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

7 June 1996 [shall come into force on 17 July 1996];

27 February 1997 [shall come into force on 12 March 1997];

19 February 1998 [shall come into force on 20 March 1998];

15 June 2000 [shall come into force on 19 July 2000];

12 September 2002 [shall come into force on 10 October 2002];

12 December 2008 [shall come into force on 31 December 2008];

29 October 2009 [shall come into force on 24 November 2009];

30 January 2014 [shall come into force on 14 February 2014];

26 April 2018 (Constitutional Court Judgment) [shall come into force on 27 April 2018];

24 March 2022 [shall come into force on 21 April 2022].

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:

**Law on Religious Organisations**

**Section 1. Terms Used in this Law**

The following terms are used in this Law:

1) **religious operation**– adherence to a religion or belief by practising a cult, fulfilling religious or ritual ceremonies, and preaching dogmas;

2) **religious denominations** (hereinafter – the denominations) – trends of world religions which have their religious affirmation, teaching, and dogmatics, and also cult traditions;

3) **officials of religious organisations**– members of the bodies elected by such organisations (councils, boards, and audit commissions), and also ecclesiastics;

4) **ecclesiastics of religious organisations** (hereinafter –the ecclesiastics) – archbishop, bishop, minister, priest, deacon, rabbi, and others;

5) **ceremonial objects**– objects and items which are necessary for the performance of religious operations of a religious organisation and for the ensuring thereof;

6) **Christian religious instruction**– a system of specific opinions, dogmas, and views of Christian denominations;

7) **religious teachings**– a system of specific religious opinions, dogmas, and views;

8) **chaplains**– ecclesiastics who perform official duties in places for the serving of a sentence, in formations of the National Armed Forces, and elsewhere where the regular care of a clergyman is not available;

9) **serving personnel of religious organisations** (hereinafter – the serving personnel) – natural persons who are not ecclesiastics or employees of religious organisations and who, on the basis of goodwill and vocation, participate in the implementation of objectives of the operation of religious organisations without compensation.

[*7 June 1996; 19 February 1998; 15 June 2000; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 2. Purpose of the Law**

(1) The Law on Religious Organisations shall, in conformity with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, and also the international agreements regarding human rights in the field of religion, govern public relations which are formed when implementing freedom of conscience and performing the operations of religious organisations.

(2) The purpose of the Law is to guarantee the inhabitants of Latvia with the right to religious freedom which includes the right to freely express their attitude towards religion, to turn or not turn to any religion individually or collectively with others, to freely change their religious or other conviction, to perform religious operations, and also to express their religious conviction in conformity with the legal acts in force.

[*15 June 2000*]

**Section 3. Concept of Religious Organisations**

(1) Religious organisations are the congregations, religious associations (Churches), dioceses, and divisions registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in this Law.

(2) Believers of one religion or denomination shall unite in a congregation on the basis of the principle of voluntary participation in order to perform religious operations in a specific populated territory, and also other types of operations in conformity with the legal acts in force.

(3) A religious association (Church) shall unite the congregations of one denomination registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in this Law.

(4) A diocese is a territorial administrative unit of the organisational structure of a religious association (Church) provided for in the canonical provisions of the relevant denomination which is overseen by a bishop.

(5) A division is a unit of the organisational structure of a religious association (Church) provided for in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the relevant religious association (Church) and established by individual congregations with separate management procedures and management body.

[*19 February 1998; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 4. Equality of Inhabitants Regardless of Their Attitude Towards Religion**

(1) A direct or indirect restriction of the rights of inhabitants or the creation of privileges for inhabitants, and also a violation of religious sensibilities of persons or incitement of hatred due to their attitude towards religion is prohibited. For the violation of this provision, the persons at fault shall be held liable in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law.

(2) No person has the right to violate laws due to their religious conviction.

(3) No indication regarding the attitude towards religion or regarding the denominational affiliation is recorded in the personal documents issued by the State.

(4) State and local government authorities, public organisations, and also undertakings and companies are prohibited from requesting information from their employees and other persons on their attitude towards religion or on denominational affiliation.

