

Text consolidated by Valsts valodas centrs (State Language Centre) with amending laws of:

10 April 2001 [shall come into force on 14 May 2003];

18 March 2004 [shall come into force on 26 March 2004];

3 November 2005 [shall come into force on 23 November 2005];

Judgment of the Constitutional Court of 23 November 2006 [shall come into force from 1 December 2006];

26 April 2007 [shall come into force on 25 May 2007];

11 December 2008 [shall come into force on 1 February 2009];

16 June 2010 [shall come into force on 14 July 2010];

14 November 2013 [shall come into force on 11 December 2013].

If a whole or part of a section has been amended, the date of the amending law appears in square brackets at the end of the section. If a whole section, paragraph or clause has been deleted, the date of the deletion appears in square brackets beside the deleted section, paragraph or clause.

The *Saeima*¹ has adopted and
the President has proclaimed the following law:

On Meetings, Processions, and Pickets

Chapter I

The Right to Organise Meetings, Processions, and Pickets, and to Participate in Them

Section 1.

(1) The State guaranteed and protected expressions of freedom of peaceful assembly are meetings, processions, and pickets.

(2) A meeting is organised for purposes of assembly, in order to meet people and express ideas and opinions (for example, regarding various socially significant of political, economic, and social nature). Within the meaning of this Law, an assembly, a meeting, or other similar assembly shall be treated as a meeting.

(3) A procession is organised moving on the roads, streets, squares, pavements, or other territories designed for traffic, in order to express ideas and opinions (for example, regarding various socially significant issues of political, economic, and social nature). Within the meaning of this Law, a demonstration, a procession, or similar movement shall be treated as a procession.

(4) A picket is an event during which a person or persons are expressing ideas and opinions (for example, regarding various socially significant issues of political, economic, and social nature) in a public place, using posters, slogans, banners, or other means, but during which no speeches or public addresses are made.

[10 April 2003; 3 November 2005; 23 November 2006; 26 April 2007; 14 November 2013]

Section 2.

(1) This Law shall not apply to:

1) public festivities, commemorative, entertainment, sports or recreational events which are regulated by the Law On Safety of Public Entertainment and Festivity Events;

2) events organised by religious organisations, which have been registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in the laws and regulations, in churches, houses of prayer, cemeteries, in the land parcels owned by a church, or other locations intended for this purpose;

¹ The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

- 3) wedding or funeral ceremonies;
 - 4) promotional arrangements.
- (2) If it is determined that the application does not apply to the scope of this Law, it shall be examined in accordance with the relevant law and regulation governing the relevant event.
[14 November 2013]

Section 3.

- (1) In accordance with this Law, everyone has the rights to organise peaceful meetings, processions, and pickets, and also to participate in them.
- (2) The exercising of this right shall not be subjected to any limitations, except those laid down in the law, or necessary in a democratic society in order to protect the interests of the State and the public safety, prevent disorders or criminal offences, safeguard public health and morality, and also the rights and freedoms of others.
- (3) The State shall not only provide the opportunities of assembly, but also ensure that there are no interferences to the assembly.
[10 April 2003]

Section 4.

The organiser of a meeting, procession and picket, the manager of the event, the assistant to the manager of the event and the person who maintains order in the event shall not be a person who:

- 1) is less than 18 years old;
- 2) is not a citizen of Latvia or a person that has the right to receive a non-citizen's passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, or a person to whom a permanent residence permit is issued;
- 3) seeks to use the abovementioned events for the purposes of organisations the operation of which is prohibited in Latvia;
- 4) *[10 April 2003]*;
- 5) within a year, has been punished in accordance with administrative procedures for infringing meeting, procession, and picket organisation or procedural requirements, or for petty hooliganism, or for malicious non-compliance with legitimate requirements of a police officer, or for infringement of rules of the commencement or termination of public organisation's operations;
- 6) is deemed to be incapacitated.

[10 April 2003; 3 November 2005]

Section 5.

- (1) Meetings, processions, and pickets may also be organised by legal persons that are registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law of the Republic of Latvia, on the condition that within a year, these persons have not been punished for infringement of requirements of meeting, procession, or picket organisation or procedure.
- (2) In such case, they shall appoint one or several responsible event organisers (hereinafter — organiser) who shall meet the requirements laid down in Section 4 of this Law.
[3 November 2005]

Section 6.

