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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

LAW
ON CONDUCTING MEETINGS, ASSEMBLIES,
RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA ON CONDUCTING MEETINGS, ASSEMBLIES, RALLIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

ARTICLE 1. OBJECTIVES AND SUBJECT OF REGULATION OF THE LAW

1. The objective of this law is to create necessary conditions for citizens of the Republic of Armenia, foreign citizens, stateless persons (hereafter referred to as citizens) and legal persons to exercise their constitutional right to conduct peaceful, weaponless meetings, assemblies, rallies and demonstrations while protecting national security and public safety of a democratic state, public order, public health and morals, rights, freedoms, dignity and reputation of others.

2. This law regulates relations pertinent to conducting peaceful meetings, assemblies, rallies (processions) or demonstrations (including pickets), as well as other events.

ARTICLE 2. MAIN CONCEPTS USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE LAW

Main concepts used for the purposes of this law shall have the following meanings:

- public event – peaceful and equitable meetings, assemblies, rallies (processions) or demonstrations (including pickets) conducted in places of general public use for the purpose of expressing opinion, seeking, obtaining or disseminating information or views on economic, social, political, spiritual or other claims, problems and issues;
- meeting, assembly, demonstration – a [public] event organized on one place;
- rally – an event constituting a movement from one location to another. A rally may also be conducted with use of public transportation means;
- place of general use - an open space of state or municipal property (street, square, park, garden, landplot, etc.), where free access or presence of citizens is neither prohibited nor restricted;
- mass public event - a public event with participation of 100 or more citizens;
- non-mass public event – a public event with participation of less than 100 citizens;
- other event – celebrations, ceremonies, cultural or sport events;
- an object of a special importance - an object having state or strategic significance, or presenting high degree of danger, or ensuring the vital functions of the population.
- organizer - a citizen or a legal person who issues notifications or determines procedures (purpose, date and time, venue, manner or other conditions) for conducting a mass public event or any other event;
- participant of a public event (hereinafter referred to as participant) – a citizen who at the time of convention of the public event was present in the place of the public event with a purpose of taking part in the public event. Citizens present in the place of the public event during the convention of that public event for the purposes of carrying out their formal or professional or creative or any other statutory or contractual duty, as well as representatives of mass media present for the purposes of covering that public event shall not be considered participants of the public event;
- authorized body – bodies considering notification on convention of a mass public event, i.e. community head and Yerevan Mayor for Yerevan.

ARTICLE 3. CONVENTION OF OTHER EVENTS IN PLACES OF GENERAL USE

1. Citizens or legal persons convene other events in places of public use, except for areas delineated by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, without prior notification and with due respect for public order, traffic rules and requirements of para. 3 of Article 9 and points 2 and 3 of para. 1 of Article 13.

Organizers of other events in places of general use shall be entitled to the right to hold such events in accordance with procedures envisaged by this law for mass public events.

2. Other events in areas delineated by the Government of the Republic of Armenia are held subject to consent of authorized bodies as stipulated in para. 10 of Article 2 of this law.

3. Other events held in violation of provisions of this Article shall be considered prohibited and may be terminated in accordance with procedures stipulated by this law, for conducting mass public events.

ARTICLE 4. CONDUCTING MEETINGS, ASSEMBLIES, RALLIES AND OTHER EVENTS IN AREAS NOT CONSIDERED PLACES OF GENERAL USE

1. Meetings, assemblies, rallies or other events are held in areas not considered as places of general use without notification or limitation provided these do not violate rights of the manager or the owner, public order and requirements of points 1 thru 3 of para. 3, as well as subpoints (a) and (b) of para. 2 of Article 9 of this law.

2. Meetings, assemblies, rallies or other events held in violation of provisions of this Article are prohibited and may be terminated in accordance with procedures stipulated by this law, for conducting mass public events.

ARTICLE 5. ORGANISATION AND CONVENTION OF A PUBLIC EVENT

1. Citizen(s) or legal person(s) shall have the right to organize public events.

2. Public event may be organized and held in one or several manners stipulated by this law.

3. State or local self-governance bodies shall not infringe upon or intervene in mass public events held in accordance with procedures stipulated by this law.

