

## **Liechtenstein Statement Green Deal**

Co-Chairs, dear colleagues,

I am delighted to participate in an EEA Council meeting for the first time – even if just by video. And let me thank you for the warm welcome received today.

Liechtenstein fully supports the introductory statement just delivered by Norway on behalf of the EEA EFTA States on the Green Deal. Let me add a few points specifically for my country.

Liechtenstein takes climate change very seriously.

We acknowledge our responsibility in this field, and we act upon it.

We can already state that we will fulfil our goals under the Kyoto regime for the first and second period. This was not easy to achieve, because we had to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from levels that were already rather low. Nevertheless, we reduced our emissions considerably: from 8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per capita in 2008, to around 5.2 tonnes in 2017. This represents the lowest level among all 31 EEA countries. This is all the more remarkable as Liechtenstein is also among the most highly industrialized countries in the EEA.

In other words, we managed to have our cake and eat it – combining an outstanding level of economic activity with an outstanding performance in climate protection.

But we are also looking toward the future. A Climate Vision 2050, as well as a long-term Climate Strategy, is currently being prepared. We must not rest on our laurels.

Liechtenstein is also strongly committed to decarbonizing the energy sector. Here again, we are currently working on our strategy for 2030 and our vision for 2050. These have not been adopted yet, but I am hopeful that they will make a positive contribution to the goal of a carbon-free Europe by 2050.

In addition, domestic renewable energy will be increased. Already now, Liechtenstein is the world leader in solar energy on a per-capita basis. Improving the efficiency of buildings and industrial plants is another key factor in that regard.

By 2050, all of these measures should result in a carbon-free energy sector for transport and buildings.

I am also happy to report that only a few weeks ago, the Liechtenstein Government presented its Mobility Concept 2030. It foresees, among other things, a strong expansion of public transport as well as pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The share of electric vehicles will significantly increase by 2030 and require further improvements in the charging infrastructure. CO2 emission performance standards will be revised as well, in line with EEA obligations.

And lastly, sustainable finance deserves a special mention. There has been much regulatory activity in this area in recent years, which is EEA relevant: Climate Transition Benchmarks come to mind, as well as the taxonomy framework for sustainable investments.

The Liechtenstein Government strongly supports the EU's emphasis on sustainable finance. We will undergo an independent assessment of our State assets and investments to make sure they align with the Paris Agreement – an exercise known as PACTA 2020. Our private sector is invited to do the same.

It is crucial for our economic operators to fully embrace this concept. And indeed, in recent years, sustainability has become a core value in the corporate culture of our financial service providers. They are encouraging, and actively pursuing, investments linked to climate and environmental goals.

After all, the Green Deal is also about money. And so we have to put our money where our mouth is.

I thank you.

## *Liechtenstein Statement on the Functioning of the EEA Agreement*

Co-Chairs, dear colleagues,

I would like to add a couple of thoughts from Liechtenstein's perspective.

As you all know, we recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of Liechtenstein's EEA membership. For obvious reasons, we were not able to hold real festivities. But we did use the opportunity to reflect on our model of European integration:

- The Government issued a report on the EEA, which was discussed in Parliament.
- The Liechtenstein Institute published a survey on the perception of the EEA in our population.
- And the media featured the matter prominently over several days.

To join the EEA was a bold and courageous decision. The 1st of May 1995 was a truly historic moment for my country. Today, we have no doubt that it was the right choice. Over the last 25 years, Liechtenstein has seen unprecedented modernization and economic growth.

The EEA has been a catalyst for this development:

- Without access to the Single Market, our industry would not have strived in the same way.
- Without the EU passport, our financial centre would not be as strong as it is today.
- Without freedom of movement, and without programmes like Erasmus, our citizens would not feel as European as they feel today.

The EEA has been and remains a model of success for Liechtenstein. But is also a very work-intensive form of collaboration. Incorporating and implementing the ever-growing EU acquis is a challenge for any administration.

This is particularly true for a small State. In Liechtenstein, almost 100 officials are regularly dealing with EEA matters – that is about one in ten of our colleagues. It is becoming increasingly difficult to explain to them that the incorporation process is slowing down because of staffing shortage in a much larger institution. I sincerely hope that these issues can be solved as soon as possible.

But back to the good news: The recent survey has shown that support for the EEA in Liechtenstein remains very high: 84% of our population think that the EEA Agreement is a good agreement.

Obviously, the data was collected before we were hit by the coronavirus outbreak. But these numbers would probably not be worse if the same questions were asked today. If anything, reduced economic activity and closed borders should make us appreciate even more what we had before – and what we had taken for granted. This includes, especially, the four freedoms of the EEA Agreement.

Liechtenstein has, as many of our European partners, gradually loosened the restrictions imposed to curb the pandemic. We have had no new infections for several weeks now. We appreciate the close cooperation with our EEA partners in our response to the pandemic.

We should be equally united as we work together on exit and recovery strategies. A full-functioning Internal Market will be the best weapon for the recovery of the European economy. Let's work together to get it back on track.

I thank you.