

Law No. 2456/1920 (A' 173) "Jewish communities Legal Persons under Public Law"

CHAPTER I

Jewish Communities – Their Property – Community Council and Its Jurisdiction

Article 1

In cities of the Kingdom in which more than twenty (20) Jewish families reside permanently and in which a Synagogue operates, a Jewish Community may be established by Royal Decree and shall be recognized as a legal entity of Public Law.

Article 2

In each city, town, or village, only one Jewish Community shall operate which shall hold full ownership of its existing and any future movable and immovable property.

Article 3

All persons of the Jewish faith who permanently reside in the seat of the Community shall be deemed automatically members of the Jewish Community.

Article 4

Jewish Communities may, for the maintenance and fulfillment of their charitable, religious, and educational purposes, accept donations granted either during the donor's lifetime or upon death. In particular, they are entitled to receive: a) Voluntary contributions and collections conducted among members of the Community or other Jews for the general purposes of the Community or for a specifically designated purpose. Such contributions and donations, made publicly within a Jewish Synagogue or at the residence of the donor, shall be deemed validly accepted by the Communities and shall give rise to an actionable claim in their favor. Proof by witness testimony shall be admissible for donations made within the Synagogue; whereas proof by oath or judicial admission shall be admissible for donations made at the donor's residence, b) prescribed fees for religious ceremonies and for certificates of any kind issued to persons of the Jewish faith, as well as for the granting of burial plots in Jewish cemeteries, c) contributions imposed by each Community upon its members (Petsia), d) special levies, traditionally known as "Gabela," collected by Communities on foodstuffs and beverages designated as "Kosher," including special sugars, unleavened bread, and flour for such unleavened bread used during the Jewish Passover.

The fees and contributions referred to in paragraphs (b)–(d), if determined by Royal Decree upon proposal of the Community and if the method of assessment is regulated thereby, may be collected from debtors in accordance with the legislation on the collection of public revenues, upon application by the Community.

Article 5

1. Jewish Communities may establish and maintain schools for Jewish children.

2. The curriculum of such schools, drafted by the Communities, shall not contravene the general laws of the State, shall conform to accepted pedagogical principles, and shall provide for adequate instruction in the official language of the State. In addition to the teaching of Greek as a language subject, History, Geography, and Mathematics and Natural Sciences shall be taught in Greek. Teaching staff responsible for subjects taught in Greek shall be appointed in the same manner as staff of public schools. All other subjects included in the curriculum drafted by each Community may be taught in any language chosen by the Community.
3. The operation of Jewish schools shall conform to the principles of school hygiene applicable to public schools.
4. Community Jewish schools shall be subject to State inspection. The duties and rights of inspectors shall be determined by Royal Decree.
5. Pupils and graduates of Jewish schools may, following successful entrance examinations the details of which shall be determined by Royal Decree, enroll in public schools of secondary or primary education.
6. Graduates of Jewish schools shall possess the same qualifications as graduates of equivalent public schools, provided that their curriculum has been approved by the Ministry of Education as equivalent to that of corresponding public schools and that final examinations are conducted before a committee and under conditions determined by Royal Decree.

Article 6

The Community Council, established in each community, administers the property and in general all the affairs of the Community, especially those of the charitable and educational institutions, as well as the pious houses for the benefit of religious, charitable, and educational purposes (later repealed).

Article 7

The Community Council shall validly resolve upon the sale of movable or immovable property belonging to the Community, the purchase of movable or immovable property acquired for its benefit, and generally upon any matter concerning the interests of the Community.

Article 8

Community Councils shall appoint special Committees for the administration of Synagogues and the management of their specific property, as well as Committees for the Community's charitable and educational institutions.

Such Committees shall be exclusively accountable to the Community Councils.

CHAPTER II

Representation of Communities

Article 9

Each Community shall have as its religious head a Chief Rabbi, appointed and dismissed by Royal Decree upon proposal of the Community.

Article 10

1. The Chief Rabbi, or in his absence or incapacity the President of the Community, shall represent the Community before administrative authorities.

2. The President, or in his absence or incapacity the Vice-President, shall represent the Community before the courts.

CHAPTER III

Rabbinical Authority and Its Jurisdiction

Article 11

1. A Rabbinical Council shall be established in each Community, presided over by the Chief Rabbi.
2. Rabbinical Councils shall decide upon all religious matters concerning the Community.

Articles 12 (later repealed)

1. Religious Courts bearing the title "Beth-Din" and appointed by the Rabbinical Council decide;
2. In cases of article 4, paragraph a of Law 147 of the year 1914, and especially in cases of the establishment and dissolution of marriage between Israelites, the personal relations of spouses constituting the marriage, regarding spouse and children support, the return of dowry and related claims due to divorce, insofar as these claims arise from the sacred Jewish law.

Article 13 (later repealed)

The Religious Court "Beth-Din" decides definitively on the dissolution of marriage, based on the sacred Jewish Law.

