Religious freedom and diversity of beliefs in Catalonia

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1. Information and regulations

1.1. Religious freedom

Religious freedom is a fundamental right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It includes freedom to change religion or belief and the freedom, either alone or with others and in public or private, to manifest one’s religion or belief through teaching, practice, worship and observance.

In Catalonia religious freedom is regulated by Spanish law. The Spanish Constitution states that ‘no religion shall have a state character’ and that ‘the public authorities shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation relations with the Catholic Church and other confessions’. All discrimination on grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion or any other personal or social condition or circumstance is also prohibited.

This constitutional right is implemented by the Religious Freedom Law which provides for agreements with religious faiths. Spain has signed cooperation agreements with Catholic, Evangelical, Jewish and Muslim faiths through their representatives.

The Ministry of Justice manages the Religious Entities Register that recognises the legal personality of entities with religious purposes. It has also set up the Advisory Council on Religious Freedom that resolves issues in the implementation of the Law.

Under Article 161 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia (2006), ‘The Generalitat has exclusive power over religious entities that carry out their activities in Catalonia.

The opening of places of worship is regulated by the Places of Worship Law passed by the Parliament of Catalonia in 2009 with three objectives: facilitate the exercise of the right to religious freedom, support local councils in guaranteeing this right and ensure adequate health and safety conditions of the premises used. To do this the measures in the Law include the obligation of councils to provide land where religious use is permitted and also a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship.
1.2. **Directorate General of Religious Affairs**

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs is the Government of Catalonia agency which maintains dialogue with religious faiths, promotes religious freedom across all tiers of government and ensures respect for diversity of beliefs as a basic aspect for coexistence.

**Actions**

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs implements a range of measures to achieve its objectives. The main ones are:

1) **Advice**: personalised advice to public services and religious entities and publicity for regulations, standards and best practices through guides, interfaith calendars, enewsletters, etc.

2) **Research**: publication of the religious map of Catalonia of places of worship and the Barometer on religion and managing its diversity which help with understanding and evolving indicators of religious diversity and its acceptance by the public at large.

3) **Training**: courses on religious diversity and how to manage it for groups of special interest.

4) **Grants**: financial assistance with calls held once a year to promote interfaith coexistence and publicise religious diversity. Each year a call is published indicating which beneficiaries can apply for funding depending on the project they submit.

**Functions**

a) Attend to the various religious organisations established in Catalonia.

b) Implement Catalan Government decisions with representative bodies of the religious faiths in Catalonia and ensure compliance with these decisions.

c) Be the regular representative of the Catalan Government to religious entities.

d) Draw up reports and studies and sponsor promotional activities in the field of religious affairs.

e) Establish and maintain relationships with institutional leaders in religious issues.

f) Assist the Spanish Government with managing the Religious Entities Register.

g) Any other similar function entrusted to it.

**Map**

**Address**: Carrer de Rivadeneyra, 6  
**Town**: 08002 Barcelona  
**Phone**: 935 545 852  
**Website**: [http://gencat.cat/afersreligiosos](http://gencat.cat/afersreligiosos)

**Registration and opening hours**

Monday to Friday from 9 am to 2 pm. Closed on 24 and 31 December.
1.3. Advisory Council on Religious Diversity

The Advisory Council on Religious Diversity is a deliberative body that assists the Catalan Government with implementing religious affairs policies related to the churches, faiths and religious communities that carry out their activities in Catalonia. It is chaired by philosopher and theologian Francesc Torralba and has up to fifteen members who are experts in religious diversity drawn from a range of disciplines.

The Advisory Council on Religious Diversity has begun a collection of documents on issues affecting the religious sphere and its expression in public life. The aim of these texts is to advise the Government, make recommendations and provide non-binding guidelines for managing religious diversity. However, the collection is also aimed at other public institutions, religious groups and the public at large.

2. Religious entities

2.1. Nature of religious entities

What is a religious entity?

A religious entity is a non-profit organisation whose main objectives include the promotion and collective practice of specified religious beliefs. Religious entities have a special nature and acquire legal personality when they are registered in the Ministry of Justice’s Religious Entities Register.

Is a place of worship the same as a religious entity?