4. Should a public event be organized by a legal entity, a head of the executive body of such entity (manager, chief executive, president, officer, etc.) or another person with statutory powers to represent such legal entity shall be considered the organizer, unless that legal entity has entrusted the organization duties to any other person(s).

5. In case of replacement of the organizer prior to commencement of a mass public event, the organizer shall, not later than 3 hours prior to the commencement of the public event, issue a written notification to the authorized body, its representative or a police representative, enclosing all information about the organizer required by this law.

6. Mass public event shall not commence unless none of the organizers is present.

ARTICLE 6. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF ORGANISERS OF A PUBLIC EVENT

1. The organizer shall have the right

- 1) to choose, at his/her discretion, location and procedure for conducting a public event,
- 2) to terminate the public event at any time,

- 3) to request the police to expel from the venue of the public event citizens who engage in unlawful activity or violate public order,
 - 4) to create weaponless groups bearing special identification signs (hereinafter referred to as volunteer groups) that should help ensure public order and legitimacy [of the public event],
 - 5) to turn to the police for issues related to protection of public order or safety of participants of the event prior to and during convention of the public event,
 - 6) to disseminate information about the date, time, venue, purpose, procedure of the public event as well as solicit participation in that event in through the mass media and other lawful means,
 - 7) exercise rights established for participants [of public events].
2. The organizer shall
- 1) assume duties stipulated for the participants [of public events],
 - 2) ensure that prior to commencement of the public events his/her first and family name is announced; should the public event be organized by a legal entity, the full title of such entity, the purpose of the [public] event, the format of the public event, as well as a estimated time of completion of the public event are announced. Should a rally be conducted in the course of the public event, the itinerary and the timing of such rally shall also be announced.
 - 3) take measures aimed to ensure compliance of the participants of the public event with the legislation and requirements for protection of public order,
 - 4) inform the participants of the public event on the existence of volunteer groups and their identification signs,
 - 5) immediately inform the participants of the public event about demands of police representatives to stop unlawful actions or violations of public order,
 - 6) assume other statutory duties stipulated for organizers of public events.
3. At least one of the organizers shall be personally present at the opening of the public event and refrain from leaving the venue of the public event until such time when the public event is finished.

ARTICLE 7. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PARTICIPANTS OF A PUBLIC EVENT

1. Every citizen shall have the right to participate in public events.
Every citizen shall have the right to stop his/her participation in public events.
None shall have the right to oblige a citizen to participate in any public event.
2. Participants of a public event may have or carry pennants and other displays and use loudspeakers.
3. Every citizen shall have the right to photograph public events and record them on video or audio.
4. Participants of public events are prohibited from carrying, using, operating and applying weapons, ammunition or explosive, poisonous, flammable or any other similar items or substances that may inflict damage on life, health or property of persons.
5. Participants shall be prohibited from distributing or using alcoholic beverages during public events.
6. Participants shall be prohibited from using loudspeakers or shouting and declaiming from 22:00 to 8:00 hours and in the proximity of healthcare, pre-school and education institutions in case such actions disrupt regular operation of those institutions or well-being of persons present in those institutions.

7. Participants of public events shall

- 1) respect public order and other requirements of the law,
- 2) follow legitimate requests of the organizer, volunteer groups, authorized body or police representative and refrain from hindering their legitimate actions,
- 3) in the event of termination of the public event, immediately leave the venue of the public event and stop other activities emanating from the public event,
- 4) refrain from inflicting damage on property, trees, bushes and green areas located in the venue of the public event,
- 5) refrain from blocking free entry and exit to and from state, municipality or privately owned buildings, structures or other working premises located in or adjacent to the venue of the public event, as well as pedestrian entry and exit routes to houses or other residential areas.

ARTICLE 8. DUTIES OF AN AUTHORISED BODY AND THE POLICE

1. Authorized body shall

- 1) appoint its representative and immediately inform the organizer thereon,
- 2) notify relevant police authority and Governor on the mass public event and its representative,
- 3) ensure presence of its representative at the mass public event during the entire course of the mass public event.