- (1) An organiser shall be responsible for compliance with this Law during meetings, processions, and pickets.

(2) The organiser of the event shall be accessible by phone indicated in event application, and the organiser shall provide local government authorities and competent State institutions with the information concerning the programme of the event upon their request.

[26 April 2007]

Chapter II General Provisions

Section 7.

(1) Meetings may be organised both indoors and outdoors.

(2) Meetings may be either open or closed.

(3) In open meetings, everyone who wishes has the right to participate, including representatives of mass media. Limitations may be set only in relation to premises or area of the territory where the meeting is held.

(4) In closed meetings, only persons invited by the organiser of the meeting may participate. Closed meetings shall be organised only in locations that are not in public use during such meetings.

Section 8.

Assembly place and procession route shall be selected so that the event minimally interferes with the vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

[3 November 2005]

Section 9.

(1) During meetings, processions, and pickets, an open access for pedestrians and vehicles shall be provided to State and local government authorities in whose neighbourhood the events are held, and operations of these authorities may not be restricted.

(2) During meetings, processions, and pickets, these events may not interfere with the proceedings of any public event, any event organised by State and local government authorities, or any pre-notified meetings, processions, or pickets.

(3) Meetings, processions, and pickets shall not be organised in private owned buildings or on privately used land parcels without a written consent from their owners or managers.

(4) Local government may issue binding rules regarding procedures for organising meetings, processions, and pickets and occurrence thereof in specific locations.

[26 April 2007]

Section 10.

(1) During meetings, processions, and pickets, the laws and regulations governing public order shall be observed.

(2) During the abovementioned events, it is forbidden to attack the independence of the Republic of Latvia, propose forcible amending of the political system of Latvia, to call for disobedience of laws, propagate violence, national and racial hatred, open Nazism, fascism, or communism ideology, to propagate war, or to praise or suggest committing criminal offences and other law infringements.

[10 April 2003]

Section 11.

(1) A member of a meeting, procession, or picket, during the event shall not:

1) hold in one's possession substances, weapons, or other objects that by their nature are designed or can be used for inflicting bodily injuries to human beings or damage to property;

2) be equipped with passive means of protection (helmet, hard hat, body armour, etc.);

3) conceal one's face behind a mask;

4) [3 November 2005];

5) use flags, coat of arms, anthems, and symbols (also in stylized form) of former USSR, Latvian SSR, and Nazi Germany;

6) engage in anti-moral acts;

7) act in the manner that endangers safety and health of the members of the meeting, procession, or picket, or the safety and health of others, or affect them physically.

(2) Event organisers and members are prohibited to deliver to the place of venue of event any objects abovementioned in Paragraph one, Clause 1, 2, and 5 of this Section, and also hold them in one's possession or in vehicles that are closer than 500 metres from the event place of venue.

[10 April 2003; 3 November 2005; 26 April 2007]

Chapter III Submission and Examination of an Application

[26 April 2007]

Section 12.

(1) The organiser shall submit an application for organising a meeting and a procession, with the exception of:

1) closed meetings;

2) meetings that are not publicly announced;

3) meetings and processions organised by State institutions or local governments;

4) meetings that are organised in the premises or territory of a trade union, and also rented premises;

5) open meetings that are organised indoors.

(2) The organiser shall submit an application for organising a picket, if the picket is publically announced.

(3) An application shall always be submitted if the meeting, procession, or picket interferes with the vehicle or pedestrian traffic.

[26 April 2007]

Section 13.

(1) The application shall be submitted to the local government in the administrative territory of which the event is to be held. If the event is to be held in the administrative territory of several local governments, the application shall be submitted to each local government. The local government shall send a copy of the application to the relevant territorial State police unit.

(2) The application shall be submitted not earlier than four months and not later than 10 working days before the day of the event. If an event is organised for an incident about which it was reasonably impossible to know earlier than 10 working days in advance, the application for organising such meeting, procession, or picket shall be submitted as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours before the event takes place.

(3) Employees of the local government shall make a note on the time the application was submitted on the application copy kept by the applicant.
[26 April 2007; 16 June 2010]

Section 14.

