

Constitution of the Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ¹)

German Version: As per General Assembly of 28th June 2026

English Translation: September 2026

Preamble of the translators*:

The purpose of this translation is only to give the Executive Committee and other non-native readers a general understanding of the original German version of the constitution, which is available at the following link of the Department of Religious Affairs (Kultusamt) of the Austrian Government:

https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:6c72feaa-a0bd-4e64-a14d-f76d05935432/hinduistische_religionsgesellschaft.pdf

This English translation will always be available from the Gdrive link of HRÖ:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a669f98RKH_ZrXJWHQ9DtEHA5MMEVo8

This translation is only for the purpose of a general understanding and possible consideration for the amendment of the constitution. Although the translation has been done with a great effort, minor mistakes may remain, and thus, this translation is not to be considered as the legally binding version.

*This translation is provided in a good faith, as a voluntary service to the Hindu community in Austria by:

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1. General Basics of Hinduism

Purpose of HRÖ

- (1.1) The Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ) serves as the assembly of all Austrian and foreign nationals living in Austria who profess this religion.

The HRÖ has, at its own discretion, the authority to react or to issue press releases if:

- (1.1.a) announcements or press releases of any kind concerning Hindus or Hinduism are made worldwide.
- (1.1.b) Protest against injustice, especially if Hindus are affected by it anywhere in the world.
- (1.1.c) Showing solidarity with other societies/communities that are interested in Hinduism and Hindus.

Self Conception

- (1.2) Hinduism² is also known by the names Sanātan Dharm and Vaidik Dharm and represents a living synthesis of the most diverse religious insights and their realization, based on the revelation of God, on the direct experience of the manifestation of the Divine both in countless different forms, as well as the formless transcendental principle.

Diversity

The objectives of Hinduism are realized through a variety of methods and spiritual disciplines (communion with God, self-knowledge, cosmic love, etc.).

Hinduism as a Lifestyle

Hinduism is fundamentally also a lifestyle that is in harmony with the eternal spiritual, ethical, and moral laws, with the Sanātan Dharm, the eternal religion, as it is taught in the traditional sacred scriptures, in particular the Shrutis (Vedas with the Upanishads), Smritis (Dharm Shāstras e.g. Bhāgavad Gita, the Mahābhārat, and Rāmāyan), as well as the Sutras, Purānas, Agamas and Darshanas (Nyāy, Vaisheshikā, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mimāṃsā, and Vedānt).

Hindu Values

- (1.3) Hinduism is undogmatic and universal; respects the freedom of conscience of every individual; recognizes the truth in all religions and the inner unity of all living beings and all existence; teaches a virtuous life according to the principles of non-violence, truth, purity, wisdom, non-stealing, self-control, dispassion, fearlessness, peacefulness, love for creation and all living beings, freedom from negative qualities such as hatred, anger, desire, jealousy and pride, as well as the renunciation of revenge; proclaims the value of devotion, humility, mercy, selfless

service, readiness for sacrifice, frugality; practices worship of the Divine through ceremony (Pujā) and inner contemplation (Upāsana) and meditation (Dhyān), development of divine virtues, etc.

Goal of Hinduism

- (1.4) The goal of Hinduism is to achieve true inner freedom – Moksh – through the overcoming of ignorance and the realization of knowledge of the Supreme, absolute inner peace, absolute inner joy, unity with the truth, the Divine, and self-realization.

2. Constitution and Institutions

- (2.1) The Constitution of the Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ) will be decided by the General Assembly and also holds validity for the institutions listed in 2.3.

Hindu Congregations

- (2.2) Within the framework of the Hindu Congregations, Hinduism recognizes various forms of expression of spiritual-religious life and of the association of persons who wish to jointly practice a specific path of Yoga or practice specific forms of the worship of God or meditation.

Status of the Hindu Congregations

The institutions/Hindu-Congregations mentioned under 2.3 are independent and possess their own means to ensure the necessary facilities for divine service, the engagement of regular pastoral caregivers (Pujāris), and the provision of regulated religion education within the institutions mentioned under 2.3. The individual institutions are completely autonomous in their administration and have their own rules and commandments. Most serve the public good. Some of these institutions also operate in the social field, e.g., healthcare, the maintenance of schools, etc.

Structure of the HRÖ

- (2.3) The Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ) is sub-divided into the following institutions, which are independent and financially autonomous from one another. For the purpose of proper business management, these institutions are to establish their own guidelines for their respective spheres of activity.