2. The police shall

- 1) upon receipt of notification on the mass public event, appoint its representative and inform the organizer and the authorized body thereon,
- 2) ensure presence of its representative at the mass public event during the entire course of the mass public event,
- 3) ensure general legality of the mass public event and protection of public order,
- 4) expel from the venue of the mass public event persons who engage in unlawful activity or violate public order,
- 5) ensure unrestricted entry and exit to and from state, municipal or privately owned buildings, structures and other working premises located in or adjacent to the venue of the public event, as well as ensure unrestricted pedestrian access and exit routes to and from houses or other residential areas.
- 6) perform its duties in accordance with the main principles of administration.
- 7) take, in cases and according to procedures stipulated by this law, decisions on terminating a public event or other event conducted in violation of provisions of this law and demand such termination from the organizer of the public event,
- 8) in cases and according to procedures stipulated by the law, compulsorily terminate public or other event,
- 9) exercise other functions in conformity with the law.

ARTICLE 9. LIMITATIONS ON ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING A PUBLIC EVENT

1. Citizens in pre-trial detention or prison institutions, as well as citizens qualified by court as incapable or partially incapable, shall not have the right to organize public events.

Citizens under 18 years of age not yet qualified as fully capable by procedure stipulated by law, shall have the right to organize mass public event with written permission of parents or custodians.

2. The right to organize or participate in public events shall not be granted to
 - 1) employees of police and national security bodies except for cases stipulated by law,
 - 2) military officers and employees of penitentiary institutions.
3. It is prohibited
 - 1) to stage meetings, assemblies and rallies on bridges, in tunnels, underground areas and safety belts of energy facilities, water systems, railways and airports,
 - 2) to conduct public events
 - a) in hazardous buildings and structures of 4th grade dilapidation,
 - b) construction sites,
 - c) working premises of state or local self-governance bodies,
 - d) military units, defense facilities, penitentiary institutions, pre-trial detention institutions and in places less than 150 meters away from such areas,
 - e) special areas and areas of significance designated as such by the Government of the Republic of Armenia and in places less than 150 meters away from such areas,
 - f) in culture and sport facilities and in places less than 150 meters away from such areas at such times when other events are conducted in these areas and when natural course of such other events may be disrupted.
 - 3) organization and convention of public events is prohibited if such events aim to forcibly overthrow the constitutional order, instigate national, racial or religious hatred, campaign for violence or war, as well as in other causes prohibited by the law.

ARTICLE 10. NOTIFICATION ON CONDUCTING A PUBLIC EVENT

1. Except for cases stipulated under para. 3 of this Article, mass public events may be organized only after written notification of authorized bodies.

2. Citizens and legal persons shall have the right to convene non-mass public events without notification provided such events do not disrupt public order and traffic rules or counter provisions under para. 3 of Article 9 and points 2, 3 and 7 of para. 1 of Article 13 of this law. Non- mass public events conducted in violation of the present article are considered to be forbidden and can be terminated according to the provisions of the present law on stipulated order on conducting public events.

The organizers of non-mass public event have the right in pursuance with the provision of the present law on the stipulated order of conducting public events.

3. Citizens of the Republic of Armenia, parties or election blocs shall have the right to convene mass public events in areas of general public use, except for areas delineated by the Government of the Republic of Armenia, for the purposes of election or referendum campaign provided such events do not disrupt public order and traffic rules and counter

provisions of para. 3 of Article 9, points 2,3, 5 and 7 of para. 1 of Article 13 this law and provisions of Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia.

4. Organizers submit a written notification about organization of a mass public event to the head of the community where such mass public event is organized or to Mayor of Yerevan [in case the public event is held in Yerevan] not later than three working days and not earlier than twenty days prior to the convention of the event. Should the mass public event be conducted as a rally, such notification shall be submitted to authorized bodies of all areas on the route of such rally.

ARTICLE 11. CONTENT AND PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION OF NOTIFICATION ON CONDUCTING MASS PUBLIC EVENT

1. Notification on conducting a mass public event shall specify

- 1) the venue of the mass public event and itinerary and schedule of a rally should such rally be envisaged in the framework of the event,
- 2) estimated time of commencement and completion of the mass public event.

2. Notification on conducting a mass public event may specify estimated anticipated number of participants of the mass public event and contain other information that, in the opinion of organizers, is necessary for protection of public order during the mass public event or security of participants of the event.