Article 14 (later repealed)

1. Decisions rendered by the "Beth Din" Religious Court shall be declared enforceable upon the application of the interested parties by the Presiding Judge of the Court of First Instance within the jurisdiction of which the issuing Religious Court is seated, pursuant to article 119, paragraph 2, of the Code of Civil Procedure.
2. The Presiding Judge of the Court of First Instance shall examine solely whether the decision was rendered within the limits of the jurisdiction of the aforementioned Court, as defined by the present law. In the event that the Presiding Judge refuses to declare the decision of the Religious Court enforceable, the case shall be brought, by means of an application, before the competent Court of First Instance to be heard under summary proceedings (interim measures). The Court of First Instance shall likewise limit its examination to the question of whether the decision was issued within the limits of the Court's jurisdiction.

CHAPTER IV

On the General Chief Rabbi

Article 15

1. Upon request of the majority of Chief Rabbis in the State, a General Chief Rabbi may be elected from among those appointed pursuant to this Law, by their General Assembly.
2. A second-instance Religious Court may be established under the General Chief Rabbi, acting as a Court of Appeal for decisions of the "Beth Din."

3. Matters concerning the election of the Chief Rabbi, his jurisdiction over the Jewish Communities and other Rabbis, the establishment of the second-instance religious Court, the conduct of its proceedings, and the general procedure for appeals shall be regulated by Royal Decree.

CHAPTER V

Community Assembly

Article 16

1. The supreme authority of each Community, before which the Chief Rabbi and the Community Council are accountable, shall be the Community Assembly.
2. The Community Assembly of each Community shall consist of a number of representatives, determined by each Community's individual regulation, elected by all male Greek citizens of the Jewish faith who have attained the age of twenty-one (21), live permanently within the community district and have not been deprived of their civil rights.
3. Exceptionally, for a period of ten years from the entry into force of the present law, foreign nationals of Jewish faith may also be elected as members of the Community Councils and Management Committees, provided they are serving as members of the community councils of the former Jewish Communities at the time of the enactment of the present law."

CHAPTER VI

Article 17

Each Jewish Community shall submit its individual regulation to the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs, etc., for approval. Such regulation shall be ratified by Royal Decree and shall enter into force upon publication in the Government Gazette.

The regulation shall determine:

- (a) The functioning of the Community organization;
- (b) The rights, duties, and jurisdiction of the Community Assembly, Chief Rabbi, Rabbis, Community Councils, Special Committees, the subdivision into sections of the Rabbinical Council for the fulfillment of the Rabbinical Council's duties pursuant to articles 11 par. 2 and 12;
- (c) The fees and contributions referred to in article 4 and their method of collection;
- (d) The method of election of the Chief Rabbi and the representatives of the Community Assembly, the number of members of the Community Council, Rabbinical Council, and the Religious Court ("Beth Din"), as well as the procedure for their election and the conditions under which the Chief Rabbi or Rabbinical Council may appoint other religious ministers of the Jewish faith.

CHAPTER VII

Criminal Sanctions

Article 18

No minister of the Jewish religion shall perform any marriage, circumcision, funeral, or other religious ceremony without written authorization from the Chief Rabbi of the Community.

Violators shall be subject to disciplinary and criminal penalties pursuant to article 487 of the Penal Code.

Article 19

Any person unlawfully assuming the office of Chief Rabbi or performing acts reserved exclusively thereto shall be punished pursuant to article 227 of the Penal Code.

Article 20

Any person unlawfully assuming the functions of a Rabbi of any rank within the Jewish religion or performing such functions outside the territorial jurisdiction for which he was appointed shall be punished pursuant to article 227 of the Penal Code.

Article 21

The criminal provisions and their civil consequences, and procedures under unfair competition legislation shall apply to those fraudulently selling food or beverages as "kosher" when they are not, upon application by the Chief Rabbi or the President of the Community.

Article 22

The provisions and exemptions of the law protecting sacred objects of the prevailing religion from being transferred or disposed of, shall apply equally to sacred objects of the Jewish religion, provided that their categories are defined by Royal Decree.

CHAPTER VIII

Exemptions

Article 23

Items imported by Jewish Communities from abroad for religious worship, unleavened bread for Passover or flour for its preparation, special sugar for Passover, and educational materials for Community schools, upon approval of the Minister of Education, shall be exempt from all import duties and public or municipal charges.

CHAPTER IX

State and Municipal Subsidies

Article 24

Appropriations for subsidies to Jewish Communities for their educational, religious, and charitable purposes may be included in the annual budgets of the State and of Municipalities and Communities, in proportion to subsidies granted to other communities.

CHAPTER X

General Provisions

Article 25

Jewish unable to keep their commercial books in Greek may validly maintain them in their particular Spanish-Hebrew dialect or in the French language.

Article 26

1. Jewish are entitled to have Saturday as their weekly day of rest instead of Sunday, subject to the same legal provisions governing Sunday rest for other Greek citizens. Those preferring Sunday rest may do so upon notifying the police authority.
2. Administrative authorities shall not summon Jewish on the Sabbath or on other religious holidays designated as exempt by Royal Decree. Investigating officers are subject to the same obligation except in exceptionally urgent cases.

Article 27

The details for the implementation of this Law shall be determined by Royal Decree.

The present Law, having been passed by the Parliament and ratified by the king this day, shall be published in the Government Gazette and shall enter into force as a Law of the State.