Hindu Congregations - Achieving Legal Entity Acc. 6 RRBG

The following institutions shall be considered Hindu Congregations which may acquire legal personality as local sub-entities (Kultusgemeinden) pursuant to § 6 RRBG:

- (a) Mandirs

- (b) Ashrams
- (c) Maths
- (d) Peethams
- (e) Missions
- (f) Sanātan Dharm Groups
- (g) Yoga Centres

(2.4) For the determination and definition of terms, see the Annex, which forms an integral part of this Constitution.

3. Membership

Who is a Hindu

A Hindu is every natural person who

- **is a Hindu by virtue of their family tradition, or**
- **has been admitted into a Sampradāy³ by virtue of Dikshā (ceremony, initiation), or**
- **has become a Hindu through conviction.**

3.1. Regular Membership

Ordinary membership or election to the Executive Committee of the HRÖ or to the Sanātan Dharm Council is reserved for Hindus.

Membership of the HRÖ

- **Of Members of Hindu Congregations:**

The members of a Congregation/Institution pursuant to items 2.3.a – 2.3.g are — except in the event that the conditions formulated in item 3.1 apply — not automatically members of the HRÖ. They may, however, acquire ordinary membership of the HRÖ by submitting a direct application to the HRÖ, or to the Executive Committee of the respective congregations / institutions (items 2.3.a - 2.3.g), which shall forward the same to the HRÖ.

- **Of Unorganized (non-affiliated) Hindus:**

Unorganized (non-affiliated) Hindus, who do not belong to an existing congregation/institution pursuant to items 2.3.a – 2.3.g, may submit their application for accession directly to the Executive Committee of the HRÖ, which shall decide upon it at its next meeting.

- **Applicants (Candidates for Admission):**

Upon submitting their application, applicants expressly commit to recognizing the principles of Sanātan Dharm and to striving to align their lives with these spiritual principles (item 1.3), in

particular the commandments of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Satyam (truthfulness), whereby every member is free to choose, according to their own conscience, the spiritual orientation/school or Yoga that suits them, as well as to practice spiritual-religious exercises independently and/or under the guidance of a spiritual guide.

- **Admission of Minors:**

For minors under the age of 14, the declaration of accession is made by their legal representative.

- **Legal Remedy for Rejected Applicants:**

A rejected applicant may appeal to the Sanātan Dharm Council, which shall make a final decision on the admission or rejection at its next meeting.

3.2. Extra-Ordinary Membership

3.2.1. **Supporting Members:**

Friends of Hinduism who wish to promote the values of Hinduism may, if they so desire, be admitted by the Executive Committee of the HRÖ as supporting members into the HRÖ.

3.2.2. **Honorary Members:**

In cases of special merit, the Executive Committee of the HRÖ may appoint honorary members. The congregations and other branches may submit appropriately reasoned proposals to the Executive Committee.

3.3. End of Membership

- (a) Ordinary membership expires through a written declaration of withdrawal, which is to be communicated to the Executive Committee of the HRÖ.

Membership can also be terminated by submitting a declaration of resignation to the relevant district administrative authority.

- (b) No fees are charged upon leaving the HRÖ.
- (c) The exclusion of an ordinary member or honorary member may be ordered by the Executive Committee on the grounds of a gross violation of membership duties and on the grounds of dishonorable conduct. An appeal to the Sanātan Dharm Council against the exclusion is permissible.
- (d) **The HRÖ Executive Committee** must keep appropriate internal records and take the necessary measures to ensure that persons whose membership has been terminated do not participate in any future HRÖ general meeting or election procedure.

3.4. Rights of the Members

Through ordinary membership, a member acquires the right to participate in all public worship services, events, and celebrations/solemnities. Furthermore, every ordinary member receives the right to vote, and may also be elected to the Executive Committee of the HRÖ and as a member of the Sanātan Dharm Council.

Hindus, who do not have their ordinary residence in Austria, as well as non-Hindu supporting members and honorary members, are permitted to participate in all public worship services, assemblies, and celebrations.

The right to vote in the General Assembly as well as the active and passive right to vote is, however, available only to ordinary Hindu members. Non-Hindu supporting and honorary members can therefore also not be elected to the Executive Committee of the HRÖ or as a member of the Sanātan Dharm Council.

3.5. Duties of the Members

The individual Hindu Congregations/Institutions, as well as their members, undertake to promote the interests of the HRÖ or their own congregation to the best of their ability, and to refrain from anything by which the reputation and the purpose of the HRÖ could be impaired.

