



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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NEW YORK, 1 NOVEMBER  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THIRD COMMITTEE  
ITEM 65 (A) AND (B): SELF-DETERMINATION  
**STATEMENT BY MR. CLAUDIO NARDI, FIRST SECRETARY**

Madame Chair,

The right of peoples to self-determination is one of the cornerstones of the Charter of the United Nations, but also the basis for the full enjoyment of all human rights, as evidenced in the Common Article 1 of the two Covenants, whose 50th anniversary we are commemorating in December. Ever since joining the United Nations in 1990, Liechtenstein has been exploring innovative approaches to the implementation of the right of self-determination. If applied in a meaningful and constructive way, it can be an important tool for the promotion and protection of human rights as well as for the prevention of conflict. As numerous conflicts within States including “frozen conflicts” remain unresolved, an open debate about contentious self-determination claims is of continued urgency and relevance.

Too often, the right of self-determination is equated with secession, which naturally is more likely to create problems than to offer solutions. We are therefore of the view that a broader perspective, more in line with existing international law, is necessary: if looked at as entailing various forms of self-administration and self-governance, the right of self-determination can offer new perspectives on peaceful coexistence of communities within states, falling short of

secession and separate statehood. For this reason, the Liechtenstein Initiative is based on a staged approach of evolving models of self-governance and self-administration.

Madame Chair,

After a first discussion in this Committee, the Liechtenstein Initiative on Self-Determination was moved to the academic level, resulting in the creation of the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination (LISD) at the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University. The Institute seeks to create an objective and non-political environment for the discussion of the root causes of a people's desire for increased autonomy or independence, while reducing the tumultuous and potentially violent processes that have often resulted from self-determination processes. It supports in particular teaching, research and publications about issues pertaining to the state, self-determination, self-governance, sovereignty, security and boundaries. We continue to work closely with the LISD to promote open discussions on new models for the flexible application of the right of self-determination.

To that end, the Mission of Liechtenstein to the United Nations in New York, in cooperation with the LISD, invited in March 2016 an eminent group of senior diplomats, mediators, experts, policy practitioners and scholars to a colloquium under the Chatham House rule in Liechtenstein. The colloquium was aimed at exploring the tensions between the Charter principles of self-determination and territorial integrity in practice, to explore ways of reconciling the two and to consider the possibilities for innovative application of the right of self-determination as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution. Discussions focused, *inter alia*, on the principle's application as a conflict prevention and resolution mechanism in specific situations in the OSCE region, followed by a more general discussion.

The discussions illustrated very clearly that the relevance of the issue of self-determination is not confined solely to the realm of academia, but is of significant practical relevance. The developments in Eastern Ukraine as well as the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Dayton Peace Accords were discussed in detail, along with other relevant crisis situations in the

OSCE area. Looking ahead, participants agreed that the discussion during the colloquium in Liechtenstein could mark the beginning of renewed efforts to grapple with the concept of self-determination and its implications for European and international peace and security. They also underlined the importance and value of bringing together experts and representatives from the diplomatic, academic and policy-making realms who all contributed to a spirited debate.

Madame Chair,

In order to allow for a broader discussion, we are organizing on November 10, at 13.15, in Conference Room 8 a side event to discuss the findings of this meeting and possible next steps. We cordially invite all of you to participate and to share your views with us.

I thank you!