wiki/Schaan-Vaduz_railway_station), [Forst Hilti](/wiki/Forst_Hilti_railway_station), [Nendeln](/wiki/Nendeln_railway_station) and [Schaanwald](/wiki/Schaanwald_railway_station), served by an irregularly stopping train service that runs between Feldkirch and Buchs provided by the Austrian Federal Rail Service. While [EuroCity](/wiki/EuroCity) and other long distance international trains also travel along the route, they do not normally stop at the stations within the borders of Liechtenstein.

[Liechtenstein Bus](/wiki/Liechtenstein_Bus) is a subsidiary of the [Swiss Postbus system](/wiki/PostBus_Switzerland), but separately run, and connects to the Swiss bus network at [Buchs](/wiki/Buchs,_St._Gallen) and at [Sargans](/wiki/Sargans). Buses also run to the Austrian town of Feldkirch.

Liechtenstein has no airport. The nearest large airport is [Zürich Airport](/wiki/Zürich_Airport) near [Zürich](/wiki/Zürich), [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland) (130 km/80 mi by road). The nearest small airport is [St. Gallen Airport](/wiki/St._Gallen-Altenrhein_Airport) (50 km/30 mi). [Friedrichshafen Airport](/wiki/Friedrichshafen_Airport) also provides access to Liechtenstein, as it is 85 km away. [Balzers Heliport](/wiki/Balzers_Heliport) is[[40]](#cite_note-40)[[41]](#cite_note-41) available for chartered helicopter flights.

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Culture of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Template:Culture_of_Liechtenstein) [thumb|City-centre with Kunstmuseum (](/wiki/File:Kunstmuseum_Liechtenstein_(Walti).jpg)[Liechtenstein Art Museum](/wiki/Kunstmuseum_Liechtenstein)) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Liechtensteinisches_Landes_Museum_1.jpg)[Liechtenstein National Museum](/wiki/Liechtenstein_National_Museum)

As a result of its small size, Liechtenstein has been strongly affected by external cultural influences, most notably those originating in the southern German-speaking areas of Europe, including Austria, Baden-Wurttemberg, Bavaria, Switzerland, and specifically [Tirol](/wiki/German_Tyrol) and [Vorarlberg](/wiki/Vorarlberg). The "Historical Society of the Principality of Liechtenstein" plays a role in preserving the culture and history of the country.

The largest museum is the [Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein](/wiki/Kunstmuseum_Liechtenstein), an international museum of modern and contemporary art with an important international art collection. The building by the Swiss architects Morger, Degelo, and Kerez is a landmark in Vaduz. It was completed in November 2000 and forms a "black box" of tinted concrete and black basalt stone. The museum collection is also the national art collection of Liechtenstein.

The other important museum is the Liechtenstein National Museum (*Liechtensteinisches Landesmuseum*) showing permanent exhibition on the cultural and natural history of Liechtenstein as well as special exhibitions. There is also a stamp museum, ski museum and a 500-year-old Rural Lifestyle Museum.

The [Liechtenstein State Library](/wiki/Liechtenstein_State_Library) is the library that has [legal deposit](/wiki/Legal_deposit) for all books published in the country.

The most famous historical sites are [Vaduz Castle](/wiki/Vaduz_Castle), [Gutenberg Castle](/wiki/Gutenberg_Castle), the Red House and the ruins of Schellenberg.

The Private Art Collection of the Prince of Liechtenstein, one of the world's leading private art collections, is shown at the [Liechtenstein Museum](/wiki/Liechtenstein_Museum) in [Vienna](/wiki/Vienna).

On the country's national holiday all subjects are invited to the castle of the head of state. A significant portion of the population attends the national celebration at the castle where speeches are made and complimentary beer is served.<ref name=Letzing>Letzing, John. "On Closer Inspection, Liechtenstein Shrinks - Then Shrugs." *The Wall Street Journal*. April 17, 2014.</ref>

## Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

The primary [internet service provider](/wiki/Internet_service_provider) and [mobile network operator](/wiki/Mobile_network_operator) of Liechtenstein is Telecom Liechtenstein, located in Schaan. There is only one television channel in the country, the private channel [1FLTV](/wiki/1FLTV) created in 2008. At the moment, 1FLTV is not a member of the [European Broadcasting Union](/wiki/European_Broadcasting_Union). L-Radio, which was established in 2004, serves as Liechtenstein's radio station and is based in Triesen. L-Radio has a listener base of 50,000 and began as "air Radio Liechtenstein" on 15 October 1938. Liechtenstein also has two major [newspapers](/wiki/Newspaper); [*Liechtensteiner Volksblatt*](/wiki/Liechtensteiner_Volksblatt) and [*Liechtensteiner Vaterland*](/wiki/Liechtensteiner_Vaterland). The primary [multimedia](/wiki/Multimedia) company in Liechtenstein is [ManaMedia](/wiki/ManaMedia), located in Vaduz.

