

REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

LAW ON MEETINGS

2 December 1993 No I-317

(As last amended on 17 June 2008 No X-1609)

Vilnius

I. GENERAL CHAPTER

Article 1. Purpose of the Law

This Law shall lay down conditions of ensuring the constitutional right of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania to assembly unarmed in peaceful meetings and the procedure for protecting national security and public safety, public order, public health and morals, the rights and freedoms of other persons when organising meetings, as well as the liability for violations of this Law.

Article 2. Meetings the organisation of which shall not be regulated

This Law shall not regulate meetings which are organised by:

- 1) state government and administration institutions;
- 2) members of the Seimas and municipal councillors as meetings with electors;
- 3) the churches or any other religious organisations recognised by the state in order to perform religious ceremonies in churches, houses of worship, cemeteries and other special places designated for that purpose;
- 4) the political parties, other political and public organisations, trade unions registered in accordance with the procedure laid down by law which arrange meetings of their members and persons invited individually pursuant to their regulations or statutes with the aim of discussing their matters in their own or other rented or provided premises;
- 5) the administration of establishments, organisations or their employees within their territory or premises as well as in rented premises or in provided premises and places upon agreement with the owners;
- 6) commercial enterprises as commercial entertaining events in premises designated for that purpose, provided that those events do not violate public order, the freedoms and rights of other persons;
- 7) private persons for entertainments, celebrations, resolution of other private matters in non-public places of joint use.

Seeking to maintain and protect the order in such meetings the security police, services for protection of individuals and property, security guards may be involved on contractual basis.

This Law also shall not regulate sports events, concerts and other public events of that type in the places designated for that purpose.

Article 3. Form of meetings

Under this Law organizers of meetings may organise various meetings: meetings, pickets, demonstrations, parades, various processions, other peaceful unarmed meetings.

Article 4. Organizers of meetings

The following may organise meetings under the conditions and in compliance with the procedure laid down by this Law:

- 1) capable citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who have reached the age of 18;
- 2) political parties, other political and public organisations, trade unions registered in accordance with the procedure laid down by law, churches and other religious organisations;
- 3) other legal persons of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 5. Establishment of the procedure for organising meetings

Meetings organised in accordance with the procedure laid down by this Law shall not require advance permission of the State or municipalities; organisers shall coordinate the place of meetings (itinerary of parades and processions), time and any other procedure of organisation thereof with the head of an executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him.

Article 6. Place of meetings

This Law shall lay down conditions and procedure for organising meetings in public places, i.e. streets, squares, parks of cities and townships as well as other public places and common-use buildings.

Local authorities may define permanent places or premises for meetings.

It shall be prohibited to organise meetings, pickets and other actions of groups or individual persons in state government and administration establishments, premises of local authorities, police, penal institutions, social rehabilitation, national defence, security service, prosecutor's office, courts, military units and facilities, national banks, enterprises of nuclear power and other enterprises of special labour safety regime or protected by the armed guard.

Meetings near the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the residency of the President of the Republic, buildings of the Government or courts may be organised not closer than 75 meters and near other state government and administration establishments, foreign diplomatic missions, establishments of local authorities, prosecutor's office, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of National Defence, military units and other facilities of special labour safety regime or protected by the armed guard – not closer than 25 meters from the main entrance to these buildings or facilities; in all cases free access to the said buildings shall be guaranteed.

Article 7. Time of meetings

Public meetings may be held from 8 am to 11 pm and only at the time coordinated by the organizers of a meeting and the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him. After coordination meetings may also be organised at a different time, but only in lighted places and without disturbing the rest of other people.

A local authority may fix a set time for meetings in permanent places or premises designated for that.

Article 8. Prohibited meetings

The following meetings shall be prohibited, if their participants:

1) hold arms (possess firearms or silent arms, things specially suited to cause bodily injuries, set fire or cause material damage or things that although not specially suited for the said purposes, but which can be practically used for the said purposes) or possess inflammable, potent or radioactive materials, alcoholic beverages; wear military uniforms or are armed with passive weaponry (helmets, bulletproof vests, etc.), hide their faces behind masks or are otherwise camouflaged so they cannot be recognised – that proves their readiness to make violations of law;

2) drive vehicles in a way which causes threat to road safety, endangers safety and health of the participants of a meeting and other persons, violates public order and peace;

3) are naked or otherwise cynically violates morals with their appearance or things they possess or demonstrate;

4) during meetings evidently instigate to violate or violate the Constitution or laws of the Republic of Lithuania by speeches they deliver, posters, slogans, audiovisual measures and other actions;

5) demonstrate the flag or coat of arms of Nazi Germany, the USSR or the Lithuanian SSR, or a flag, coat of arms or uniform the constituent part of which is the flag or coat of arms of Nazi Germany, the USSR and the Lithuanian SSR, the images of the leaders of the German National Socialist Party or the USSR Communist Party, responsible for repressions

of the Lithuanian population, the symbols or uniforms of the Nazi or Communist organisations, or the flags or badges composed on the basis of the flag or coat of arms of Nazi Germany, the USSR or the Lithuanian SSR, the symbols of the Nazi swastika, the Nazi SS, the Soviet hammer and sickle, the Soviet five-pointed red star, perform the national anthem of Nazi Germany, the USSR or the Lithuanian SSR.

II. PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING NOTIFICATIONS ABOUT ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS

Article 9. Time limits of submitting of a notification about organisation of meetings and its form

A notification about organisation of a meeting shall be submitted by organizers or their representatives not later than 5 working days prior to the date of holding of a planned meeting.

The head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him shall be informed by organizers of meetings about a meeting which is being organised by submitting a written notification (its copy shall also be submitted) which is signed at least by two persons in order to coordinate the place, date and conditions of a meeting.

The notification must indicate:

- 1) the form and content of a meeting;
- 2) the date of a meeting, the time of its beginning and end;
- 3) the place of a meeting, routes of parades or processions;
- 4) the planned number of participants;
- 5) requests to the police concerning the maintenance of public order;
- 6) the names, surnames, places of residence of at least two organizers or persons authorised by them.

If a meeting is organised in a permanent place or premises designated by the local authority for that person and at the set time, and the number of participants is limited (up to 100 individuals), the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him shall be informed about organisation of a meeting, but a written notification shall not be necessary. It shall not be necessary to inform about pickets in which not more than 10 individuals participate.

The head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him shall issue a certificate of the established form concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting.

Article 10. Time limits and procedure for considering a notification

A notification about organisation of a meeting must be considered not later than within 3 working days from its receipt and not later than 48 hours before the beginning of a meeting.

A notification shall be considered by the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him, with participation of a representative of the police. Possibilities of organisation of a meeting at the indicated time and the indicated place as well as other conditions shall be discussed and a decision shall be taken. Organizers of a meeting or their authorised representatives as well as representatives of other establishments, specialists may also participate in discussion.

If during consideration of a notification the circumstances come out because of which a meeting may not be organised in the form specified in the notification, in the indicated time or place, then proposals concerning other forms, place and time of a meeting may be introduced and considered, but only in participation of organizers of a meeting.

Article 11. Decision concerning the form, place and time of a meeting

Upon consideration of a notification about organisation of a meeting, the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him shall take one of the following decisions which shall be announced immediately:

1) to issue to the organizer of a meeting a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of the meeting;

2) to refuse to issue such certificate if when organising a meeting state security or public safety, public order, people's health or morals or the rights and freedoms of other persons may be violated.

A certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting or a decision to refuse to issue such certificate shall be issued on the day of consideration of the notification. A certificate of the established form must specify the rights and duties of the organizers as well as the liability for violation of law, and the measures of local authorities and the police to be taken for the implementation of the requests set out in a notification by the organizers of a meeting.

Article 12. Decision to refuse to issue a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting

A decision to refuse to issue a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting must be in written form and reasoned. It shall specify the reasons and

circumstances because of which the notification of the organizers of a meeting about organization of a meeting may not be satisfied altogether because of an unacceptable form, place, time of a meeting, or due to other circumstances provided for in this Law. A decision shall be signed by the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him, and a copy of this decision shall be presented to the organizers or the persons authorised by them.

Article 13. Appeal against the refusal to issue a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time or form of a meeting

Organizers of a meeting may appeal against the refusal to issue a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting to an appropriate local court within 10 days of the adoption of the decision. The court must examine such application not later than within 3 days.

Article 14. Cancellation of a meeting

If after the issuing of a certificate concerning the coordinated place, time and form of a meeting, new circumstances provided for in the Law come out because of which a meeting may not be organised in the coordinated place, at the coordinated time and in the coordinated form, the head of the executive body of the municipal council or a representative authorised by him shall inform the organizers about this and propose to cancel a meeting. If the organizers of a meeting refuse to cancel a meeting, they the whole liability provided for by law for the consequences of such a meeting shall fall on the said organizers.

III. PROCEDURE FOR HOLDING MEETINGS

Article 15. Procedure for holding meetings

If within an hour from the beginning of the coordinated time of a meeting the organizers of a meeting do not inform that the start of a meeting falls behind schedule, a meeting shall be considered as not held.

