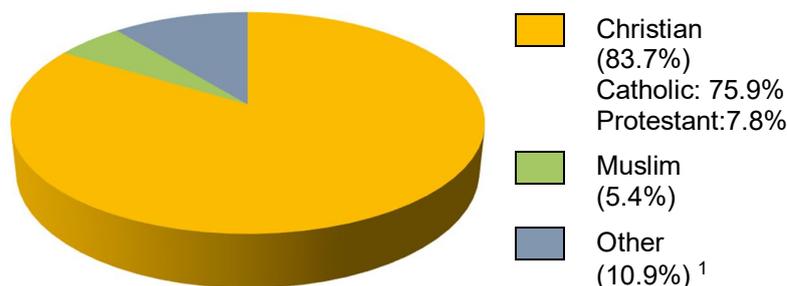


LIECHTENSTEIN



Area ² :	Population:	Political system:	Major Language(s):
160 km ²	37,624	Monarchy	German, Italian

Legal framework on Freedom of Religion and actual application:

According to the constitution, citizens have the right to choose their religion from the age of 14. Religious freedom is protected and the state protects the religious “interests” of its people. The criminal code prohibits discrimination against any religion or its adherents.

Although the constitution states that the Catholic Church is “the national Church” and it enjoys “the full protection of the state”, the country is in the process of establishing a new legal framework on the separation of Church and state. This process includes the way religious denominations are supported financially by the state as well as the properties of the religious groups (buildings, sites and their management).

The system that provides public funding to religious denominations is likely to be modified in order to include not only the Catholic and Protestant Churches, but also two Muslim groups (the Islamic Community and the Turkish Union). The way this public funding is organised is by allowing the individual taxpayer to select the religious group or denomination they wish to support. Protestants currently receive funding according to the number of members they have, and this might apply to the Muslim groups as well.

Religious education is compulsory in primary schools (children between seven and 13 years old), be they Catholic or Protestant (Evangelical and Lutheran), but exemptions are routinely granted. Since 2008, Islamic education has also been provided. All religious groups are tax-exempt.³

Incidents

No incidents were recorded in the period covered by this report.

Prospects for Freedom of Religion

The process to separate the Church and state is well underway, following a recommendation by the Prince and a vote of amendment by the Parliament in Vaduz on 15th December 2012. This is not happening as smoothly as initially thought because of the centuries-old system by which the Church manages properties. There are not only property titles but also trust and management funds to be unbundled, concerning both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches.⁴ At the time of writing, two of Liechtenstein's 11 municipalities had yet to complete the unbundling process.⁵

¹ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_133_2.asp

² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17535108>

³ <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper>

⁴ <http://www.luxarazzi.com/2016/02/prince-nikolaus-talks-separation-of.html>

⁵ Günther Meier, Schwierige Entflechtung von Kirche und Staat, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 5 January 2016, <http://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/schwierige-entflechtung-von-kirche-und-staat-1.18671988>