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The *Saeima*¹ has adopted
and the President has proclaimed the following Law:

Youth Law

Section 1. Purpose of this Law

The purpose of this Law is to improve the life quality of young people – persons from 13 to 25 years of age – by promoting their initiatives, participation in decision-making and social life, as well as by supporting youth work.

Section 2. Scope of Application of this Law

- (1) This Law determines the persons involved in the implementation of the youth policy and the competence thereof in the field of this policy, youth participation in the development and implementation of the youth policy, as well as the basic principles for granting of financing to youth initiatives, for participation in decision-making and social life and for youth work.
- (2) Within the meaning of this Law youth work is a set of planned youth-oriented practical measures, which ensure the improvement of their life quality.

Section 3. Competence of State Administrative Institutions in the Field of Youth Policy

- (1) The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs shall ensure the development and the co-ordinated implementation of the single State policy in the field of youth.
- (2) State administrative institutions, in implementing the youth policy pursuant to the competence thereof, shall evaluate the impact of the relevant field policy on youth.
- (3) State administrative institutions in their activities shall provide youth organisations with an opportunity to engage in discussion of the decisions affecting the youth policy prior to the taking thereof.

Section 4. Youth Advisory Council

- (1) The Youth Advisory Council shall be an advisory institution established by the Cabinet, the objective of which is to promote the development and implementation of the co-ordinated youth policy, as well as the youth participation in decision-making and social life.
- (2) Delegated representatives of the State administration, local governments and youth organisations shall be included in the composition of the Youth Advisory Council. Delegated representatives of youth organisations shall form at least half of the composition of the Youth Advisory Council.
- (3) The Cabinet shall approve the by-law of the Youth Advisory Council.

¹ The Parliament of the Republic of Latvia

Section 5. Competence of Local Government in the Field of Youth Policy

(1) A local government, in executing the functions thereof, shall participate in the implementation of the State youth policy. The local government may also develop local level documents in the field of youth policy.

(2) Local governments in their activities shall provide youth organisations and youth initiatives groups with an opportunity to engage in discussion of the decisions affecting the youth policy prior to the taking thereof.

(3) A local government may establish an institutional system in order to ensure youth work by determining the responsible institution or appointing a specialist on youth affairs – that person shall plan, perform and co-ordinate youth work in establishing an advisory commission on youth affairs or intending other procedures for performance of youth work.

(4) If a specialist on youth affairs ensures youth work in a local government, he or she shall be trained in accordance with the procedures specified by the Cabinet.

(5) If a local government establishes an advisory commission on youth affairs, which promotes the development and implementation of the co-ordinated youth policy, as well as the youth participation decision-making, local government specialists who perform youth work and representatives of youth organisations, youth initiatives groups or another association or foundation, which performs youth work, shall be included in the composition thereof.

Section 6. Youth Organisation

The Youth Organisation is an association registered in the Register of Associations and Foundations, which conforms to all of the following criteria:

1) one of the purposes of activity specified in the statutes of the association is youth work, the promotion of youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life;

2) at least two thirds of the members of the association are children and young people or also several associations, where in total at least two thirds of the members are children and young people; and

3) participation of young people is ensured in administrative institutions of the association, and the procedures for this participation are specified in the statutes of the respective association.

Section 7. Youth Participation in the Development and Implementation of the Youth Policy

Young people have the right to participate in the development and implementation of the youth policy:

1) by engaging in the acquisition and provision of non-formal education and carrying out voluntary work;

2) by performing activities in the local governments of educational institutions;

3) by developing and implementing projects, as well as other initiatives;

4) by participating in the activities of youth organisations, as well as other associations and foundations;

5) by engaging in the process of the taking of State and local government decisions affecting the youth policy; and

6) by engaging in other activities, which are oriented towards the promotion of the youth participation in the development and implementation of the youth policy.

Section 8. Useful Utilisation of Leisure Time

- (1) The State and local governments shall promote non-formal education, voluntary work, physical activities and the engaging of young people in the cultural life as essential ways of useful utilisation of leisure time.
- (2) Non-formal education shall supplement formal education; the objective of non-formal education is to provide knowledge, develop skills, abilities and attitudes, as well as promote comprehensive development and active youth participation in decision-making and social life.
- (3) The State and local governments shall support the respective adjustment of the environment necessary for the useful utilisation of the leisure time of young people as much as possible.

Section 9. Youth Voluntary Work

- (1) Youth voluntary work shall be oriented towards activity of public benefit and promote the development of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes thereof, as well as the useful utilisation of leisure time.
- (2) A young person shall carry out voluntary work free of charge, not entering into legal employment relationship with the organiser of the voluntary work.
- (3) Youth voluntary work shall not be used for the purpose of profit-making of the organiser of the voluntary work or a third party.
- (4) Prohibitions and restrictions specified in the regulatory enactments regulating legal employment relationship shall be applicable to youth voluntary work.

Section 10. Youth Voluntary Work Organisation

- (1) Youth voluntary work may be organised by associations and foundations, as well as State and local government institutions.
- (2) An organiser of youth voluntary work:
 - 1) shall be responsible for safe voluntary work conditions, which do not harm the health of a young person;
 - 2) shall issue a written certification regarding the time spent in voluntary work, duties, acquired knowledge, skills and abilities upon the request of a young person; and
 - 3) is entitled to request that a young person, upon commencing voluntary work, presents a statement issued by a doctor regarding his or her state of health, thus ascertaining the suitability of the young person for the intended voluntary work.
- (3) A written contract regarding voluntary work may be entered into upon the initiative of the organiser of the voluntary work or a young person, specifying the work to be done and the time period for the fulfilment thereof.

Section 11. Promotion of the Commercial Activity and Employment of Young People

The State shall promote the commercial activity and employment of young people, particularly:

- 1) training of young people in matters related to the commencement of commercial activity;
- 2) support to the commencement of commercial activity of young people; and
- 3) support to projects for the promotion of employment of young people, particularly young people subject to the risk of social exclusion.

Section 12. Granting of Financing

(1) Financing from the State budget, which is provided for the promotion of youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life, as well as for youth work, shall be granted in an open competition.

(2) Youth organisations have the right to receive the financing from the State budget, which is provided for projects, the objective of which is the promotion of youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life, as well as projects for youth work.

(3) A recipient of the financing from the State budget may also be a local government and an association or a foundation, a project of which is oriented towards youth work.

(4) Youth organisations have the right to receive the financing from the State budget also for projects of support of activity of such organisations, if they comply with the following criteria:

1) not less than 500 members have joined in the youth organisation or youth organisations with the total number of members not less than 500;

2) the youth organisation operates in all planning regions;

3) the duration of activities of the youth organisation, in carrying out youth work, is at least three years;

4) the youth organisation is an organisation of public benefit; and

5) the youth organisation ensures co-financing for the implementation of the project.

(5) The Cabinet shall specify the procedures for granting of financing from the State budget, which is provided for promotion of young people initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life, as well as for youth work.

Section 13. Delegation of the Tasks of State Administrative Institutions

The Ministry of Children and Family Affairs may delegate the performance of administrative tasks to private persons, including associations and foundations, by entering in to a contract in order to efficiently implement a system of measures for youth work.

This Law shall come into force on 1 January 2009.

The *Saeima* has adopted this Law on 8 May 2008.

President

V. Zatlers

Rīga, 28 May 2008