**Section 5. Basis for the Relationship of the State and Religious Organisations**

(1) In the Republic of Latvia, the State is separate from the Church. State authorities are of secular nature, and religious organisations shall perform the State functions only in the cases specified in law.

(2) The State shall protect the rights of religious organisations provided for in the Law. The State and local governments and the authorities thereof, and also public and other organisations do not have the right to intervene in religious operations of religious organisations.

(3) The State recognises the right of parents and guardians to raise their children according to the religious conviction thereof.

(4) [7 June 1996]

(5) The relationships of the State and religious organisations shall be arranged by the Ministry of Justice which shall ensure the development, harmonisation, and implementation of the State policy in religious matters in accordance with the competence determined in laws and regulations and shall manage the matters related to the relationship of the State and religious organisations. The structural unit established by the Ministry of Justice for dealing with religious matters shall, upon request of religious organisations, provide them with the necessary consultations and assistance.

(6) The conformity of the operations of religious organisations with laws and regulations shall be monitored by law enforcement institutions which shall inform the Ministry of Justice of violations of laws and regulations established in the operations of religious organisations.

(7) The relationship of the State and religious associations (Churches) may be governed by special laws.

(8) The Council of Sacred Affairs is an advisory body the personnel of which is determined and the by-laws of which are approved by the Cabinet. The objective of operation of the Council of Sacred Affairs shall be to promote and improve the cooperation of the State and religious organisations.

[*7 June 1996; 15 June 2000; 12 September 2002; 18 December 2008; 29 October 2009; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 5.1 Board of Religious Affairs**

[18 December 2008]

**Section 6. Religious Organisations and Education**

(1) Anyone has the right to acquire religious teachings, either individually or collectively with other teaching establishments of religious organisations.

(2) The Christian religious instruction may be taught in State and local government schools to persons who have expressed a wish in writing to acquire this. Minors shall submit a submission regarding a wish to acquire the Christian religious instruction with the written agreement of parents or guardians. If a minor is less than 14 years of age, parents or guardians of such person shall submit the submission on the behalf thereof.

(3) The Christian religious instruction shall be taught according to a teaching programme approved by the Ministry of Education and Science by teachers from the Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Old Believer, and Baptist denominations if there are at least 10 pupils in a school wishing to acquire the teachings of the relevant Christian denomination. Teachers shall be brought forward by the management of the denomination and they shall be certified by the Ministry of Education and Science.

(4) The schools for national minorities under management of the State and local governments may, in conformity with the wishes of students or their parents or guardians, also provide religious teachings typical to the relevant national minority in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Ministry for Education and Science.

(5) The Christian religious instruction and ethical teaching is financed from the State budget.

[*7 June 1996; 19 February 1998*]

**Section 7. Procedures for the Establishment of Religious Organisations**

(1) There shall be no fewer than 20 citizens of Latvia or persons who are registered in the Population Register and have attained the age of 18 years among the founders of a congregation. One person has the right to be the founder of only one congregation. Any inhabitant of Latvia has the right to join a congregation and to operate therein. Young persons up to the age of 18 years may join a congregation only with a written permission of parents or guardians.

(2) Ten (or more) congregations of one denomination which are registered in the Republic of Latvia may establish a religious association (Church).

(3) [Recognised as invalid from 27 April 2018 under the judgment of the Constitutional Court of 26 April 2018]

(4) A diocese may be established by a religious association (Church) by taking a relevant decision thereon.

(5) A division may be established by at least two congregations if the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious association (Church) and congregations provide for it.

[*7 June 1996; 19 February 1998; 15 June 2000; 12 September 2002; judgment of the Constitutional Court of 26 April 2018; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 7.1 Institutions of Religious Organisations**

(1) The religious organisations registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in this Law may, for the achievement of the operational objectives specified in the articles of association thereof, establish institutions the objective and nature of which are not profit-making: institutions for teaching ecclesiastics, monasteries, missions, deaconate institutions, and institutions similar thereto.

(2) An institution of a religious organisation shall operate in accordance with the laws in force and its articles of association (constitution, by-laws) to be approved by the relevant religious organisation.