3. Should the mass public event be organized by a legal entity, the notification shall be verified by the rubber stamp of that legal entity and accompanied by following documents signed by the head of the legal entity:

- 1) corresponding decision of a competent body of the legal entity on conducting a mass public event,
- 2) a copy of a registration certificate of the legal entity,
- 3) name, surname, address and a passport copy of the organizer(s),
- 4) written agreement of organizer(s).

4. Should a mass public event be organized by a citizen, the notification shall be accompanied by the name, address and passport copy of the citizen(s).

Persons under 18 years of age not qualified as fully capable should also submit a written consent of their parents or custodians.

Should the notification be delivered in person, validity of signature of the organizer, parents or custodians shall be confirmed by an official receiving the notification or, [if the notification is delivered] otherwise, be certified by a notary.

5. Notification on conducting a mass public event submitted to authorized bodies is entered in a special journal in chronological order, and copies thereof are posted in an accessible and visible location on the premises of the authorized body.

ARTICLE 12. CONSIDERATION OF NOTIFICATION ON CONDUCTING A MASS PUBLIC EVENT

1. An authorized body shall start consideration of a notification at 12:00 of a working day following the receipt and shall consider notifications in order of submission. A notification submitted in violation of provisions of para. 4 of Article 10 of this law is considered as not submitted and shall not be considered.

2. Head of community or his/her authorized representative (in the case of Yerevan, Mayor of Yerevan or his/her authorized representative) shall carry out consideration of notifications and take decisions [with respect thereof] on behalf of the authorized body.

3. Consideration of notifications shall be public. Consideration of notification may be attended by the organizers or not more than their three representatives. Consideration of notification shall be carried out regardless of presence of the organizers.

Consideration of notification may be attended by other persons invited by the authorized body.

4. Procedure for consideration of notifications is established by the authorized body; however, the organizer shall be fully entitled to the right to present his/her position. Participants to consideration of notification shall have the right to speak, ask questions, answer questions, make suggestions or interventions and submit additional documents, judgments or other information. Consideration of notification shall not take more than one hour. Consideration of notification shall not be put off to the next day.

5. Should the organizer submit a flawed notification, the authorized body shall, at the time of consideration of such notification, offer detailed information on such flaws to the present organizers or their representatives. If possible, the flaws shall be fixed on the spot and consideration of the notification shall continue.

Consideration of notification or decision making may be put off exclusively at the request of the organizers provided there is a need to fix the flaws identified in the notification or it is necessary to submit additional documentation. Should consideration of notification or decision making be delayed, the time frame established under para. 6 of this Article does not apply.

6. Consideration of notification results in a decision to prohibit conducting of a mass public event or to accept the notification.

7. The authorized body shall immediately inform the organizers and the police on its decision taken as a result of consideration of the notification and shall post it in a specially dedicated accessible and visible spot. The decision of the authorized body shall remain posted until 1800 hours when the mass public event mentioned in the consented notification takes place.

8. Should the authorized body not issue a decision prohibiting convention of the mass public event by 16:00 of the working day following the receipt of the notification, the organizers shall have the right to conduct the mass public event on terms and conditions set forth in the notification.

ARTICLE 13. PROHIBITION TO CONDUCT A MASS PUBLIC EVENT

1. A mass public event is prohibited by a decision of the authorized body pursuant to consideration of notification provided

- 1) notification is not accompanied by all documents required under Article 11 of this law, or any required information is missing,
- 2) some other mass event or other event that precludes convention of the event takes place on the mentioned date, time and location,
- 3) there is reliable information that convention of the event on the mentioned date, time and location poses a present (real) danger to life or well-being of persons,
- 4) the present law prohibits convention of mass public events in the mentioned location,
- 5) all organizers do not, under this law, have a right to organize mass public events,
- 6) the rally may result in disruption of traffic in the mentioned area or at interstate highways,

7) another mass public event is organized by opponents of the organizer in the immediate proximity to the mentioned place and on the same date and time and there is reliable information that there exists a clear (real) danger of confrontation between opposing parties, or

8) the event pursues unlawful goals and objectives.

2. The decision to prohibit conducting a mass public event shall contain a justified and clear explanation of the grounds whereby the mass public event is prohibited.

3. The decision to prohibit conducting a mass public event may be appealed in court. The court shall issue a verdict within 24 hours. A court verdict to invalidate the decision to prohibit conducting a mass public event enters into force from the date of issuance.

