

(Please note: This is a non-binding English translation.
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Statutes
of the religious denominational community
(*religiöse Bekenntnisgemeinschaft*)
“Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”
(“*Atheistische Religionsgesellschaft in Österreich*”)
of 14 April 2015

Name of the religious denominational community

§ 1. Our religious denominational community is named “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”.

Presentation of the religious doctrine

§ 2. (1) We, the members of the “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”, when trying to explain the shaping of the world and our position as humans in this world, denominate ourselves in free religious self-determination as “atheists” and

(a) believe that not gods/deities created us humans, but that in each case humans created and/or create, respectively, their gods/deities (and their narratives and so on), so that all of these (and their narratives and so on) in the end only exist as gods/deities (and their narratives and so on) that have been created by humans, and

(b) want this religious denomination to be recognized, in an inclusive sense, as a religious denomination in Austria.

(2) We therefore believe that not gods/deities gave us our ethos but that our ethos has been and is, respectively, developed and negotiated by us humans.

(3) We are aware of the fact that the currently applying state laws on religion offer special opportunities for legal consideration of rites. In this context we believe and want that it shall be possible for each member

(a) to live, at his/her own option, a vegetarian life (vegetarian rite), and

(b) to live, at his/her own option, a vegan life (vegan rite).

(4) We recognize that there is much that lies beyond our horizons of knowledge and experience, and we can calmly accept the reality of this non-known and non-experienced without any statement of last grounds as well. We also recognize that there are desirable things that transcend the horizon of what we have achieved.

Purposes and aims of the religious denominational community
and rights and duties of the members

§ 3. (1) As religious denominational community “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria” we strive for the long-term aim of getting full judicial equality and recognition as a *Religionsgesellschaft* in Austria. We thereby want to open up new spaces of cultural participation and to make visible a process of social change of what and how people believe religiously.

(2) All members have the right of being members free of charge (§ 7 section 1) and of ending the membership at any time and free of charge (§ 4 section 2); any change of these rights is excluded.

(3) All members have the right of submitting suggestions to the presidium, regarding all affairs of our religious denominational community.

(4) All members, specifically the members of the Presidium, are bound to the Statutes of the religious denominational community if they explicitly act as members and/or organs of the “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”.

(5) Members who have personally opted for a life according to one of the rites mentioned in § 2 section 3 are bound to the rite they have opted for until the point of time when they revoke their option. They have the right to get an appropriate written certification about this.

Beginning and ending of membership

§ 4. (1) Everyone who is legally entitled to opt totally on his/her own for or against the membership to a religious denomination (*voll religionsmündig*), who has a legal residency in Austria and who is neither member of a registered religious denominational community according to the Austrian Law concerning the legal personality of religious denominational communities 1998 (RRBG, *Bundesgesetz über die Rechtspersönlichkeit von religiösen Bekenntnisgemeinschaften*, BGBl. I 1998/19) nor member of a church or religious society (*Religionsgesellschaft*) recognized by Austrian law can join the “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”. The ritual of joining consists of filling in the provided form appropriately and of signing it by one’s own hand; as an alternative to a signature by one’s own hand authentication by a court of justice or by a notary is also sufficient. The membership begins at the point of time of valid joining.

(2) The members of our religious denominational community can end their membership at any time on their own and free of charge. To this end, it is sufficient to declare one’s leaving at the respective district administration authority (*Bezirksverwaltungsbehörde*) that is competent according to the Austrian Law concerning the legal personality of religious denominational communities 1998 (RRBG, *Bundesgesetz über die Rechtspersönlichkeit von religiösen Bekenntnisgemeinschaften*, BGBl. I 1998/19); however, a short written note to the “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria” signed by one’s own hand or authenticated by a court of justice or a notary is also sufficient. The membership ends at the point of time of valid leaving and at death.

Organs of the religious denominational community

§ 5. (1) Organs of the religious denominational community are

- (a) the Presidium and
- (b) the Presidial Ambassador.