(3) An institution of a religious organisation shall be founded, re-organised, or liquidated if the founder thereof takes a relevant decision according to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation.

[*19 February 1998*]

**Section 8. Registration of Religious Organisations and Institutions Thereof**

(1) Religious organisations and institutions thereof shall be registered in the Register of Religious Organisations and the Institutions Thereof (hereinafter – the Register). The Register shall be arranged by the Enterprise Register of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the registration institution).

(2) Prior to registration of a religious organisation or institution thereof, the registration institution shall request an opinion from the Ministry of Justice on the conformity of the operational objectives and tasks indicated in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation or institution thereof with the laws and regulations, and also as to whether or not the operations (teachings) of the religious organisation may endanger human rights, the democratic structure of the State, national security, public safety or order, welfare and morals.

(3) A religious organisation or institution thereof shall be registered by making an entry in the Register regarding the registration of the religious organisation or institution thereof.

(4) [Recognised as invalid from 27 April 2018 under the judgment of the Constitutional Court of 26 April 2018]

(5) [24 March 2022]

(6) [24 March 2022]

[*18 December 2008; 30 January 2014; judgment of the Constitutional Court of 26 April 2018; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 9. Documents to be Submitted to the Registration Institution**

(1) A person authorised by a religious organisation shall append the following to an application for the registration of a congregation:

1) the articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) a list of the founders of the congregation (the given name, surname, personal identity number of a person (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document) and signature);

3) the minutes of the meeting regarding the founding of the congregation, the approval of the articles of association (constitution, by-laws), the composition of the management and audit commission (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document) and official title), and also the officials who are entitled to represent the religious organisation (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none,– the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)), and the authorised person (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)) who is entitled to sign the application for the registration of the congregation and the articles of association (constitution, by-laws). The minutes of the meeting shall be signed by the chairperson of the meeting, the minute-taker, and at least one member of the meeting;

4) [30 January 2014].

(2) A person authorised by a religious organisation shall append the following to an application for the registration of a religious association (Church) or a division:

1) the articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) a list of the founders of the congregations – religious association (Church) or division – which is approved by the heads of the congregations;

3) the minutes regarding the founding of the religious association (Church) or division, the management bodies thereof, the composition of the management and audit commission (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document) and official title), and also the officials which are entitled to represent the religious organisation (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)), and the authorised person (given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)) who is entitled to sign the application for the registration of the religious association (Church) or division and its articles of association (constitution, by-laws). The minutes of the meeting shall be signed by the chairperson of the meeting, the minute-taker, and at least one member of the meeting;

4) [30 January 2014].

(3) A person authorised by a religious organisation shall append the following to an application for the registration of a diocese:

1) the articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) the decision of the religious association (Church) on the establishment of a diocese;

3) information on the composition of the management (the given name, surname, and personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)), and also the officials which are entitled to represent the diocese (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)), and the authorised person (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)) who is entitled to sign the application for the registration of the diocese and its articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

4) [30 January 2014].

(4) A person authorised by a religious organisation shall append the following to an application for the registration of a teaching institution for ecclesiastics, monastery, mission, or deaconate institution:

1) the articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) the decision of a religious association (Church), diocese, or division on the establishment of a teaching institution for ecclesiastics, monastery, mission, or deaconate institution;

3) information on the official who is entitled to represent the institution of a religious organisation (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)), and the authorised person (the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document)) who is entitled to sign the application for the registration of the institution of a religious organisation and the articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

4) [30 January 2014].

(5) [24 March 2022]

(6) A person authorised by a religious organisation shall append to the application for the changes in the composition of the management or audit commission, and also the changes in the composition of officials entitled to represent the religious organisation the decision taken according to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of a religious organisation on the changes in the composition of the management or audit commission, and also in the composition of the officials which are entitled to represent the religious organisation, indicating the given name, surname, personal identity number, and official title of the person.

(7) A person authorised by an institution of a religious organisation shall append to the application for the registration of changes to the officials entitled to represent the institution of the religious organisation the decision taken according to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation or the institution thereof on the changes in the officials thereof who are entitled to represent the religious organisation, indicating the given name, surname, personal identity number (if none, the date of birth, the number and date of issue of a personal identification document, the state and authority which issued the document) and official title of the person.

