The *Saeima*1 has adopted and

the President has proclaimed the following law:

**Law on Riga Jewish Religious Community**

**Section 1. Terms Used in the Law**

(1) The terms used in the Law correspond to the terms used in the Law on Religious Organisations unless it has been laid down otherwise in this Law.

(2) The following terms are used in the Law:

1) **Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia**– the association registered in the Register of Associations and Foundations of the Republic of Latvia;

2) **Riga Jewish Religious Community**– the religious organisation as it is at the time of coming into force of this Law;

3) **articles of association**– the articles of association of the Riga Jewish Religious Community (hereinafter – the Community) which, in accordance with the procedures laid down in the law, have been registered with the Register of Religious Organisations and the Institutions Thereof;

4) **Head of the Community**– the person who has assumed the office and leads the Community in accordance with the procedures laid down in the articles of association;

5) **rabbi of the Community**– the clergyman included in the list of clergymen of the Community;

6) **chapel**– a building which has been built or adapted for holding services.

**Section 2. Purpose and Task of the Law**

(1) The purpose of the Law is to promote the development of an open, judicial, and harmonious society, and also cultural environment.

(2) According to the constitutional traditions and the provision of Article 99 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, taking into account the continuous existence of the Community as a religious organisation that is traditional in Latvia, respecting its faithfulness to the spiritual and moral values, and also taking into account that Jewish religious communities have not established a religious association in Latvia and that a cultural and art heritage of State significance is in the ownership of the Community, the task of the Law shall be to govern legal relationship of the State and the Community and to determine the joint tasks of the State and the Community in social, legal, and cultural field.

**Section 3. Status of the Community**

(1) The Community holds the status of a legal entity and the rights arising from it in accordance with the laws and regulations.

(2) The Community shall conform in its activity to the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, this Law, the Law on Religious Organisations, the law On Protection of Cultural Monuments, and other laws and regulations governing the activity of religious organisations, and also the articles of association of the Community.

(3) The Community shall exercise, in full extent, the right to self-governance and self-determination in accordance with the articles of association and the canons laid down therein.

(4) The full name of the Community is the Riga Jewish Religious Community. The name of the Community may only be used by the Community, and also the institutions and bodies founded thereby. The names of other religious organisations, associations, foundations, and legal subjects shall be unequivocally different from the name of the Community.

(5) The Community may request that unlawful use of its name is terminated, and also the losses caused to the Community are reimbursed.

(6) The decisions of the Community on canon issues shall not be subject to appeal in State institutions.

**Section 4. Head of the Community**

(1) The Head of the Community shall represent the Community in relationship with the State.

(2) The Head of the Community may, in accordance with the procedures and in the cases laid down in the articles of association, authorise in writing other persons for operation in relationship with the State on behalf of the Community.

**Section 5. Property of the Community**

(1) The Community may have movable and immovable property in the ownership.

(2) Actions of all kinds with immovable properties of the Community (including pledging, alienation, encumbering with property rights) shall be possible only with a written consent of the Head of the Community. Such consent shall not be necessary if the immovable property is alienated in accordance with the law On Expropriation of Immovable Property for State or Public Needs. The chapels and cemeteries in the ownership of the Community shall not be subject to expropriation.

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

**Section 6. Ceremonies in Cemeteries**

(1) Ceremonies in the cemeteries belonging to the Community shall take place in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Community.

(2) The Community may perform religious burial ceremonies also in the cemeteries arranged by local governments in accordance with the procedures stipulated by local governments.

**Section 7. Protection and Accessibility of Cultural Monuments**

(1) The Community shall ensure the preservation and use of the cultural monuments in its ownership or possession in accordance with the laws and regulations governing the protection of cultural monuments.

(2) The Community shall ensure accessibility of the cultural monuments in its ownership or possession for public viewing in accordance with the procedures stipulated by the Community.

(3) The State shall, in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations and in the amount of financial resources provided for in the law on the State budget for the current year, participate in financing of the survey of the cultural monuments in the ownership or possession of the Community and in conservation and restoration of cultural monuments of State significance which cannot be used for economic purposes. A local government has the right to participate in conservation and restoration of cultural monuments of local significance which cannot be used for economic purposes.

**Section 8. Right of a Rabbi of the Community to Perform a Marriage Ceremony**

Such rabbis of the Community to whom the Community has granted an authorisation and who have been entered in the list of the rabbis of the Community with the right to perform a marriage ceremony submitted to the Ministry of Justice are entitled to perform a marriage ceremony in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Civil Law and other laws and regulations.

**Section 9. Protection of Information**

(1) A rabbi of the Community may not be interrogated and it may not be demanded that he discloses the information established during his spiritual activity even if such rabbi is a witness or a participant to the proceedings in a court.

(2) None of the institutions or officials shall be allowed to recruit a rabbi of the Community.

**Section 10. Community and Military Service**

Persons in the National Armed Forces have the right to receive spiritual care by a rabbi of the Community and to participate in services of the Community unless it hinders the fulfilment of the duties of military service.

**Section 11. Cooperation in the Process of Granting an Asylum**

(1) An asylum seeker who is afraid of persecution due to his or her conviction of Moses believer (Judaist) has the right, during the process of granting an asylum, to the presence of a representative of the Community during negotiations.

(2) If necessary, the State institutions shall ask for a statement of the Community regarding possible persecution of the asylum seeker due to his or her Judaist conviction.

**Section 12. Relationship of the Community with Employees**

In establishing employment relationship with employees, in existence, amending, and termination of such relationship, the Community is entitled to be based on religious affiliation, readiness, and ability of a person to operate in good faith and loyalty in relation to the Community dogma (doctrine), and also on the aggregate of moral and behavioural norms, principles, and ideals which form the basis of Judaism.

**Section 13. Report on the Use of the Funds from the State Budget**

The Community shall prepare a report on the use of the funds from the State budget allocated to the Community in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law on Budget and Financial Management and submit it to the Ministry of Finance.

**Section 14. List of the Rabbis of the Community**

(1) The Community shall submit a list of such persons to the Ministry of Justice in writing who conform to the status of rabbis of the Community referred to in Section 1, Clause 5 of this Law and who are entitled to perform the activities referred to in Section 8 of this Law, and also information on such persons.

(2) The Community shall, within two weeks, notify the Ministry of Justice of changes in the information provided for in Paragraph one of this Section in writing.

(3) The amount of information to be submitted to the Ministry of Justice, the procedures and time periods for the submission and updating thereof shall be determined by the Cabinet.

(4) The information submitted to the Ministry of Justice shall be accessible to the public.

**Section 15. Procedures for Taking Certain Decisions of the Community**

In the cases provided for in Section 5, Paragraph two, Section 8, and Section 14, Paragraphs one and two of this Law, the Community shall take a decision as the member of the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia in conformity with the procedures laid down in the articles of association of the Council of Jewish Communities of Latvia, unless such procedures are in contradiction with the provisions of this Law and other laws and regulations.

**Transitional Provisions**

1. The Community shall, by 1 May 2008, harmonise the articles of association with this Law by making the relevant amendments to the articles of association, approving them in a new wording, and submitting them to the Ministry of Justice for registration in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law on Religious Organisations.

2. The Community shall, by 1 June 2008, notify the data referred to in Section 14, Paragraph one of this Law to the Ministry of Justice.

The Law shall come into force on 1 May 2008.

The Law has been adopted by the *Saeima* on 31 May 2007.

President V. Vīķe-Freiberga

Rīga, 20 June 2007