



Liechtenstein Prince Retains Veto Power After Abortion Fight

The unborn are now a little safer in [Liechtenstein](#).

Voters [have upheld](#) the right of Crown Prince Alois Philipp Maria of the Central European principality to veto referenda passed by voters — a right that was threatened after he promised to veto a referendum to legalize abortion.

That referendum failed, but introducing what Ann Coulter calls the liberals' "[holiest sacrament](#)" of abortion into the Catholic monarchy could have ended the political role of its royals had voters taken away the prince's right to veto referenda.



Liechtenstein's Law

The threat to the unborn began, [according to](#) LifeSiteNews, when the [United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) put the Roman Catholic country in its sights in 2007, and began hectoring the tiny 62-square-mile country to legalize abortion and promote contraception.

The law the pro-abortion side wanted to overturn is simple and straightforward, punishing the crime of abortion with a prison sentence. [According to](#) the principality's penal code, "Whoever performs an abortion on a pregnant woman with her consent will be sentenced to a prison term of up to one year; if he does this for profit, he will be sentenced to a prison term of up to three years."

After that first codicil, the law [runs thusly](#):

- 2) If this person is not a physician, he will be sentenced to a prison term of up to three years; if he does this for profit or if the operation leads to the death of the woman, he will be sentenced to a prison term of from six months to five years.
- 3) A woman who performs an abortion on herself or allows another person to do so will be sentenced to a prison term of up to one year.
- 4) Under 1) and 3) above the operation is exempt from punishment if the abortion
 - 1) is necessary to prevent serious danger to the life of the pregnant woman or serious harm to her health, or the pregnant woman has not at any time been married to the man who impregnated her and was not yet at the time of conception fourteen years old; and in all these cases the abortion is performed by a physician; or
 - 2) is performed to save the pregnant woman from immediate danger to her life that cannot otherwise be prevented, in circumstances where medical help cannot be obtained in time.

The pro-abortion groups believe that murdering the unborn must be legal everywhere at all times for



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any woman or girl who wants one for any reason. In Liechtenstein, those favoring abortion [wanted](#) women to have the “right” to kill unborn children 12 weeks old or less, or those who are imperfect.

Thus, they moved against one of the last pro-life countries on the planet, trying to overturn the criminal statute, and in effect, Article 27 of [Liechtenstein’s Constitution](#), which does not permit abortion, stating, “Every person shall have the right to life.”

Those favoring abortion [lost](#) a parliamentary vote, 25-7, that would have legalized abortion, so they sought to impose abortion on the principality’s 35,000 citizens through a referendum in September last year.

The pro-abortion move failed there too, [LifeSiteNews reported](#), with 52.3 percent of voters upholding the state’s constitution and its anti-abortion law.

Attempt to Strip the Prince’s Power

Yet before that vote, [Prince Alois threatened to](#) veto the referendum. That threat was a “clear signal that abortion isn’t an acceptable solution for an unwanted pregnancy,” said a [spokesman for Alois](#).

The veto was unnecessary because the referendum failed, as [LifeSiteNews reported](#), but it led to another referendum: one that would have stripped the prince of his power to veto popular votes.

The veto referendum backers’ [slogan was](#) “Yes, for your voice to count.” The referendum “does not strive to abolish the princely right to veto bills,” a spokesman for the referendum committee [told LifeSiteNews](#). “But it wants to restrain it, so in future the Prince shall not have the power to veto bills passed by the Liechtenstein electorate.”

He will keep his veto right against bills passed by the parliament. So the princely veto right will remain as it has been in 98%+ of the cases.

While the catalyst for the citizens’ initiative was the prince’s announcement to veto abortion legislation, [the spokesman] emphasized that “this initiative to restrain the princely veto right is not a question of pro or contra abortion: It is only a matter of how much power the Prince of Liechtenstein shall have in future.”

That effort didn’t merely lose. On July 1, voters [crushed it](#): 76.1 percent of voters backed the prince’s veto power, “underscoring how citizens see the ruling family as integral to the principality’s wealth and stability,” as [Reuters put it](#).

[According to](#) Reuters,

The Liechtenstein royal family is credited with transforming the country from a rural backwater into a wealthy banking centre, making the country’s 36,000 inhabitants some of the world’s wealthiest, with national output per head expected to top \$141,000 in 2012.

In other words, voters did not want the royal family to abandon political life.

Had voters not backed the prince, the royal family likely would have stepped out of political life, [Agence France Presse reported](#). “The royal family is not willing to undertake its political responsibilities unless the prince ... has the necessary tools at his disposal,” Alois told the parliament on March 1. “But if the people are no longer open to that, then the royal family will not want to undertake its political responsibilities and ... will completely withdraw from political life.”

One voter told Reuters, “It was a dreadful proposal. If we didn’t have the prince, our country would be a



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lot worse off.”

As a political scientist [told AFP](#), the monarchy is a “deeply anchored tradition” and “people are afraid they would lose their identity and their quality of life if the monarchy disappeared.”

But all was well in Liechtenstein after the vote. “I want to thank you dearly that with such a convincing ‘yes’ you have agreed to continue the 300-year-old partnership between the people and the royal house, which [has] been so successful up to now,” said Alois’ father, [Prince Hans Adam](#), [Reuters reported](#).

Oddly enough, even had the referendum to scrap the prince’s veto passed, he could have vetoed that as well, [LifeSiteNews reported](#).

State Religion

The vote was important given what the principality’s constitution says about the role of the state and religion. “The highest responsibility of the State shall be to promote the overall welfare of the People. For this purpose, the State shall be responsible for establishing and safeguarding law and for protecting the religious, moral and economic interests of the People,” the constitution says.

Although Liechtenstein’s constitution guarantees freedom of religion and conscience, it says the “Roman Catholic Church is the National Church and as such shall enjoy the full protection of the State; other denominations shall be entitled to practice their creeds and to hold religious services within the limits of morality and public order.”

Strangely, though Liechtenstein voters rejected abortion, they [recently approved](#) same-sex unions.

As for abortion, Liechtenstein remains one of the few pro-life countries in Europe, along with Ireland, Malta, Poland, and Russia. Malta [bans abortion](#) outright. Ireland [also bans abortion](#) unless the life of the mother is in danger, although the leftist [European Court of Human Rights has declared](#) that the Catholic nation must institute abortions.

Last year, pro-life forces in Poland [narrowly lost](#) a vote that would have banned all abortions. As it is, abortion is allowed only to protect the life of the mother, if the child is deformed, or if pregnancy results from rape or incest.

Russia [is moving](#) toward banning abortion as well in the face of [a demographic collapse](#).

Photo of Prince Alois at a press conference: AP Images



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