(8) The following shall be appended to an application by a person authorised by a religious organisation or institution thereof for the registration of amendments to the articles of association (constitution, by-laws):

1) the decision on amendments to the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) taken according to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of a religious organisation or institution thereof;

2) the text of the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) in the new wording;

3) [30 January 2014].

(9) A State fee shall be paid for the registration and re-registration of religious organisations and institutions thereof and for the registration of amendments to the articles of association (constitution, by-laws). The amount and payment procedures of the State fee shall be determined by the Cabinet.

(10) The information indicated in the application for the belonging of a congregation to a religious association (Church), diocese, or division shall be certified by the management of the relevant religious association (Church), diocese, or division by submitting a relevant submission to that effect.

(11) If a congregation belongs to a religious association (Church), diocese, or division registered in the State, the congregation shall append a submission from the management of the religious association (Church), diocese, or division to its application for reorganisation, exclusion, or withdrawal from the religious association (Church), diocese, or division certifying that the relevant actions conform to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious association (Church), diocese, or division if such procedures are provided for in their articles of association (constitution, by-laws). The new wording of the articles of association of the congregation, and also the minutes of the congregation meeting regarding the approval of the new wording of the articles of association and regarding the authorised person who is entitled to sign the application and the articles of association shall be appended to the application. The minutes of the meeting shall be signed by the chairperson of the meeting, the minute-taker, and at least one member of the meeting.

[*18 December 2008; 30 January 2014; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 9.1 Information to be Included in the Register**

(1) The following information on a religious organisation shall be entered in the Register:

1) the name;

2) the legal form [congregation, religious association (Church), diocese, division];

3) the denominational affiliation;

31) information on the religious association (Church), diocese, or division to which the congregation belongs;

4) the operational objectives;

5) the date when the decision on founding was taken;

6) the territory of operations;

7) the legal address (location of management);

8) the given name, surname, personal identity number of members of the management body, and also officials who are entitled to represent the religious organisation;

9) the registration number (the unified eleven-digit registration code);

10) [24 March 2022];

11) information on the termination of operations, renewal of operations, exclusion from the Register, insolvency, and reorganisation;

12) information on the appointing of an administrator in an insolvency case, indicating the given name, surname, personal identity number, and address of the place of practice of the administrator;

13) the date of making the entry;

14) other information if it is directly provided for by law.

(2) The following information on an institution of a religious organisation shall be entered in the Register:

1) the name;

2) the legal form (a teaching institution for ecclesiastics, monastery, mission, or deaconate institution);

3) the operational objectives;

4) the date when the decision on founding was taken;

5) information on the religious organisation which is founding the institution (name, registration number);

6) the legal address (location);

7) the given name, surname, and personal identity number of the official who is entitled to represent the institution of a religious organisation;

8) the registration number;

9) information on the termination of operations, exclusion from the Register, insolvency, and reorganisation;

10) information on the appointing of an administrator in an insolvency case, indicating the given name, surname, personal identity number, and address of the place of practice of the administrator;

11) the date of making the entry;

12) other information if it is directly provided for by law.

[*18 December 2008; 24 March 2022* / *See Paragraph 10 of Transitional Provisions*]

**Section 9.2 Registration Certificate of a Religious Organisation or Institution Thereof**

[24 March 2022]

**Section 10. Articles of Association (Constitution, By-laws) of Religious Organisations**

(1) The following shall be indicated in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of a religious organisation:

1) the name and denominational affiliation of the religious organisation;moreover, the name shall be clearly distinguishable not only from the names of religious organisations and institutions thereof registered and applied for registration in the State in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law, but also from the names of entities registered and applied for registration in other registers kept by the registration institution; the name shall not contain misleading information on the legal form, operational objectives and type of the religious organisation; the name shall not mislead about the belonging of a congregation to a religious association (Church) if the congregation is not part of the religious association (Church) registered in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law;

11) belonging of the religious organisation to a religious association (Church), diocese, or division, if any;