The membership fees of the ordinary members are to be paid directly to the HRÖ. The 2025 General Assembly fixed the annual fee at €10 per member. Families with five or more members receive a discount in the amount of one membership fee.

Honorary members do not pay membership fees.

The amount of the annual contribution of the individual congregations/institutions of the HRÖ and the expenses of the General Secretariat of the HRÖ shall be fixed upon the admission of the congregation to the HRÖ. It may be adjusted to the changed needs by resolution of the Congregation Assembly of the Hindu Congregations.

3.6. Ashrams, Maths, Peethams, and Missions are mostly associated with a spiritual order

They devote themselves to intensive spiritual disciplines and have corresponding rules, which is why their activities can only be partially accessible to the general public. They therefore decide completely autonomously on applications concerning admission to their community and order affiliation.

Participation in their internal worship services requires, even in the case of ordinary membership in the HRÖ, the express permission of the committee members of these institutions and orders authorized for this purpose. Their decisions are not contestable. Insofar as these institutions also maintain public Mandirs, these are accessible to the entire Hindu community.

4. Executive Bodies

4.1. Executive Bodies of HRÖ

The bodies to be elected shall, as far as possible, be composed of female and male HRÖ members in an appropriate proportion. The designation of the offices of the committee members below refers only to their function, without any gender discrimination.

The headquarters of HRÖ is Vienna.

The bodies of the HRÖ are:

1. Executive Committee (EC)
2. Arbitration Tribunal
3. The assemblies of the Hindu Congregations
4. The Sanātan Dharm Council of HRÖ
5. General Assembly
6. 2 Auditors⁷

4.2. The Bodies of HRÖ on a Local Level

It is provided that, with the consent of the EC, local Hindu Congregations may also acquire their own legal personality (see item 5.9.1 a).

In every location where at least nine members entitled to vote for one of the Hindu Congregations/Institutions named under 2.3. a–g reside, an HRÖ Congregation may be founded, whereby the provisions of § 6 RRBG are decisive. The EC of the HRÖ is to be notified thereof in writing. The boundaries of the HRÖ Congregations are determined by the boundaries of the political municipalities.

Members of the Hindu Congregation are all persons residing in the political municipality who are recognized as Hindus in accordance with the provisions applicable to membership. The individual institutions pursuant to item 2.3. a–g are completely autonomous in their internal administration within the meaning of item 2.2. They administer their congregation/institution according to the statutes drawn up by themselves, which have been approved by the EC of the HRÖ within the framework of the recognition of membership.

Each of the Congregations/Institutions named under item 2.3. a–g, that have acquired legal personality pursuant to § 6 RRBG, may form their own executive committee or local Sanātan Dharm Council, which is the governing body of the Hindu Congregation, and consists of nine members. If the number of Congregation members entitled to vote is only nine, these shall constitute themselves as an Executive Committee/Sanātan Dharm Council at the beginning of the year.

5. The EC

5.1. The EC of HRÖ Consists of

- 5.1.1. The President
- 5.1.2. the Vice-President as deputy
- 5.1.3. the General Secretary (also entrusted with the function of the Editor⁵⁾)
- 5.1.4. the Deputy Secretary (Editor, if required)
- 5.1.5. the Treasurer
- 5.1.6. the Deputy Treasurer

5.2. The President

- 5.2.1. He is the highest governing body of the HRÖ in all administrative, organizational, and representative matters. The President represents – as do the Vice-President and the General Secretary – the religion organization externally toward third parties and authorities.
- 5.2.2. In urgent matters, the President may take decisions that are reserved for other bodies of the religion organization. In such cases, the President must immediately convene a meeting of the respective body and obtain approval for the actions taken. If approval is refused, the representative action of the President shall cease to be in force as of the date of the refusal of approval. All decisions and representative actions, that are not expressly assigned to another body, are reserved for the President.
- 5.2.3. The President holds the chair at the General Assembly of the Congregations and in the Sanātan Dharm Council. In the event of a tie, the President has the highly personal right to cast the deciding vote.

5.3. The Vice-President

The President may entrust the Vice-President with his representation in specific or in all matters. In the event that the President is hindered from functioning, the Vice-President shall continue to conduct the business. The Vice-President shall then be entitled to the same rights.

