**Estonian Governments response to the questionnaire on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

Estonia is one of the highly secularized countries in Europe where religion does not have central or important social or political impact in society where according to the population censuses and other surveys less than one third of adult population consider themselves religiously affiliated and Estonia is religiously diverse.

Persons belonging to minority religious or belief communities in Estonia enjoy civil and political rights, including but not limited to participation and representation in the public life, access to justice and effective remedies, liberty and security, freedom of expression, assembly and association. Everyone living in Estonia is entitled to economic, social and cultural rights, including but not limited to the rights to adequate food and housing, education, employment and healthcare. The Estonian Constitution from 1992 as well as other laws and legal acts prohibit discrimination inter alia on the basis of religion

There are no laws or policies targeting manifestation of freedom of religion or belief of minority religious communities. The minority religious communities may operate in different legal entity forms or practice their religion without any legal entity status. Minority religious communities have the same possibilities and procedures as other, larger religious communities to become recognized as religious associations. There are no legal acts regarding blasphemy.

Religiously based family and personal laws, including those related to marriage, divorce, inheritance and alimony are not legally binding in Estonia. Religious communities may apply for the right to conduct marriages with civil validity for their religious authorities (clergy) that includes participation in training and examination. If the exam is passed the clergy receives the right to act as registrar office for marriages and the marriage becomes valid only if the general regulations regarding contracting marriage is followed. This possibility is open for all religious communities with legal capacity association and does not discriminate any religious community on the basis of religion or belief.

There have not been cases involving displacement and forced migration of religious or belief communities owing to discrimination, exclusion or land rights violations nor instances of communal violence against religious minorities, and incitement to such violence. According to Penal Code these actions are punishable.