2) the liabilities of the religious organisation to observe the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Latvia in the operations thereof;

3) teaching (Holy Scripture, dogmatics, and denominational peculiarities), forms of religious ceremonies, objectives and tasks of religious operations;

4) the administrative structure of the religious organisation, the procedures for electing the management body and the audit body and the competence thereof;

5) the territory of operations of the religious organisation and the location of the governing body thereof;

6) the procedures for the joining and leaving of members of the congregation, their rights and obligations;

7) the rights and obligations of the religious organisation, its property and financial resources;

8) the procedures for the reorganisation, liquidation of the religious organisation and the subsequent use of the property remaining as a result of liquidation.

(2) Religious organisations may also govern other matters of internal life with the articles of association (constitution, by-laws).

(3) [24 March 2022]

[*19 February 1998; 15 June 2000; 29 October 2009; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 11. Refusal of Registration**

[18 December 2008]

**Section 12. Appealing of the Decision of the Head of the Board of Religious Affairs**

[18 December 2008]

**Section 13. Rights of Religious Organisations**

(1) Religious organisations shall obtain the status of a legal person from the moment of the registration thereof. The legal status of a teaching institution for ecclesiastics, monastery, mission, and deaconate institution shall be determined by the religious association (Church), diocese, or division.

(2) Only registered religious associations (Churches), dioceses, or divisions have the right to establish teaching institutions for ecclesiastics, monasteries, missions, and deaconate institutions.

(3) Only registered religious organisations and the institutions established thereby have the right to use the names and emblems of the religious organisations in their forms and seals.

[*19 February 1998; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 14. Operations of Religious Organisations**

(1) Religious organisations shall elect or appoint to the office and remove from the office the ecclesiastics thereof according to the articles of association (constitution, by-laws), but hire and dismiss other employees in accordance with the labour legal acts. The service relationship with the serving personnel are established on the basis of an agreement which shall be drawn up in writing in cases where the serving personnel is compensated for expenditures related to the service.

(2) Religious organisations shall operate on the basis of the canonical rules of the relevant denomination and the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) thereof.

(21) A religious organisation is prohibited in its activity from taking action against the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic of Latvia, from expressing or disseminating proposals regarding violent amendment of the State structure of Latvia, from encouraging not to comply with the laws if non-compliance with them endangers national security, public safety, or order, from propagating violence or terrorism, outright nazism, fascism, or communism ideology, from popularising war, from carrying out acts directed towards triggering national, ethnic, racial, religious hatred or enmity, from praising or encouraging the committing of criminal offences.

(3) Religious operations in public places may only be performed by religious organisations with the consent of local governments. When performing religious operations, the rules of public order shall not be violated.

(4) Foreign clergymen or missionaries may be invited for the performance of religious operations in the Republic of Latvia only by religious organisations, arranging residence permits for them in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law.

(5) Religious organisations may perform religious operations at hospitals, homes, places for the serving of sentences, and in the formations of the National Armed Forces if the persons present therein so wish. The anticipated time and place for an event shall be coordinated with the administration of the relevant institutions. Operations of religious organisations shall take place in the formations of the National Armed Forces in conformity with the provisions developed by the Ministry of Defence. Chaplains shall operate in the Republic of Latvia in accordance with the Cabinet regulations regarding chaplain service.

(6) The operations of religious organisations and believers shall only be restricted in those cases when the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Latvia are violated.

(7) Religious organisations shall, not later than on 1 March of each year, submit a report on the operations thereof to the Ministry of Justice in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Cabinet.

[*19 February 1998; 15 June 2000; 18 December 2008; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 15. Economic Activity of Religious Organisations**

(1) Religious organisations have the right to perform economic activity. If the revenues of a religious organisation from economic activity exceed the minimum monthly salary by 500 times within one calendar year which the government has determined for the relevant period of time, this organisation shall found its own undertaking to be registered in accordance with the legal acts in force.

(2) [24 March 2022]

(3) The legal relationship of a religious organisation and its undertaking shall be governed by the legal acts in force, and also the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of such organisation or a separate contract.