(2) Their territorial sphere covers the entire territory of the Republic of Austria. The official address of the Presidium is the residential address of the current Presidial Ambassador or the personal place of residence of the member of the Presidium entitled to fulfill the functions of the Presidial Ambassador according to § 5 section 8, respectively, unless the Presidium decides otherwise. The Presidial Ambassador has, unless the Presidium decides otherwise, his/her residential address at his/her personal place of residence.

(3) The Presidium is the only and, thus, also the highest decision-making body of our religious denominational community. The sphere of competence of the Presidium covers all affairs of our religious denominational community. The Presidial Ambassador in his/her role is bound to the decisions of the Presidium. Decisions of the Presidium always require at least a consenting quorum of the absolute majority of all the members of the Presidium; the election of the Presidial Ambassador requires the consenting quorum of two thirds of all the members of the Presidium; changes of the Statutes require a consenting quorum of three quarters of all the members of the Presidium; a decision of the Presidium to self-liquidate our religious denominational community requires the consent of all the members of the Presidium. All members of the Presidium with a membership to the Presidium of more than five years have a combined veto right. Members of the Presidium who are not in a state to decide and to communicate their decision successfully to the Presidium are exempted from this combined veto right; they are also exempted from the eventuality that the functions of the Presidial Ambassador, according to § 5 section 8, could fall to them. In case of their hindrance, members of the Presidium are entitled to let other members of the Presidium, to whom they gave authority prior to this in the form of a written notification signed by their own hand or authenticated by a court of justice or by a notary, act for them as members of the Presidium at the Presidium; resignation cannot be declared via such a representation. After any change of the Statutes all members of the Presidium shall very carefully read through the Statutes from start to finish (ritual of reading through the Statutes). The Presidium can change the Statutes, it can recall the current Presidial Ambassador even against his/her will from his/her office, and it can decide that a concrete member of the Presidium (except the first two members of the Presidium), even against the will of that member of the Presidium, is no longer member of the Presidium. The Presidium can be correctly convened by the Presidial Ambassador as well as by at least the tenth part of its members. Physical presence is not necessary for decisions, it is sufficient to ascertain the will of each single member of the Presidium; thereby, each member of the Presidium has to be contacted and informed preferably at an early point of time and verifiably and, if necessary, also repeatedly.

(4) The members of the Presidium shall be awake to notably being representatives of the religious denominational community.

(5) The Presidium is entitled to incorporate members of our religious denominational community who agree with this incorporation; at the occasion of its incorporation, each new member of the Presidium shall very carefully read through the Statutes from start to finish (ritual of reading through the Statutes). The first five members of the "Atheistic Religious Society in Austria" who signed the original of the Statutes of 14 January 2009 are at the same time also the first five members of the Presidium; a decision that one of the first two members of the Presidium, without the explicit and verifiable consent of that member of the Presidium, is no longer member of the Presidium (and a relaxation of this clause) is excluded. The members of the Presidium are obligated to treat the memberships of all members of the "Atheistic Religious Society in Austria" as confidentially as possible; this obligation extends also to the time after their membership to the Presidium. Each member of the Presidium is at any time free to declare his/her resignation as a member of the Presidium in the form of a written notification to the Presidium signed by his/her own hand or authenticated by a court of justice or by a notary; such a resignation becomes effective by the point of time when the Presidium demonstrably is informed about that resignation, whereat this notification itself counts as an irrevocable consent of the notifying/resigning person to this resignation. The membership to the Presidium also

ends with the end of membership to our religious denominational community according to § 4 section 2.

(6) The Presidial Ambassador is elected indefinitely by the Presidium out of the members of the religious denominational community and is at any time free to resign in the form of a written notification to the Presidium signed by his/her own hand or authenticated by a court of justice or by a notary; such a resignation becomes effective by the point of time when the Presidium demonstrably is informed about that resignation, whereat this notification itself counts as an irrevocable consent of the notifying/resigning person to this resignation. The elected Presidial Ambassador by his/her election automatically becomes member of the Presidium, if he/she was no member of the Presidium directly before his/her election.