5.4. The General Secretary and his/her Deputy

- 5.4.1. The General Secretary is to perform the administrative tasks of the religion organization, and is authorized to sign and represent in all financial and organizational matters. He is at all times empowered by the President to issue binding declarations for the religion organization concerning membership and in other administrative and financial matters.
- 5.4.2. The General Secretary executes the decisions of the EC and the Sanātan Dharm Council, unless otherwise specified in the rules of procedure.
- 5.4.3. In internal relations, the General Secretary is bound by the instructions of the President, the Vice-President, and the Sanātan Dharm Council; however, in external relations, he receives full power of representation.
- 5.4.4. Written copies and notices of the HRÖ, in particular documents binding the HRÖ, are to be signed jointly by the President and the General Secretary or his deputy. For financial transactions up to 500 Euro, the General Secretary or his deputy shall sign together with the President or his deputy. For amounts exceeding this, the General Secretary or his deputy, the President or his deputy, as well as the Treasurer or his deputy must sign jointly.
- 5.4.5. In the event of an increasing workload and in the case that the General Secretary and his/her Deputy cannot manage the areas of responsibility assigned to them alone, the EC shall provide them with further members. The EC may decide to establish a permanent General Secretariat with its own rules of procedure and, if necessary, also approve employees who, under the responsibility of the General Secretary and his deputy or additional staff, shall perform all ongoing secretarial work or prepare it under their guidance. The General Secretary has the right of instruction over his staff, and his staff are bound by the rules of procedure of the General Secretariat.

5.5. The Editor⁵

The Editor is to support the President in the conduct of the business of the HRÖ. He is obliged for the keeping of the minutes of the EC, and of the General Assembly of the Hindu Congregations and Institutions (see also item 5.1.3 and item 5.1.4).

5.6. The Treasurer

The Treasurer must

- 5.6.1. Provide accurate and up-to-date weekly, monthly, and annual financial statements and reports to the Executive Committee, Auditors, the Sanātan Dharm Council, and the General Assembly, as and when required.

- 5.6.2. Based on sound financial principles, prepare the annual budget for the Executive Committee.
- 5.6.3. Be proficient (or well-experienced) with a cloud-based documentation system (for example, Google Drive, Microsoft, or any other similar technology).

Written documents of the HRÖ, in particular those containing declarations that are binding or incriminating to the religion organization, are to be signed jointly by the President, the General Secretary, and the Treasurer (or their deputies).

5.7. The Auditors⁷

The auditors are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of business operations and the auditing of the annual financial statements. The auditing process shall be regulated by an ordinance.

5.8. Election and the Power of HRÖ's Executive Committee

- 5.8.1. The members of the EC of the HRÖ shall be elected by the General Assembly by a simple majority for a respective functional period of 4 years (Item 8.3.2), unless the office-holders themselves request new elections. In the event of any resignations of Executive Committee members, their replacement must be carried out by election within 8 weeks.

- 5.8.1.1. An ordinary member of the HRÖ is entitled to be elected to a function on the EC for a maximum of two consecutive terms of office (§5.8.1). After the expiry of these two terms of office, the member must pause for one term of office before they can stand for a function again.

In the event of any resignations of EC members, the duration of the term of office shall be counted as a full term of office, regardless of the actual duration in office.

The duration of the new term of office of an incoming EC member shall be counted as a full term of office, provided that they have served at least 25% of the term of office in accordance with §5.8.1.

- 5.8.1.2. Only one ordinary member from a family may serve on the EC for the duration of the term of office.

- 5.8.1.2.1. **Definition of a family:** spouses and immediate blood relatives, i.e. siblings, parents and children of the applicant.

- 5.8.1.3. If multiple members of the same family submit nominations for an election, the Election Commission shall randomly select one candidate by drawing lots (lucky draw method).

- 5.8.2. The EC shall manage the affairs of the HRÖ. It is obliged to report to the Sanātan Dharm Council and the General Assembly of the Hindu Congregations. All EC members shall have one vote each. In the event of absence, they may be represented by another EC member by means of a written authorization.
- 5.8.3. In the EC, the majority of the members should not be provided by one (1) Institution of the HRÖ; the members should, as far as possible, belong equally to the various congregations, ashrams, etc. Exceptions to this are only allowed if no other candidates stand for election.
- 5.8.4. Within the EC, the majority principle shall apply. Resolutions are to be implemented immediately, unless an appeal is made to the Sanātan Dharm Council or the Arbitration Tribunal by at least two outvoted members. The Sanātan Dharm Council or the Arbitration Tribunal then makes a final decision.
- 5.8.5. The EC may adopt its own rules of procedure.

