



GOVERNMENT
PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

MINISTRY OF
GENERAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND FINANCE

Speech by Prime Minister Dr. Daniel Risch

Minister of General Government Affairs and Finance

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Guests

I would like to warmly welcome you to Liechtenstein, a country that not only honours its roots, but also always looks to the future. The historians William Strauss and Neil Howe call it the "Fourth Turning" in which we currently find ourselves – characterised by a combination of geopolitical uncertainty, technological optimism, and a wide range of ongoing transformations and challenges.

The financial world and crypto industry are indeed at a crucial turning point, marked by the events of the past year that continue to reverberate across sectors – events like FTX, the very recent Pepe scandal, and the collapse of the crypto-friendly banks Silvergate, Signature, and Silicon Valley Bank, all of which have undermined trust. The demise of Credit Suisse illustrates the enormous challenges facing the traditional financial industry as well. Additionally, the current geopolitical situation is being shaped by great tensions between the major powers, a multitude of global challenges such as growing conflicts, socio-economic inequality, and the climate crisis.

Thanks to groundbreaking initiatives like OpenAI and visionary projects like Worldcoin, we also find ourselves in an era of inspiration and optimism. AI is a universal key technology offering nearly limitless possibilities, with the potential to fundamentally change many facets of our everyday lives. AI offers us promising tools to tackle some of the greatest challenges of our time, whether in medicine, education, climate protection, or energy optimisation. Of course, this transformation also raises complex ethical and security questions.

What does this mean for us? We have a responsibility to find solutions – or better yet, to create solutions – that adequately consider the risks but also enable and support technological innovations. Our goal is to harness the enormous potential of these innovations in a safe, sustainable, and meaningful way for all of us. This underscores the importance of being proactive and forward-looking in shaping these exciting developments. By taking a responsible and pragmatic approach, we can ensure that the concrete risks are addressed and that AI not only enriches our lives, but also contributes to a better future for all.

By creating the Blockchain Act, Liechtenstein has positioned itself as a pioneer in digital financial innovation and blockchain technologies. The Blockchain Act is one of the proofs of Liechtenstein's commitment to promoting innovation and to leading from the front. Through the further development of our Blockchain Act in preparation of MiCAR, our current intensive engagement with other emerging technologies such as AI, and our active advancement of digitalisation, we provide the soil for companies not only to take root, but also to bear fruit.

Innovation is not a status, but rather a continuous process that requires cooperation, agility, and also stability. Our vision is clear: Promoting innovation and further development is essential for us – not merely at the level of regulation, but rather at the level of *all* the framework conditions that provide fertile soil for start-ups and established companies alike.

A wide array of government support options are available. This includes targeted financial assistance programs, such as grants or vouchers, to stimulate specific economic activities like innovation and export, as well as to support digital transformation in small and medium-sized enterprises. We also promote cooperation between companies and educational institutions through numerous incentives. The Liechtenstein European Digital Innovation Hub "digihub.li" aims to provide active and concrete support for digital transformation to both the public administration and to Liechtenstein SMEs and the general public. Our globally unique Innovation Framework ensures that we always have our finger on the pulse of technological innovations so that we can discover, shape, and facilitate them. After all, our ability to innovate – at both the governmental and private level – is the key to Liechtenstein's value creation, future viability and competitiveness.

This is also connecting the dots – finance, technology, Web3, longevity, and sustainability – that will be illuminated and discussed over the course of this conference.

In short, Liechtenstein builds bridges between the traditional (financial) world and the rapidly developing digital landscape and its opportunities. As a member of the European Economic Area and as part of our customs union with Switzerland, we are optimally positioned to succeed in both worlds. At this juncture, the interlocking forces of regulation, innovation, and global cooperation have the power to redefine the landscape of finance and technology.

Dear Attendees – we are in a time of transformation and dynamism. In a world where change is the only constant, our best strategy is to actively shape it.