A meeting shall be started, lead or chaired by its organizers or the persons invited by them, or the persons selected by the meeting. The organizer and the leader of a meeting shall have the right:

- 1) to call to order a participant of the meeting who violates public order or the requirements of this Law;
- 2) to demand to remove from the meeting the persons who create disorder, do not comply with the laws, or to ask the police to do this.

A police officer who observes the compliance with the laws during a meeting must present himself to the organizers of the meeting and to stay in that meeting.

Article 16. Termination of a meeting on the initiative of the organizers

The organizers and leaders of a meeting must end a meeting when:

- 1) it loses the character indicated in the notification;
- 2) persons who have violated this Law are not removed from the meeting;
- 3) violation of laws or morals is instigated.

If the violations of this Law or other laws are made during a meeting, its organizers, leaders or keepers of order must terminate the meeting and request that its participants disperse.

If this is not done by the organizers or keepers of order, it must be done by the police officer who observes the compliance with the laws during a meeting.

Article 17. Termination of a meeting on the initiative of the police

A meeting shall be terminated by police officers who observe the compliance with the laws during a meeting, if when publicly warned the organizers or participants of the meeting:

- 1) deliberately grossly violate the procedure for organising meetings as laid down by this Law (the coordinated form, place or time of a meeting);
- 2) by making use of the opportunities of a meeting, attempt to commit or commit crimes against the independence, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the State of Lithuania or other deliberate criminal acts to person's life, health, freedom, honour and dignity, public safety, governance order and public order;
- 3) individually or by group actions disturb or causes an actual threat to disturb traffic, activities of state establishments, organisations and local authorities, to cause production emergencies in military enterprises and plants producing explosive, poisonous or any other hazardous production.

**IV. RIGHTS, DUTIES AND LIABILITY OF ORGANIZERS
AND PARTICIPANTS OF MEETINGS**

Article 18. Rights of organizers and participants of meetings

Organizers and participants of meetings shall enjoy the right to organize unarmed peaceful meetings in compliance with the conditions and procedure laid down by the Constitution, this Law and other laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

Officers who unjustifiably restricts the right of citizens to peaceably assemble and persons who hinder organisation of peaceful meetings shall be held liable in accordance with the procedure laid down by the laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 19. General duties of organizers and participants of meetings

Organizers and participants of meetings must adhere to this Law and other laws of the Republic of Lithuania, set rules of road traffic, fire protection and other rules, respect moral values accepted by society, meet the lawful demands of government representatives and police officers.

Article 20. Liability of organizers and participants of meetings

Organizers and participants of meetings who violate the laws, shall be held criminally or administratively liable, shall be responsible for the caused material damage and must compensate damages.

When participants of a meeting maliciously fail to meet the lawful demands of the police officers who protect public order, insult them, threaten to use or actually use violence against them, the measures set out by law shall be applied to the said participants.

Article 21. Cash deposit for compensating material damage

If an administrative penalty has already been imposed on the organizers of a meeting (the subject who organises meetings) for the committed violations of law and order or the meetings organised by them were terminated because of the infringements of the procedure for organising the meeting, committed by the organizers, or the considerable material damage caused through the fault of organizers, when taking a decision to issue a certificate for a meeting the organizers of such meetings may, during one year, be requested to deposit the sum from LTL 10 000 to 50 000 for compensation of possible material damage or losses. In the event of failure to meet such requirement, a meeting shall not be organised.

V. DUTIES, RIGHTS AND LIABILITY OF POLICE OFFICERS

Article 22. Duties and liability of state government and police officers

State government and police officers must provide organisational and other possibilities set out by law for organisation of legal meetings, for protection of the rights and freedoms of the organizers and participants of meetings as well as of other persons, state security or public safety, public order, people's health or morals.

Officers who hinder organisation of legal meetings shall be held liable in accordance with the procedure laid down by laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 23. Rights and duties of police officers when ensuring legality and order of meetings

In order to ensure state security or public safety, public order, people's health or morals, or the rights and freedoms of other persons, police officers shall during a meeting act in compliance with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Police as well as other laws.

The committed violations shall be entered into an appropriate record or resolution. For failure to comply with the lawful requirements (resolutions) the organizers and participants of meetings shall be held administratively or criminally liable.

For unlawful actions the officers shall be held liable in accordance with the procedure laid down by law.

Article 24. Preventive measures

If the city, region police commissar possesses information that the participants of a meeting may hold or actually hold arms, things or materials hazardous to health or life, he shall inform the organizers of the meeting about this and may take a decision to organise at the approaches to the place of a meeting the inspection and examination of citizens and their baggage in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

I promulgate this Law passed by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

ALGIRDAS BRAZAUSKAS