

## Amendments to the Law on the Latvian Orthodox Church

Amend the Law on the Latvian Orthodox Church (*Latvijas Republikas Saeimas un Ministru Kabineta Ziņotājs, 2009, No. 1; Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2019, No. 115*) as follows:

1. Replace the word “bishops” (applicable to all relevant case endings) with the words “archbishops, bishops” (with the relevant case endings).

2. Formulate Subparagraph 1 of Paragraph 2 of Section 1 as follows:

“1) **Church** – the Latvian Orthodox Church including all of its dioceses, parishes and institutions, which is completely self-contained and independent from any pastoral power outside of Latvia (an autocephalous church).”

3. Add a new first sentence to Paragraph 1 of Section 3 as follows:

“This Law fully corroborates the autocephalous status of the Church.”

4. Formulate Paragraph 3 of Section 3 as follows:

“(3) The Church is managed by the head of the Church, who is independent from any pastoral power outside of Latvia.”

5. Add Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 to Section 4 as follows:

“(4) The Church shall inform the Chancery of the President of Latvia in writing about the accession to office of the head of the Church, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops. The Church shall, likewise, provide written notice about removal from office of the head of the Church, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops.

(5) Based on the information provided by the Church and an application from the elected individual, the Chancery of the President of Latvia shall announce in the official publication “Latvijas Vēstnesis” the taking of office of the head of the Church, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops, and shall also send this information to the body legally authorised to maintain the register of religious organisations and the institutions thereof.

(6) Based on the information provided by the Church, the Chancery of the President of Latvia shall announce in the official publication “Latvijas Vēstnesis” the removal from office of the head of the Church, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops, and shall also send this information to the body legally authorised to maintain the register of religious organisations and the institutions thereof.”

6. Add Point 4 and 5 to the Transitional Provisions as follows:

“4. By 31 October 2022 the Church shall harmonize its statutes with the amendments to this Law in regard to the status of the Church, by making relevant amendments to the statutes, approving the new version of the statutes and submitting it for registration as per the procedure prescribed in the Law on Religious Organisations.

5. By 1 October 2022 the Church shall notify the Chancery of the President of Latvia about the incumbent head of the Church, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops. The Chancery of the President of Latvia shall without delay publish the relevant information in the official publication “Latvijas Vēstnesis”.”

This Law shall come into force on the next day after its proclamation.

President of Latvia

Egils Levits