The *Saeima*1 has adopted and

the President has proclaimed the following law:

**Sacral Heritage Preservation Financing Law**

**Section 1. Purpose and Task of the Law**

(1) The purpose of this Law is to ensure the preservation for future generations of cult buildings, including Latvian churches, monasteries, chapels, houses of prayer, and objects of religious rituals (hereinafter – the sacral heritage), which have the status of protected cultural monuments of State and local significance, as a nationally significant part of cultural heritage.

(2) The task of the Law is to establish the procedures by which the State of Latvia shall financially support the preservation of the sacral heritage.

(3) The preservation and maintenance of the sacral heritage shall be governed by this Law, the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments, and other laws and regulations.

(4) An object of the sacral heritage (hereinafter also – the object) included in the programme for financing the sacral heritage may not be simultaneously financed, in the relevant calendar year, also from the funds from the State budget in accordance with the provisions of the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Law of Dome Cathedral and Cloister Ensemble.

(5) An object of the sacral heritage which is not included in the programme for financing the sacral heritage may be applied for funding in accordance with Section 24 of the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments.

**Section 2. Programme for Financing the Sacral Heritage**

(1) The State of Latvia shall participate in the financing of research, development of technical designs, conservation, restoration, repairs, and other renovation works of the sacral heritage by establishing a permanent programme for financing the sacral heritage within the scope of the financial resources provided for these purposes in the annual State budget law. The programme for financing the sacral heritage shall include those objects to which the State financial support is provided in the relevant calendar year and shall determine the distribution of the funding available for them.

(2) Local governments may participate in the maintenance of the sacral heritage. Local governments have the right to allocate funding from the budgetary resources of local governments for the research, development of construction designs, conservation, restoration, renovation, reconstruction, repairs, and improvement of the sacral heritage.

(3) The programme for financing the sacral heritage for the current year shall be approved by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection after assessment of the opinion of the Sacral Heritage Council.

**Section 3. Allocation of Resources for the Programme for Financing the Sacral Heritage**

(1) A proposal for the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage may be submitted by a religious association (church) or a religious organisation which does not belong to any religious association (church). The religious association (church) shall submit one joint proposal for the renovation of the objects (also for objects belonging to the church’s congregations), indicating the objects in order of priority. Proposals for the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage shall be submitted to the State Inspection for Heritage Protection by 31 December of the current year.

(2) A religious association (church) or a religious organisation which does not belong to any religious association (church) shall, when applying for the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage, submit:

1) a completed application for funding, containing information on the applicant, the object, its owner, the extent and nature of the works to be performed;

2) a survey report indicating the defects found, or another document describing the situation of the object of the sacral heritage in as much detail as possible and confirming the need for the planned works;

3) colour images describing the situation of the object of the sacral heritage;

4) a description of the planned works, methods and materials to be used;

5) a calculation of costs;

6) information on the procedures by which public access to the object of the sacral heritage, and also its use and management is ensured, including contact information (website address, e-mail address, telephone number);

7) a certification that the relevant religious organisation which belongs to a religious association (church) agrees to the inclusion of the object of the sacral heritage owned by it in the programme for financing the sacral heritage;

8) information on the measures that will be taken to ensure the authenticity of the object of the sacral heritage and the preservation of original substance. If a type of work does not require project documentation, this shall be reflected in the description, methodology or shall be apparent in a detailed estimate of the practical works to be performed;

9) information on the public significance of the object of the sacral heritage, including information on the number of events and the number of visitors to the object of the sacral heritage or to the place where it is located during the past year.

(3) The following criteria shall be taken into consideration when taking a decision on the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage and determining the distribution of the available funding:

1) the actual condition of the object of the sacral heritage applied for the programme, including the need to save an object of the sacral heritage in a critical condition;

2) the public accessibility of the object of the sacral heritage;

3) the compliance of the planned works with the requirements laid down in laws and regulations and set by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection in accordance with the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments.

(4) When taking a decision on the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage and determining the distribution of the available funding, in addition to the criteria included in Paragraph three of this Section:

1) it is assessed whether the practical conservation and restoration solutions are based on a comprehensive documentation of the values, architectural-artistic and scientific research of the object and whether the conservation and restoration works are planned sequentially and will be professionally managed and supervised;

2) it is assessed how the authenticity of the object of the sacral heritage is ensured and its original substance is preserved.

(5) In determining the distribution of the available funding, priority shall be given to the application:

1) in which the costs of works, materials, and machinery are expected to be lower, taking into consideration the specific nature of the works, the qualifications of the specialists and the quality of the materials, and also the amount of the works to be performed;

2) in which training in restoration trades, the transfer of experience, and also the use of good practice examples are planned as part of the project.

**Section 4. Use of Resources for the Programme for Financing the Sacral Heritage**

(1) The State Inspection for Heritage Protection shall take a decision on the inclusion of an object of the sacral heritage in the programme for financing the sacral heritage, determine the distribution of the available funding and the allocation of funding, and also control the use of the resources for the programme.

(2) The State Inspection for Heritage Protection shall conclude a contract with the owner of the relevant object of the sacral heritage on the allocation of the funds from the State budget for the research, development of restoration documentation, or execution of conservation, restoration, repair, and other renovation works of the object of the sacral heritage.

(3) The owner of the object of the sacral heritage shall be responsible for the legal and economical use of the funds from the State budget allocated to the object of the sacral heritage, and also for the maintenance of the object of the sacral heritage and timely performance of maintenance works related to its preservation.

(4) The allocation of funding may be divided into stages, and the State Inspection for Heritage Protection shall ensure control over the execution of the works planned in the particular stage.

(5) Upon completion of the works or within the time limit specified in the contract, the owner of the object of the sacral heritage shall submit to the State Inspection for Heritage Protection a detailed written report on the works preformed, indicating the costs of labour, materials, and machinery and the breakdown of taxes. The report shall be accompanied by photographs and a list of documents supporting payments, and also one copy of the documentation prepared as a result of the use of the funding (if such is prepared).

**Section 5. Sacral Heritage Council**

(1) In order to ensure cooperation and exchange of information among the Ministry of Culture, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, and religious organisations, a Sacral Heritage Council (hereinafter – the Council) shall be established.

(2) The Council shall be a consultative body and its decisions shall be of recommendatory nature.

(3) The composition and by-laws of the Council shall be approved by the Minister for Culture.

(4) The Council shall consist of one representative from the Ministry of Culture, three representatives from the State Inspection for Heritage Protection, and one representative each from the religious associations (churches) which have submitted the proposal referred to in Section 3, Paragraph one of this Law.

(5) The Council shall make recommendations in relation to the implementation of the project of the programme for the renovation of the sacral heritage, and also assess the necessary changes during the implementation of the project.

(6) The operation of the Council shall be ensured by the State Inspection for Heritage Protection.

(7) The resources for the programme for financing the sacral heritage specified in Section 2 of this Law shall not be used for the remuneration of the Council.

The Law shall come into force on 1 January 2018.

The Law has been adopted by the *Saeima* on 22 November 2017.

President R .Vējonis

Rīga, 1 December 2017