5.9. The Following Decisions are Reserved for the EC:

- 5.9.1. The EC shall examine applications concerning the establishment of new or the admission of existing Hindu Congregations, Ashrams, Maths, Peethams, Missions, etc., and concerning the recognition and constitution of religious orders as well as concerning the establishment or recognition of foundations and institutions:

- (a) The EC shall examine whether the acceding institution belongs to a Sampradāy² in India. In the affirmative case, this application may be approved (without further examination as to whether this institution can be assigned to Hinduism).

The EC shall decide upon a proposal for the acquisition of legal personality for local subdivisions of a Mandir, Ashram, Math, Peetham, or Mission. In the case of cultural congregations to be newly founded, which do not belong to any known Sampradāy, the applications for admission shall be intensively examined together with a panel of experts, and it shall be determined whether the applicant cultural congregation can be assigned to Hinduism. The Sanātan Dharm Council may be consulted for the assessment of this question.

The acquisition of legal personality for local subdivisions requires, pursuant to Section 6 RRBG, an application to the Federal Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs⁶, and must be communicated to the same.

- (b) The EC shall examine – if necessary with the consultation of the Sanātan Dharm Council – the compatibility of the religious customs of the applicant institution with the Sanātan Dharm or the Austrian legal system.

(c) The EC shall review the constitution of the new cultural congregation and shall, if necessary, recommend proposals for amendments.

(d) Upon fulfillment of the conditions for admission or recognition, the EC shall decide with a two-thirds majority on the admission and internal recognition of the applicants. The procedure for obtaining the status of legal entity from the government side, however, is to be conducted exclusively by the respective applicant and in particular at the applicant's own expense.

5.9.2. The EC shall decide by a two-thirds majority on the revocation of memberships, the exclusion from orders, institutions, Sanātan-Dharm groups, establishments and foundations, as well as on the dissolution of HRÖ congregations.

The EC may, by a two-thirds majority, decide on the financial support of an existing Mandir or a Mandir to be newly established or of another Hindu institution and/or issue recommendations for the contribution of purpose-restricted donations.

5.9.3. The EC is further entitled to the following rights:

(a) Decision-making on the rules of procedure of the General Secretariat.

(b) Decision-making on initiative motions.

5.9.4. Further duties of the EC:

Fulfillment of the functions of the Sanātan Dharm Council until its establishment in accordance with point 4.1 and point 9.1.

5.10. Disciplinary Actions and Removal of Executive Committee Members

5.10.1. Progressive Discipline and Written Warnings

5.10.1.1. Upon establishing a pattern of dereliction of duty or non-compliance with governing directives by an Executive Committee (EC) member, and following the failure of informal mitigation efforts, the EC shall issue a formal written warning to the member.

5.10.1.2. The EC shall issue two (2) written warnings. If the non-compliance persists after the second warning, the EC shall notify the HRÖ members within seventy-two (72) hours of issuing the second warning and convene an Extraordinary General Assembly (EO-GA).

5.10.2. Removal by the General Assembly

- 5.10.2.1. **Convocation:** The EC shall convene the EO-GA to vote on the removal of the EC member as per §8.1.
- 5.10.2.2. **Member's Hearing:** The affected EC member shall be given an opportunity to present his or her case before the General Assembly prior to the call for a vote.
- 5.10.2.3. **Removal Vote:** Removal from office requires a simple majority vote of the eligible members present and voting at the EO-GA.
- 5.10.2.4. **Effect of Removal:** After the EC member is removed by the General Assembly, the removed member shall be disqualified from contesting Executive Committee elections for the remainder of the current term and the entire duration of the immediately succeeding term.

6. The Arbitration Tribunal

Until the constitution of a regular arbitration tribunal, the Executive Committee shall mediate in disputes within the HRÖ, which, if necessary, are to be submitted to an arbitration tribunal to be convened on a case-by-case basis.

The arbitration tribunal shall be composed of five ordinary members of the HRÖ. It shall be formed in such a way that each contending party nominates two members as arbitrators to the Executive Committee within 14 days and the Executive Committee dispatches the fifth member as chairperson. The nominated persons should have belonged to the HRÖ for at least 7 years. They must possess a deep knowledge of Hindu religion doctrine and lead a life in accordance with this doctrine.

The arbitration tribunal shall reach its decisions in the presence of all its members by a simple majority of votes. It shall decide to the best of its knowledge and belief. Its decisions are final.

7. Assembly of Hindu Congregations

The General Assembly of Congregations is the body of the following Congregations/Institutions belonging to the HRÖ.