(7) The Presidial Ambassador has the task of organizing ballots and decisions, respectively, of the Presidium and of caring for the documentation and for the storage of the documents and/or written materials and the list of members of the "Atheistic Religious Society in Austria". Furthermore, the Presidial Ambassador has the task of notifying without any delay the respective federal ministry that is competent according to the Austrian Law concerning the legal personality of religious denominational communities 1998 (RRBG, *Bundesgesetz über die Rechtspersönlichkeit von religiösen Bekenntnisgemeinschaften*, BGBl. I 1998/19) of the names and addresses of the members of the institutions entitled to represent our religious denominational community as well as of any change of the Statutes.

(8) If there is no currently acting Presidial Ambassador, then all functions fall to the member of the Presidium with the highest seniority; if several members of the Presidium fulfill this criterion, then to the one with the oldest membership of our religious denominational community; and if several members meet even that criterion, then to the oldest among them.

(9) If once the Presidium has no single member anymore, then a new Presidium shall be elected. Up to the correct election of at least five new members of the Presidium the Presidium's functions fall to those twenty members of our religious denominational community with the oldest memberships of our religious denominational community, whereupon each eligible member can renounce at any time in favor of the respective following one; any abstention from voting counts as renunciation; such a renunciation is irrevocable. If the memberships of eligible members are equally old, then in each case the age decides about the ranking of the respective members, whereupon in each case the older member gets priority. The twenty members entitled to vote shall be informed, if possible, about their special situation without any delay by the last previous member of the Presidium. Only members of our religious denominational community who agree with their election can be elected new members of the Presidium. Any changing of the Statutes by the twenty electing members is excluded. If the twenty electing members don't manage to correctly elect at least five new members of the Presidium within a half year, then members of our religious denominational community who have been nominated by the previous Presidium on a respective list become members of the Presidium; at the same point of time the mandate of the twenty members ends. The Presidium has to make provisions for the transmission of all required information as appropriate.

(10) We deliberately did not establish an organ that consists of all members of our religious denominational community, in order to keep the costs for the "Atheistic Religious Society in Austria" as small as possible.

Outward representation of the religious denominational community

§ 6. The members of the Presidium, acting jointly as the Presidium, do the outward representation of our religious denominational community “Atheistic Religious Society in Austria”. Toward the state, in addition, also the Presidial Ambassador is entitled to act as a full representative of our religious denominational community.

Way of acquiring resources necessary for the fulfillment of economic needs

§ 7. (1) The membership in our religious denominational community is free of charge.

(2) Resources that may be necessary for the fulfillment of the economic needs of our religious denominational community shall be acquired specifically by means of donations and/or gifts.

(3) The religious denominational community commits to deal with its resources that may be at hand in a responsible, sustainable and sparing manner.

Regulations for the case of dissolving the legal personality

§ 8. (1) In the case of dissolving the legal personality of our religious denominational community resources that may be possessed by our religious denominational community must not be used for purposes that contradict its aim.

(2) In the case of dissolving the legal personality of our religious denominational community the last Presidium, if necessary, cares for the correct handling of claims against the religious denominational community.

(3) A decision of the Presidium to self-liquidate our religious denominational community is valid only if the Presidium consists of at least five members; such a decision requires a unanimous vote by all members of the Presidium; a relaxation of these minimum requirements is excluded. In the case of a valid self-liquidation of our religious denominational community by a decision of the Presidium, the Presidium takes care that all (hitherto) members of our religious denominational community are immediately informed, and the Presidial Ambassador notifies this in writing to the respective federal minister who is competent according to the Austrian Law concerning the legal personality of religious denominational communities 1998 (RRBG, *Bundesgesetz über die Rechtspersönlichkeit von religiösen Bekenntnisgemeinschaften*, BGBl. I 1998/19).

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