(4) Revenues from profit acquired as a result of economic activity shall be used for the objectives provided for in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation in accordance with the legal acts in force.

(5) Religious organisations shall organise accounting, draw up reports, and pay taxes in accordance with the legal acts in force.

[*24 March 2022*]

**Section 16. Property of Religious Organisations**

(1) Religious organisations may have movable and immovable property in their ownership. Only the management bodies of religious organisations have the right to act with immovable property unless different procedures are specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws).

(2) If the spiritual centre of a religious organisation registered in the Republic of Latvia is located in a foreign country, it may not own the immovable property of such organisation, and also a property which is recognised as a cultural monument.

(3) Houses of worship, art and other values which are recognised as cultural monuments shall be maintained by religious organisations in accordance with the requirements laid down in the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments.

(4) It is prohibited to pledge houses of worship and ceremonial objects, and recovery upon request of creditors may not be directed against them.

[*19 February 1998*]

**Section 17. Procedures for the Liquidation and Re-organisation of Religious Organisations**

(1) Congregations, religious associations (Churches), and divisions shall be liquidated or reorganised according to the procedures laid down in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) thereof.

(2) The operation of a diocese shall end if the religious association (Church) which is the founder thereof takes the decision on the termination of operations thereof according to the procedures laid down in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws).

(3) The decision on the liquidation, termination of operation, or re-organisation of a religious organisation or institution thereof shall be notified to the registration institution not later than within 14 days after taking the relevant decision.

(4) A congregation which withdraws from any religious association (Church) or division shall retain the status of a congregation and shall submit an application to the registration institution in conformity with the requirements of Section 9 of this Law.

(5) If a religious organisation which has taken the decision on the termination of operation decides to renew its operation, it shall inform the registration institution of the decision taken.

(6) If a religious organisation which has taken the decision on the liquidation or re-organisation and has been excluded from the register of religious organisations and the institutions thereof decides to renew its operation, it shall register in accordance with the requirements of this Law.

(7) [18 December 2008]

[*19 February 1998; 15 June 2000; 12 September 2002; 18 December 2008; 29 October 2009; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 18. Basis for the Termination of Operation of Religious Organisations and Institutions Thereof**

(1) A religious organisation or institution thereof shall terminate its operation:

1) with the decision taken according to the procedures laid down in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation;

2) if the number of congregations united in a religious association (Church) has become smaller than that specified in Section 7, Paragraph two of this Law and has not been increased to the number specified in this Law within one year;

21) on the basis of a decision by the registration institution;

3) by a court ruling;

4) on another basis specified in law or the articles of association (constitution, by-laws).

(2) The operation of a religious organisation may be terminated on the basis of a court ruling:

1) if it is in contradiction with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, other laws and regulations, or articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) if the religious organisation invites others not to comply with the law;

3) if the religious organisation endangers the democratic structure of the State, national security, public safety or order, and also the health and morals of other persons with its operation (teachings);

4) in other cases specified in laws and regulations.

(3) An application may be submitted to a court by the Prosecutor General.

(4) [24 March 2022]

(5) Taking into account the severity and consequences of the violation committed by a religious organisation, and also having assessed its objective of operation and the operation at whole, a court may express a warning to the religious organisation without terminating its operation.

(6) When evaluating the violation committed by an institution of a religious organisation, a court shall take into account the objective of the establishment of the institution and also assess the conformity with laws and regulations of the operation of the religious organisation which founded the abovementioned institution.

[*18 December 2008; 24 March 2022*]

**Section 18.1 Termination of Operation of a Religious Organisation on the Basis of a Decision of the Registration Institution**

(1) Operation of a religious organisation may be terminated on the basis of a decision of the registration institution if:

1) the management bodies of the religious organisation have not had the right of representation for more than six months and the religious organisation has not eliminated the indicated deficiency within six months after receipt of a written warning;

2) the religious organisation cannot be reached at its legal address and has not eliminated the indicated deficiency within six months after receipt of a written warning;

3) the religious organisation has not complied with the provisions of Section 14, Paragraph seven of this Law and has not submitted the report on its operation referred to in Section 14, Paragraph seven of this Law to the Ministry of Justice within one month after receipt of a repeated written warning, and the Ministry of Justice has informed the registration institution thereof.