- (a) Mandirs
- (b) Ashrams
- (c) Maths
- (d) Peethams
- (e) Missions

- (f) Sanātan Dharm Groups
- (g) Yog Centers
- (h) Establishments (insofar as they do not belong to a – f)
- (i) Foundations (insofar as they do not belong to a – f)

- 7.1. The chairpersons of these entities of the HRÖ shall each have one seat and one vote on the Executive Committee of Congregations. The chairpersons may be represented by a member of the Executive Committee of their respective Congregation.

In decisions concerning initiative motions, the initiator shall have one seat and one vote on the Executive Committee of Congregations.

- 7.2. The entire Executive Committee of Congregations, including the chairpersons of the Congregations, shall meet four times a year.

The President, Vice-President, and General Secretary of the HRÖ Executive Committee may convene extraordinary general assemblies of Congregations. The invitation to all members of the Executive Committee of Congregations must be issued in writing four weeks in advance, stating the agenda. Motions for the General Assembly of Congregations must be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee of Congregations at least 15 days prior to the date.

Valid resolutions may only be passed regarding the agenda, provided that they concern important decisions in accordance with points 5.9.1 – 5.9.3.

8. General Assembly

The general assembly is the decision-making body of the HRÖ and consists of all ordinary members.

8.1. Convening

The notification of the members must be made in writing at least 4 weeks before the scheduled date. The scheduling of the general assembly must be made stating the agenda. The convening shall be carried out by the Executive Committee.

8.2. Modus of Voting

The general assembly shall constitute a quorum if half of all members entitled to vote (or their representatives) are present.

Only those members who have also paid the fixed membership fee for the current and preceding year shall be entitled to vote. In principle, everyone who has paid their own membership fee shall be considered entitled to vote.

If the general assembly does not constitute a quorum at the appointed hour, the general assembly shall take place 30 minutes later with the same agenda, but shall then constitute a quorum regardless of the number of persons present.

The decisions of the general assembly shall be made by a simple majority of votes, unless a higher qualified majority is prescribed in this Constitution. The nominated candidates as well as the election mode must be announced to the members at least one week prior to the election of the Executive Committee.

8.3. Duties/Responsibilities

8.3.1. Resolution on the Constitution of the HRÖ

8.3.2. Election of the Executive Committee

8.3.3. Approval of the annual accounts and release of the Executive Committee

9. Sanātan Dharm Council

9.1. Composition:

Until the point in time when all the congregations resolve by majority that an independent Sanātan Dharm Council shall be elected, the respective Executive Committee shall assume the responsibilities of the Sanātan Dharm Council as a part of the duties and powers previously exercised by the Executive Committee.

The rights and duties of the Sanātan Dharm Council shall be determined in detail upon its constitution in its own rules of procedure (see item 4.1).

9.2. Functions:

The primary function of the Sanātan Dharm Council is to ensure or promote the spiritual-religious and cultural interests of the Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ).

Its tasks include, in particular:

9.2.1. The Sanātan Dharm Council shall develop, in cooperation with the various institutions, the guidelines for the training of spiritual leaders / pastoral care workers, Pujaris etc. and shall promote the founding of training centers where the religious texts – philosophy and ceremony (Puja, Havana etc.) – are taught and researched. The organization of training programs for Hindus living in Austria, both at home and abroad (especially in India), as well as distance learning courses etc. are planned, among other things. The long term goal is to establish a Hindu University in Europe.

- 9.2.2. Promotion of the study of Indian languages, especially Sanskrit, but also other national languages of India.
- 9.2.3. Founding of a working group/institute for the promotion of the translation and reprinting of ancient holy texts into English and German and the opening up of the sources of the wisdom books of Hinduism.
- 9.2.4. Promotion of the establishment of libraries.
- 9.2.5. Research into the various branches of Vedic/Hindu sciences; development of cross-connections to the various branches of science in the sense of a comprehensive synthesis of sciences.
- 9.2.6. Promotion of domestic worship traditionally rooted in Hinduism.
- 9.2.7. Maintenance of the culture of Hinduism through the promotion of traditional art, music, temple dance etc. and the creation of suitable training centers.
- 9.2.8. Cooperation, exchange, networking of the various Hindu Religion Societies or Congregations of the HRÖ also at the international level; Hindu dialogue; support for the publication of a Hindu information newsletter.
- 9.2.9. Promotion of the dialogue of Hinduism with the world religions and of peace between religions; organization of exchange programs.
- 9.2.10. Promotion of the creation of a Hindu social service (family counseling, opening of own kindergartens, schools, retirement homes etc.).
- 9.2.11. Assistance in the organization of the import and sale of spiritual and cultural books as well as religious images, statues, Puja articles, incense etc.
- 9.2.12. Promotion and advice in the organization of exhibitions and lectures on Indian culture; information and orientation of the public regarding the activities of the HRÖ and current Hindu topics.