4. Should the authorized body find that there are grounds to prohibit conducting a mass public event pursuant to points 2,3 or 7 of para. 1 of this Article, the authorized body shall, upon a verbal request of the organizer, offer to the organizer other dates (in the place and at the time specified in the notification) and other hours (in the place and on the date specified in the notification) for conducting a mass public event, should there be such a possibility.

Another date proposed by the authorized body shall be within two days after the date proposed by the organizer.

Another time proposed by the authorized body shall be the same as proposed by the organizer or be within three hours' difference.

5. Should the authorized body find during consideration of the notification that there are sufficient grounds to prohibit conducting a mass public event in accordance with point 4 of para. 1 of this Article, the authorized body shall, upon verbal request of the organizer, offer to the organizer another place for conducting the mass public event (on the date and time specified in the notification), should there be such a possibility.

Another place proposed by the authorized body shall meet reasonable requirements of the organizer, specifically with regard to possibility of participation of an estimated number of participants, provided the notification contains such information. Proposed places should not include areas outside the selected community and, in the case of Yerevan, areas outside selected districts. The proposed place shall be as close as possible to the place specified in the notification.

6. Any other date, time or place for conducting a mass public event may be identified subject to mutual consent of the authorized body and the organizer.

7. Should the organizers consent to any of proposals of the authorized body under paras. 4 thru 6 of this Article, the authorized body and the organizers shall prepare a protocol that empowers the organizers to conduct a mass public event.

Article 14. BASES AND PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF A PUBLIC EVENT

1. Police representatives shall have the right to take a decision with regard to terminating a public event, establishing reasonable time-frame for such termination and requesting the organizers to terminate the public event provided:

- 1) mass public event is conducted without notification,
- 2) mass public event is prohibited,
- 3) notwithstanding a warning by a police representative, the public event or other events continue in full or in part in locations referred to under para. 3 of Article 9 of this law or considerably deviate from the itinerary or schedule of the rally,

4) notwithstanding a warning by a police representative, organizers or participants continue violating public order and requirements of the law and by doing so jeopardize life and health of persons, national security, public safety and public order, or threaten to cause a substantial material harm to the state, community, physical or legal persons, or

5) all organizers are absent during the mass public event.

2. Upon receiving the warning referred to under para. 1 of this Article, the organizer shall immediately announce termination of the event and take measures for termination of the public event within the time-frame established by a police representative.

3. The police shall have the right to compulsorily terminate the public event provided, solely and exclusively, that

1) the request to terminate [the public event] made in a manner prescribed by this Article is not immediately announced by the organizer to the participants,

2) the request to terminate the public event within the established time-frame is not followed, or

3) all organizers are absent from the place of convention of the public event.

Prior to compulsory termination of the public event, the police representative shall no less than twice inform the participants through a loudspeaker about the request to terminate the public event within a reasonable time-frame. Should the public event be not terminated within such time-frame, the police shall have the right to terminate the event by means established by the law.

4. The procedure for terminating a public event set forth under paras. 2 and 3 of this Article shall not apply in the event of an outbreak of mass disturbances in the place of conducting the public event that calls for appropriate emergency measures.

ARTICLE 15. LIABILITY FOR VIOLATING PROVISIONS OF THE LAW

1. The state or the community shall compensate any material loss caused to organizers and participants of the public event due to unlawful prohibition or unlawful termination thereof by their respective bodies or official representatives.

Official representatives of state or local self-governance bodies shall bear liability for unlawful hindrance, interference in or termination of a public event.

2. Organizers of a public event conducted in violation of provisions of this law or organizers and participants failing to comply with requirements for termination thereof shall be liable by law.

3. A citizen or a legal person organizing or conducting a public event in violation of provisions of this law shall be considered as the organizer for the purposes of this article.

ARTICLE 16. FINAL PROVISIONS

Entry of this law into force invalidates provisions 1 and 2 of a Decree No. 1289-XI of Presidium of Supreme Council of Republic of Armenia "On Liability for Violating Procedures Established for Organizing and Conducting Meetings, Assemblies, Street Rallies and Demonstrations" dated 29 July 1988 and Decree N 9306-XI of USSR Supreme Council Presidium "On Procedures for Organizing and Conducting Assemblies, Meetings, Rallies and Demonstrations in USSR" dated 28 July 1988.