[Amateur radio](/wiki/Amateur_radio) is a hobby of some nationals and visitors. However, unlike virtually every other sovereign nation, Liechtenstein does not have its own [ITU prefix](/wiki/ITU_prefix). It uses Switzerland's callsign prefixes (typically "HB") followed by a zero.

Music and theatre are an important part of the culture. There are numerous music organizations such as the Liechtenstein Musical Company, the annual Guitar Days, and the International Josef Gabriel Rheinberger Society, which play in two main theatres.

## Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|upright|](/wiki/File:Marco_Büchel.jpg)[Marco Büchel](/wiki/Marco_Büchel), the first Liechtensteiner alpine skier to compete at six [Winter Olympics](/wiki/Winter_Olympic_Games). Liechtenstein [football](/wiki/Association_football) teams play in the Swiss football leagues. The [Liechtenstein Football Cup](/wiki/Liechtenstein_Football_Cup) allows access for one Liechtenstein team each year to the [UEFA Europa League](/wiki/UEFA_Europa_League); [FC Vaduz](/wiki/FC_Vaduz), a team playing in the [Swiss Super League](/wiki/Swiss_Super_League), the first division in Swiss football, is the most successful team in the Cup, and scored their greatest success in the [European Cup Winners' Cup in 1996](/wiki/1996–97_UEFA_Cup_Winners'_Cup) when they drew with and defeated the [Latvian](/wiki/Latvia) team [FC Universitate Riga](/wiki/FK_Jelgava) by 1–1 and 4–2, to go on to a lucrative fixture against [Paris Saint-Germain F.C.](/wiki/Paris_Saint-Germain_F.C.), which they lost 0–3 and 0-4.

The [Liechtenstein national football team](/wiki/Liechtenstein_national_football_team) is regarded as an easy target for any team drawn against them; this was the basis for a book about Liechtenstein's unsuccessful qualifying campaign for the [2002 World Cup](/wiki/2002_FIFA_World_Cup) by British author, [Charlie Connelly](/wiki/Charlie_Connelly). In one surprising week during autumn 2004, however, the team managed a 2–2 draw with [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal_national_football_team), who only a few months earlier had been the losing finalists in the [European Championships](/wiki/UEFA_Euro_2004). Four days later, the Liechtenstein team traveled to Luxembourg, where they defeated [the home team](/wiki/Luxembourg_national_football_team) 4–0 in a [2006 World Cup](/wiki/2006_FIFA_World_Cup) qualifying match. In the qualification stage of the European Championship 2008, Liechtenstein beat Latvia 1–0, a result which prompted the resignation of the Latvian coach. They went on to beat Iceland 3–0 on 17 October 2007, which is considered one of the most dramatic losses of the Icelandic national football team. On 7 September 2010, they came within seconds of a 1–1 draw against [Scotland](/wiki/Scotland_national_football_team) in Glasgow, having led 1–0 earlier in the second half, but Liechtenstein lost 2–1 thanks to a goal by [Stephen McManus](/wiki/Stephen_McManus) in the 97th minute. On 3 June 2011, Liechtenstein defeated [Lithuania](/wiki/Lithuania_national_football_team) 2–0. On 15 November 2014, Liechtenstein defeated [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova_national_football_team) 0-1 with [Franz Burgmeier's](/wiki/Franz_Burgmeier) late free kick goal in [Chișinău](/wiki/Chișinău).