(2) The decision of the registration institution on the termination of operation of a religious organisation shall enter into effect at the moment when it has been notified to the addressee. The registration institution shall make an entry in the Register on the termination of operation of a religious organisation after the decision of the registration institution on the termination of operation of the religious organisation has become uncontestable.

(3) If the religious organisation belongs to a religious association (Church), diocese, or division registered in the State, the registration institution shall also send a written warning regarding the termination of operation of the religious organisation to the management of the religious association (Church), diocese, or division.

(4) If the operation of a religious organisation has been terminated on the basis of a decision of the registration institution, the liquidation of the religious organisation shall take place according to the procedures specified in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) of the religious organisation.

[*24 March 2022*]

**Section 19. Consequences of the Termination of Operation of a Religious Organisation**

(1) On the day when a court ruling enters into legal effect regarding the termination of operation of a religious organisation or when a decision is taken by this organisation on liquidation or re-organisation, the religious organisation shall take the decision on the taking over of property rights according to the procedures laid down in the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) thereof. If there is no successor of property rights, the property shall be taken over by the State.

(2) If operation of a religious organisation is terminated, employment relationship with all employees working in the religious organisation shall be terminated in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Labour Law.

[*12 September 2002*]

**Transitional Provisions**

1. The legal status of those religious congregations, associations (Churches), and monasteries which have been registered with the Ministry of Justice prior to the coming into force of this Law is not changed.

2. All existing religious organisations regardless of the period of registration thereof shall harmonise their articles of association (constitution, by-laws) with this Law by 1 May 1998 and, if necessary, in accordance with the requirements of the Law:

1) revise and adopt articles of association (constitution, by-laws);

2) alter the structure and establish management and audit bodies;

3) amend the names, abbreviations of names, and symbols.

[*7 June 1996; 27 February 1997; 19 February 1998*]

3. The rights of religious associations (Churches) provided for in this Law shall also be applicable to the Dievturi Congregation and the Hebrews of Riga Jewish Religious Community.

4. [15 June 2000]

5. The Ministry of Justice shall publish a list of those religious organisations in the official newspaper *Latvijas Vēstnesis* which have not harmonised the articles of association (constitution, by-laws) with this Law within the time period specified in Paragraph 2 of the Transitional Provisions of this Law. The Ministry of Justice shall exclude a religious organisation from the Register if it has no debts in the State and local government budgets and no application has been received from persons who have claims against the relevant religious organisation within three months from the publication of the announcement. The registration certificate, forms, and seals of a religious organisation excluded from the Register shall be regarded as invalid.

[*19 February 1998*]

6. With the coming into force of this Law, the law On Religious Organisations (*Latvijas Republikas Augstākās Padomes un Valdības Ziņotājs*, 1990, No. 40) and the law On Amendments and Supplements to the Law of the Republic of Latvia On Religious Organisations (*Latvijas Republikas Augstākās Padomes un Valdības Ziņotājs*, 1991, No. 29/30) is repealed.

7. The Board of Religious Affairs shall commence operation by 1 September 2000.

[*15 June 2000*]

8. Until the day of coming into force of the Cabinet regulations referred to in Section 9, Paragraph nine of this Law, but not later than by 30 March 2009, Cabinet Regulation No. 57 of 15 February 2000, Regulations Regarding the State Fee for the Registration of Religious Organisations and Institutions Thereof, shall be applicable.

[*18 December 2008*]

9. The takeover of functions of the Board of Religious Affairs (except for the keeping of the Register of Religious Organisations and Institutions Thereof) shall be determined by the Cabinet by 30 December 2011.

[*18 December 2008*]

10. Amendments to Section 9.1 of this Law regarding the addition to the Register of an entry on a division and an entry on the belonging of a congregation to a religious association (Church), diocese, or division shall be applicable from 1 March 2024.

[*24 March 2022*]

The Law has been adopted by the *Saeima* on 7 September 1995.

President G. Ulmanis

Rīga, 26 September 1995