10. Raising of Funds

The funds required for the economic needs of the religion organization shall be raised through voluntary donations or through contributions from the members of Hindu Congregations and other institutions. Contributions, with the exception of a contribution toward costs for administrative expenses upon the admission of a member, shall only be levied insofar as the funds required by the religion organization cannot be raised through voluntary donations.

Insofar as donations are made by non-members, these may only be accepted insofar as they are not tied to an obligation that contradicts the constitutional purposes. Should the treasurer have concerns prior to the acceptance of such a contribution from outsiders, he shall first obtain the instruction of the Executive Committee. If the latter shares its concerns, the Sanātan Dharm Council shall be called upon, which shall decide on the acceptance of the donation with finality.

For the determination of the contribution toward costs of the HRÖ congregations, see item 3.5.

11. Provisions for the Termination of Legal Personality

- 11.1. The voluntary dissolution of the HRÖ may only be resolved in an extraordinary general assembly convened for this purpose and only with a two-thirds majority of the valid votes cast.
- 11.2. The last Executive Committee shall notify the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs⁶ of the voluntary dissolution of the HRÖ.
- 11.3. In the event of dissolution or upon the loss of legal personality, any assets remaining shall be used exclusively, and in their entirety, for charitable purposes within the meaning of §§34 BAO with a similar Hindu orientation.

12. Coming into Force

1. This Constitution enters into force for the HRÖ as soon as it has been approved by the Executive Committee and by the members of the General Assembly with two-thirds of the votes cast. This Constitution was adopted by the Executive Committee on the occasion of its meeting on 19.03.1999 as well as by the members of the General Assembly in its meeting on 21.03.1999.
2. The present items 4.1 – Executive Bodies of the HRÖ and item 5 – Executive Committee of the Constitution received their current wording by unanimous resolution of the General Assembly of 17 September 2006.

FN (Footnote)

1. The Hindu Religion Organization in Austria (HRÖ) acquired legal personality as a registered religious denomination on 10 December 1998 on the basis of the BekGG (Notice of the Federal Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of 15 April 1999, GZ 13.486/2 – 9c/99).
2. The literature on Hinduism is extremely extensive. For further information, reference is made to the contribution by Bettina Baum, Hinduism in Johann Figl, Handbuch Religionswissenschaft, 2003, Publishers Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht and TYROLIA, and the literature cited therein.
3. Sampradāy: this is to be understood as the lineage of a spiritual tradition.
4. The original version of the Constitution of the HRÖ contained in item 4.1, among others, the provision that "the Hindu Mandir Association Vienna, as the first Hindu congregation of the HRÖ, shall assume the functions of the Executive Committee of the HRÖ until the point in time of the constitution of the administrative bodies of the HRÖ which are independent of the individual congregations." This regulation resulted in the respective Executive Committee of the Hindu Mandir Association also exercising the function of the Executive Committee of the HRÖ with identical personnel. Hindus who were indeed ordinary members of the HRÖ, but not of the Hindu Mandir Association, would thus have been permanently denied the possibility of standing as candidates for the Executive Committee of the HRÖ. It was therefore necessary, in the sense of item 5.8.3, to rectify this situation and, furthermore, to ensure the legal-organizational autonomy of the HRÖ as well as its independence from the Hindu Mandir Association. This was effected by the redrafting of item 4.1 of the Constitution of the HRÖ in the General Assembly (Generalversammlung) of 17 September 2006.
5. The duties of the Editor shall be performed by the General Secretary (see point 5.1.3).
6. In accordance with the respective applicable federal statutory jurisdiction regulations, this provision is to be read as follows: "the Federal Minister responsible for the enforcement of the BekGG/RRBG 1998 as amended."
7. It is now clarified that the auditors are a separate organ of the HRÖ, independent of the Executive Committee.