As an [alpine](/wiki/Alps) country, the main sporting opportunity for Liechtensteiners to excel is in winter sports such as [downhill skiing](/wiki/Downhill): the country's single ski area is [Malbun](/wiki/Malbun). [Hanni Wenzel](/wiki/Hanni_Wenzel) won two gold medals and one silver medal in the 1980 [Winter Olympics](/wiki/Winter_Olympic_Games) (she won bronze in 1976), and her brother [Andreas](/wiki/Andreas_Wenzel) won one silver medal in 1980 and one bronze medal in 1984 in the [giant slalom](/wiki/Giant_slalom_skiing) event. With nine medals overall (all in alpine skiing), Liechtenstein has won more Olympic medals per capita than any other nation.[[42]](#cite_note-42) It is the smallest nation to win a medal in any Olympics, Winter or Summer, and the only nation to win a medal in the Winter Games but not in the Summer Games. Other notable skiers from Liechtenstein are [Marco Büchel](/wiki/Marco_Büchel), [Tina Weirather](/wiki/Tina_Weirather), [Willi Frommelt](/wiki/Willi_Frommelt), [Paul Frommelt](/wiki/Paul_Frommelt) and [Ursula Konzett](/wiki/Ursula_Konzett). Liechtenstein is also the home country of [Stephanie Vogt](/wiki/Stephanie_Vogt), a professional women's [tennis](/wiki/Tennis) player.

### Youth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Liechtenstein](/wiki/Liechtenstein_national_football_team) competes in the Switzerland U16 Cup Tournament, which offers young players an opportunity to play against top football clubs.

## Security and defence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

The [Liechtenstein National Police](/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_Liechtenstein) is responsible for keeping order within the country. It consists of 87 field officers and 38 civilian staff, totaling 125 employees. All officers are equipped with [small arms](/wiki/Small_arms). The country has one of the world's lowest [crime rates](/wiki/Crime_statistics). Liechtenstein's prison holds few, if any, inmates, and those with sentences over two years are transferred to Austrian jurisdiction. The Liechtenstein National Police maintains a trilateral treaty with Austria and Switzerland that enables close cross-border cooperation among the police forces of the three countries.[[43]](#cite_note-43) Liechtenstein follows a policy of [neutrality](/wiki/Neutrality_(international_relations)) and is one of the few [countries in the world that maintain no military](/wiki/List_of_countries_without_armed_forces). The army was abolished soon after the [Austro-Prussian War of 1866](/wiki/Austro-Prussian_War_of_1866), in which Liechtenstein fielded an army of 80 men, although they were not involved in any fighting. The demise of the [German Confederation](/wiki/German_Confederation) in that war freed Liechtenstein from its international obligation to maintain an army, and parliament seized this opportunity and refused to provide funding for one. The Prince objected, as such a move would leave the country defenceless, but relented on 12 February 1868 and disbanded the force. The last soldier to serve under the colours of Liechtenstein died in 1939 at age 95.[[44]](#cite_note-44) During the 1980s the Swiss army fired off shells during an exercise and mistakenly burned a patch of forest inside Liechtenstein. The incident was said to have been resolved "over a case of white wine".<ref name=Letzing/>

In March 2007, a 170-person Swiss infantry unit got lost during a training exercise and inadvertently crossed [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) into Liechtenstein. The accidental invasion ended when the unit realized their mistake and turned back.[[45]](#cite_note-45) The Swiss army later informed Liechtenstein of the incursion and offered official apologies.[[46]](#cite_note-46)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

* [Liechtenstein wine](/wiki/Liechtenstein_wine)
* [List of foundations established in Vaduz](/wiki/List_of_foundations_established_in_Vaduz)
* [List of Liechtensteiners](/wiki/List_of_Liechtensteiners)
* [Outline of Liechtenstein](/wiki/Outline_of_Liechtenstein)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Official Portal of the Principality of Liechtenstein](http://www.liechtenstein.li/index.php?id=54&L=1)
* [The Princely House of Liechtenstein](http://www.fuerstenhaus.li/en/)
* [Website of the Parliament of Liechtenstein](http://www.landtag.li/default.aspx?auswahl=1&id=390)
* [Website of the Government of Liechtenstein](http://www.regierung.li/index.php?id=485)
* [Official tourism website of Liechtenstein](http://www.tourismus.li/en/)
* [Statistics Liechtenstein](http://www.as.llv.li/) [Template:De icon](/wiki/Template:De_icon)
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Liechtenstein](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/liechtenstein.htm) from *UCB Libraries GovPubs*
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Liechtenstein profile](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17535108) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
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