- (1) The application shall state the following:
- 1) type of the event (meeting, procession, picket);
 - 2) purpose of the event;
 - 3) event date, starting and ending time;
 - 4) place of venue for a meeting or picket, route for a the procession;
 - 5) planned number of participants;
 - 6) what kind of support is requested from local government and police to facilitate undisturbed occurrence of the event;
 - 7) organiser (one or several) and the phone number for contacting the organiser;
 - 8) manager of the event;
 - 9) assistants to the event manager and persons for maintaining order.
- (2) When submitting the application, a natural person shall present his or her passport, and a representative of a legal person shall present his or her passport, and submit an authorisation of the legal person to submit an application.
- (3) For all the persons referred to in the application, their given name, personal identity number, and place of residence shall be indicated, but for legal persons – their full name, legal address, and registration number.
- (4) The following shall be appended to the application:
- 1) a list of persons maintaining order and their signatures that prove their consent to participate in the event as persons maintaining order, or a copy of an agreement, if the event organiser hires commercial security guards for providing public order and safety during the event;
 - 2) a written consent for organisation of the event given by the owner or manager of the place of venue of the event, if this person is not the organiser of the event and the event is held on the land privately owned by him or her or privately owned or privately used land parcels.
- (5) The number of persons for maintaining order shall be determined by the organiser and calculated in such a way so the event can proceed in a peaceful and organised manner. After submitting the application, the organiser is entitled to replace individual persons for maintaining order or increase their number.
- (6) If the number of participants of the planned event exceeds one hundred, for every hundred of members no less than two persons for maintaining order shall be assigned.
- (7) For maintaining order, the organiser may invite commercial security guards. If so, the number of persons maintaining order shall be determined according to the provisions of Paragraph six of this Section.
- (8) Together with the application, the manager of the event and the assistants to the manager shall submit a notification that they are responsible for compliance with this Law during the event.

[3 November 2005; 23 November 2006; 26 April 2007; 16 June 2010]

Section 15.

- (1) After receiving an application, the local government shall ascertain that all the provisions of this Law are complied with.
- (2) In addition to that laid down in Paragraph one this Section, the local government shall ascertain that:

1) the event will not interfere with other previously announced public events, events organised by the State or local government, or previously announced meetings, processions, or pickets;

2) the organisation of the event in the expected time and location will not cause significant problems for vehicle or pedestrian traffic;

3) the organisation of the event in the planned time, location, and form, will not endanger the rights of others, the democratic system of the State, public safety, welfare, or morality.

(3) In order to prevent the conditions abovementioned in Paragraph two of this Section, the local government together with the organiser shall examine what changes are needed for the place of venue, time, or form of the event. For the examination, police and, when applicable, representatives of other concerned persons shall be invited.

(4) When examining an application for organising a meeting, procession, or picket, the local government shall take into account the opinion of the police and other competent State authorities regarding conditions abovementioned in Paragraph two of this Section, and options to prevent them.

(5) [14 November 2013]

[26 April 2007; 14 November 2013]

Section 15.¹

(1) In order not to endanger the participants of the event and to prevent conditions referred to in Section 15, Paragraph two of this Law, the local government is entitled to decide on limitations regarding the place of venue, time, and form of the event, without interfering with the purpose of the event, if it cannot agree with the organiser on the changes necessary to be introduced to the process of the event.

(2) Local government is entitled to take a decision to prohibit the event if it is concluded that organising of the event will endanger the rights of others, the democratic system of the State, public safety, welfare, or morality, and these risks cannot be prevented by limitations to the process of the event.

[14 November 2013]

Section 16.

(1) The local government is entitled to take the decision abovementioned in Section 15.¹ of this Law, not later than five working days prior to the date of the announced event. If the application for the event is made pursuant to the procedures and time period laid down in the second sentence of Section 13, Paragraph two of this Law, then the local government is entitled to take the decision abovementioned in Section 15.¹ of this Law not later than six hours before the announced event.

(2) If the conditions indicated in Section 15, Paragraph two of this Law are determined after the time period laid down in Paragraph one of this Section, the local government is entitled to take the decision abovementioned in Section 15.¹ of this Law after clarifying the relevant conditions.