Appendix

The institutions (Hindu Congregations) and Sanskrit terms mentioned under item 2.3 a-g in the Constitution are defined and briefly described hereafter as follows:

(a) **Mandir:**

Mandirs are temples in which the Divine is worshiped in its most diverse aspects (sarva-devatā) or which are consecrated to a particular aspect of the Divine (ishta-devatā) specially worshiped by a group of believers. These latter Mandirs generally constitute themselves as a Peetham, the seat of a deity, and these temples are subject to special rules and statutes; access may be restricted to the believers of this Sampradāy (Sampradāy = a spiritual organizational unit or lineage of a spiritual tradition, its founders and successors) or be made dependent on compliance with certain rules.

In Hindu congregations that constitute themselves around a Mandir dedicated to the most diverse forms of expression of the One Divine (sarva-devata), the believers may belong to the most diverse traditions of Hinduism and various Sampradāya. Access to a sarva-devatā temple is open to all Hindus. Active membership is desired but not a prerequisite.

In the Mandirs, the Divine is worshiped through divine service (pujā) and ceremonies (e.g., arti, offering of lights) or also through fire ceremonies (havan, hōm), through repetition of holy names (nām-jāp) and prayers (mantra-jāp), through recitation of holy hymns from the holy scriptures (sūktam, ashtakam, upanishad, etc.), through holy dance dedicated to the Divine (e.g., through Bharat Nātyam, Odissi, and others), through spiritual instruction and exchange of spiritual ideas (satsang), etc.

(b) **Āshram:**

In this specific context, the term Āshram is to be understood as a monastery-like community, a spiritual-cultural and religious assembly point, as a meditation and learning community. Most Āshram belong to a specific Sampradāy; they often have their own Mandir, and life is organized according to the principles of Ora et Labora.

The members of an Āshram may belong to a specific spiritual order – i.e., monks and/or nuns who have, among others, taken vows of chastity (brahmacharya), truth (satya), non-violence (ahimsā), etc. – as well as be laypersons.

Āshram furthermore has a wider circle of believers and associated families who live outside and visit the Āshram from time to time for short visits or also for longer stays for the purpose of spiritual inspiration, communal meditation, etc. Access to the Āshram and its Mandir is usually reserved for members or requires at least the express consent of the Executive Committee or of a responsible member.

Āshram represents a traditional form of a Hindu Congregation typical of Hinduism, which offers diverse possibilities for the deepening and renewal of religious life.

(c) **Math:**

The Hindu Congregations known as Math are comparable to a large Āshram and are the seat of a religious organization or Sampradāy.

Numerous spiritual orders have their origin in the Dashanāmi Order founded by Sri Shankarāchārya in the 8th century. Sri Shankarāchārya, the great renewer of Hinduism, put into effect a spiritual-religious system with the founding of his order, which represents a supporting pillar of Hinduism to this day. He founded four Maths, which in turn were structured into ten "divisions" (Dashanāmi). The Gaudiya Math, which goes back to Sri Caitanya, also has branches, Āshram, and temples worldwide.

(d) **Peetham:**

According to an ancient Hindu tradition, the Peetham is the seat of a religious community with a Mandir which is consecrated to a specific deity. Particularly well-known are the Shakti Peethams, which are consecrated to an aspect of the Divine Mother (e.g., the Shakti Peethams in Kanchi and Kanyakumari etc.).

(e) **Mission:**

Under British influence in India, some larger, recognized Hindu religious communities have chosen the name "Mission", which is also understood as a branch, legation, or organizational form that is very close to that of an Āshram (example: Rāmakrishna Missions). A part of the Hindu "Missions" existing in India would likewise have to be subsumed under the term of a Hindu Congregation.

(f) **Sanātan Dharm Groups:**

Sanātan Dharm Group serves as a collective term for smaller, spiritually-religiously oriented Hindu groups.

The associations considered **Sanātan Dharm Group** normally do not constitute a Hindu Congregation. However, provided they are a member of a Sampradāy (Āshram, Peetham, or Mission), their application for the acquisition of legal personality for a local sub-area may be supported by the Executive Committee.

(g) **Yog Centers:**

Yog centers are associations/societies entered in the register of associations that dedicate themselves to the teaching, cultivation, and dissemination of the science of Yog based on the traditional scriptures (see point 1.2 of the Constitution of the HRÖ), hold Yog courses, and train Yog teachers.

Yog centers do not automatically constitute a Hindu Congregation. However, provided they are a member of a Sampradāy (Ashram, Peetham, or Mission), their application for the acquisition of legal personality for a local sub-area may be considered and supported by the Executive Committee on a case-by-case basis.

The members of Yog centers may likewise become members of the HRÖ upon application.

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