



REGIERUNG  
DES FÜRSTENTUMS LIECHTENSTEIN

MINISTERIUM FÜR  
PRÄSIDIALES UND FINANZEN

**Speech by Prime Minister Adrian Hasler  
at the Ambassador Information Day 2013  
on 10 June 2013**

*„Check against delivery“*

Your Serene Highnesses

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a particular pleasure for me to welcome you to Liechtenstein today for the Ambassador Information Day. This Ambassador Information Day was created to give you – but also us – the opportunity to get to know each other better. Since you reside as ambassadors of your countries in Bern, only – but still – two hours by car from Liechtenstein, this means that we have only few opportunities to deepen our existing mutual understanding. Getting to know each other and learning from each other is indeed the basic idea of the Ambassador Information Day.

Reporting on the Ambassador Information Day in the local media also offers the possibility to give our citizens an even better understanding of our work as well. Your presence shows that Liechtenstein's foreign policy and cooperation is not something that happens exclusively "out there", in foreign countries, but on this special day the world is also a guest here in Liechtenstein. Thank you very much for coming!

Excellencies

The world is in the midst of upheaval, and Liechtenstein is changing too. The turbulences on the international financial markets and the exchange rate changes have a direct impact on Liechtenstein as well. As a small State without any significant domestic market – which is why we also call ourselves world champions in exports – we immediately feel even small changes in the world economy. Not surprisingly, we have developed a very finely tuned set of sensors for such changes.

As a small State, we know that access to free markets and open trade channels are key to international competition. At least as important, however, are innovation and inventiveness. Precisely in these areas, many countries have made enormous developments in recent years, and we can all see how the national economies in Asia, Latin America, and also Africa are developing.

## Excellencies

Europa's growing together is a success story, but does not run by itself. Especially in the currently difficult situation, in which States are consolidating their budgets and in which we too must question certain responsibilities of the State, the persuasion work that must be invested in a common Europe is becoming even more important.

The idea of a peaceful, unified Europe has deep roots. Not long ago, I discovered the following in a conversation with young people: When we are out there in the big wide world, we understand ourselves as European. When we are in Europe, we understand ourselves as Liechtensteiners, and when we are in Liechtenstein, as Ruggellers, Vaduzers, or Triesners.

Liechtenstein has a long history of cooperation. The Customs Treaty with Switzerland and our membership in the European Economic Area are essential to us and our understanding of ourselves. We understand ourselves as Liechtensteiners and are proud of our sovereignty. But we decided early on and unambiguously that we also want to be Europeans and that we want to make a contribution to a common, united Europe. Especially based on the conviction that we can handle the major tasks of our era only together, we are confirmed in our approach. Anyone who thinks they can master these challenges alone is a prisoner to the echo of the past. We are firmly convinced that everyone involved benefits from active, in-depth cooperation.

## Excellencies

Especially in economically difficult times, the question of cooperation in the field of tax information becomes more important. We have recognized this and have consistently implemented the OECD standards. In a short period of time, we have concluded 30 tax information exchange agreements and double taxation agreements and are willing to continue along this path in a constructive way. Our limited personnel resources combined with our record so far show that we are serious about this. We have implemented the Liechtenstein Declaration of 2009 in a binding manner, and we will continue to implement it.

## Excellencies

Just as we change, your home countries are changing too. We are united by the desire for progress, rising prosperity for our populations, and development within our societies. When I am asked where Liechtenstein should stand in 10 years, I always cite 4 benchmarks that are especially important to me:

1. The Liechtenstein business location is even more broadly diversified. Young entrepreneurs appreciate the investment-friendly climate and see the advantages of a streamlined administration with short communication channels. Performance and the willingness to assume risks are rewarded and are recognized by society. The current ratio of one entrepreneur to ten inhabitants is not only maintained, but further expanded. Excellent infrastructures, reachability, and the quality of the educational institutions enhance the attractiveness of the location.
2. Our children should have even better opportunities and be able to use them. International cooperation in the field of education lets young people study in even greater numbers in Johannesburg, Beijing, Moscow, London, or Sydney. Greater cooperation allows young Liechtenstein apprentices to gather experience in even greater numbers at the foreign branches of our local industry, and in return we

benefit even more strongly from the diversity of people from all around the world who study or work in Liechtenstein.

3. Liechtenstein continues to be an immigrant country. People from very different regions around the world enrich our society and work together with us to create an even better Liechtenstein.
4. We preserve our living space and our identity. We preserve our understanding of our home country not only as a counterweight to mass culture, anonymity and uniformity, but we also develop self-confidently in a globalized world. We reflect on our regional strengths and preserve them.

I see great advances especially in bringing together globalization and localization – the premise of thinking globally and acting locally.

Our University of Liechtenstein is dealing intensively with questions of land use planning, sustainable architecture and preserving living spaces. Young entrepreneurs start up a coffee or beer brewery – the latter a Liechtenstein tradition that has been revived – and these young entrepreneurs meet consumers whose choice of products is continuously evolving.

Just as we Liechtensteiners enjoy French cheese, North African couscous, American burgers, Indian curry or an Eastern European solyanka, you as visitors are certainly looking forward to experiencing regional specialities and identity. So I would like to invite you: Try regional *käsknöpfle* cheese dumplings with a beautiful view in Triesenberg. Experience our mountain landscape in the winter sports destination Malbun, or try a "Tresner Moscht" apple cider in Triesen! You will see, your image of Liechtenstein will change. You will experience and enjoy the diversity of our beautiful country. I am firmly convinced of this.

## Excellencies

The Ambassador Information Day in Liechtenstein is an especially important event, since it lets us present the true Liechtenstein to you as the representatives of your

sending States. Independently of reporting in the media, you can form your own idea of our national economy and our efforts in international cooperation – whether in development assistance, advocacy of more free trade, or closer cooperation in combating crime. I am firmly convinced that the international challenges facing us can be solved only together. For one thing is clear. All our countries bear responsibility for a world order based on cooperation, economic development, and justice.

### Excellencies

The future begins now and today! In 10 years, the euro crisis will be a thing of the past. The euro will still be in circulation, budget deficits will shrink, and competitiveness will rise. The economic imbalances within Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world will decline.

With its reforms today, Liechtenstein is creating the foundation for a successful small State. Our corporate tax reform with a flat tax rate of 12.5% is triggering investments in the business location. Our dual education system is keeping youth unemployment at a low 2.2%, and the consolidation of our public budget is preserving the future chances of our children and grandchildren.

### Excellencies

I will see many of you again in the coming months. I look forward to working together with all of you and to our discussions.

As ambassadors of your country, you perform an important task that is also appreciated by our country. Together with your States and organizations, I and we Liechtensteiners want to make a contribution so that the wish for free and peaceful coexistence and the common desire for progress become a reality.