(3) If the conditions indicated in Section 15, Paragraph two of this Law set in during the event, a police officer is entitled to determined event limitations needed for maintaining public order and safety, regardless of the decision taken by the local government. It may be asked to document such action of a police officer as a written decision, and it may be contested and appealed in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

[14 November 2013]

Section 17.

(1) Limitations and prohibitions laid down by the local government to organise the event may be appealed to the Administrative District Court. Submitting an application to the court shall not suspend the operation of the administrative act.

(2) The court shall adjudicate the cases abovementioned in Paragraph one of this Section within three days of the date the application was received in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Administrative Procedure Law.

(3) Defendant shall submit all the explanations and proof during the hearing, meeting the amount of proof laid down for the defendant in the Administrative Procedure Law.

(4) The judgement of the Administrative District Court made on the issues abovementioned in Paragraph one of this Section shall be enforced without delay.

(5) A judgement of the Administrative District Court that is made regarding issues abovementioned in Paragraph one of this Section, may be appealed by submitting a cassation complaint to the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court Senate.

[26 April 2007; 11 December 2008]

Chapter IV Process of a Meeting, Procession, and Picket

Section 18.

(1) Meeting, procession, and picket may not start before the time stated in its application.

(2) During a meeting, it is allowed to use a megaphone, microphone, and other sound boosting devices, provided such use is stated at the time of submitting the application for the event, and the use of such devices is not limited or prohibited.

(3) The event may not be started, if the organiser, event manager, assistants to the manager and sufficient number of persons for maintaining order are not present.

(4) The organiser, of the event, manager, assistants to the manager and persons for maintaining order shall be present in the place of venue of the event throughout the event.

(5) Persons for maintaining order shall have a certificate issued by the organiser of the event, and they shall present it when asked by a representative of the local government or a police officer. During the event, persons for maintaining order shall wear a bandage or other form of clearly visible signs.

[26 April 2007; 14 November 2013]

Section 19.

In meetings, processions, and pickets, there is freedom of speech and linguistic freedom.

Section 20.

(1) The manager of a meeting, procession, or picket, and assistants to the manager shall be responsible for compliance with the provisions of this Law and for maintaining order during the event. They shall maintain the order both personally, and with the help of persons for maintaining order. If children are participating in the event, the manager of the event shall provide protection of the rights of these children, in accordance with the Protection of the Rights of the Child Law.

(2) Participants of the event shall avoid actions that may impede peaceful and organised event proceedings, and the participants shall obey the instructions given by the manager of the event, assistants to the manager, persons for maintaining order and the members of the police.

(3) During a meeting, speeches can be made only when authorised by the manager of the event or assistant to the manager.

[18 March 2004]

Section 21.

(1) During open meetings, processions, and pickets, compliance with this Law shall be controlled by representative of the local government, and also employees of the police.

(2) An employee of the police is entitled to give binding instructions to the organiser of the event, manager, participants, and persons for maintaining order, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements laid down in this Law in conformity with specific conditions at the place of venue of the event.

[26 April 2007]

Section 22.

During open meetings, processions, and pickets, it is allowed to make audio and video recordings, to take photographs and to film.

Section 23.

(1) If participants of a meeting, procession, or picket infringe the provisions of this Law and do not obey the instructions of the manager of the event, assistants to the manager, and persons for maintaining order, the manager shall either declare the event to be closed, or turn to an employee of the police or representative of the local government to restore order.

(2) If the participants of the event do not obey the instructions given by an employee of the police or representative of the local government regarding compliance with the requirements of this Law, the member of the police or representative of local government shall declare the event to be closed, or shall demand that participants thereof leave the place of venue of the event.

Section 24.

The Police shall not allow any meetings, processions, and pickets, which are organised without compliance with the requirements of this Law.

Chapter V Liability for Infringement of this Law

Section 25.

The organiser, manager of meetings, processions and pickets and assistants thereof, and also other participants shall be held responsible according to the Law for infringements of the provisions of this Law.

Transitional Provision

Section 17, Paragraph five of this Law shall not apply to cases for which the District Administrative Court has adopted judgement before 31 January 2009. The judgement for these cases may be appealed in accordance with procedures laid down in the Administrative Procedure Law.

[11 December 2008]

This Law was adopted by the *Saeima* on 16 January 1997.

President

G. Ulmanis

Adopted 30 January 1997