A place of worship is the public building or premises recognised or declared by a religious community or faith that is intended primarily and permanently for the performance of collective worship. It is consequently not the same as a religious entity.

Only religious entities which have acquired legal personality through registration in the Religious Entities Register can open a place of worship. Therefore before opening a place of worship, religious entities must be registered in the Register.

2.2. The Ministry of Justice’s Religious Entities Register

What is the Religious Entities Register?

The Religious Entities Register is the register where the religious entities that are present in Spain and wish to obtain legal personality are registered. It is in the Directorate General for International Legal Cooperation and Relations with Religious Faiths in the Ministry of Justice and is managed by the Sub-directorate General of Relations with Religious Faiths.
Why do religious entities have to register with it?

- The Register affords legal personality to the entities registered in it so that they can buy, sell, rent, appear before the courts, etc.
- Registered entities benefit from the special regime provided by the Religious Freedom Law, which recognises their full independence and their ability to set their own organisation regulations, internal rules and the system for their staff as well as appoint the religious leaders they wish to.
- Under the Places of Worship Law 16/2009, of 22 July, only religious entities which have acquired legal personality by registering with the Religious Entities Register can open a place of worship. Therefore before opening a place of worship, religious entities must be registered in the Register.

Which entities can register with the Religious Entities Register?

The following can register with the Religious Entities Register:

- Churches, faiths and religious communities and their federations.
- The following types of religious entities, as long as they have been set up, created or instituted by a church, faith or religious community or their federations entered in the Register:
  a) Their regional divisions.
  b) Their local congregations, sections or communities.
  c) Institutional entities that are part of their structure.
  d) Associations with religious purposes set up or created by a church, faith or religious community as well as their federations.
  e) Seminaries or training centres of their ministers of worship.
  f) Higher education schools that exclusively educate in the theological or religious teachings of the registered church, faith or religious community.
  g) Monastic or religious communities and the orders or federations in them.
  h) Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, their provinces and houses and their federations.
  i) Any other entity that can register pursuant to the Agreements between the Spanish Government and religious faiths.
Which procedures can be performed with the Religious Entities Register?

a) Registration of the foundation and establishment of a religious entity in Spain, which can be:
   - A church, faith or religious community.
   - An entity created by a church, faith or religious community.
   - A federation of religious entities.
   - An entity dependent on another one established abroad.

b) Amendments to the bylaws of registered religious entities.

c) State or change the members of the religious entity’s representative body.

d) Inclusion of an entity in or its separation from a federation.

e) Dissolution of an entity.

f) Registration of the places of worship of an entity.

g) Deregistration of the places of worship of an entity.

h) Registration of or change in the ministers of worship of the entity.

i) Any other act that can be entered or recorded pursuant to the Agreements between the Spanish Government and religious faiths.

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs advises on and receives registration applications.

3. Regulation of places of worship in Catalonia

Places of Worship Law 16/2009, of 22 July


3.1. Legal framework

The Parliament of Catalonia passed the Places of Worship Law on 15 July 2009 with three objectives: facilitate the exercise of the right to religious freedom, support local councils in guaranteeing this right and ensure adequate health and safety conditions of the premises used. To do this the measures in the Law include the obligation of councils to provide land where religious use is permitted and also a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship. On 20 July 2010 the Catalan Government passed the decree implementing the Places of Worship Law in Catalonia which establishes the technical and material conditions required for the opening and operation of new premises. On 27 January 2014 it was decided that places of worship which do not have a licence must conform to the regulation by 2020.
3.2. **Scope**

**What is a place of worship?**

For the purposes of Law 16/2009 and the regulations that implement it, ‘place of worship’ means one coming under the Religious Freedom Law 7/1980, of 5 July, and which also meets the following requirements:

- It is open to the public.
- It is recognised, certified or declared by its own church, faith or religious community.
- It is permanently used as a place of worship.

*(Section 3 of Law 16/2009)*

**Which places of worship does the Law not apply to?**

*Excluded* from the application of Law 16/2009 are places of worship in:

- Hospitals
- Care centres
- Schools
- Cemeteries
- Funeral parlours
- Prisons
- Other places used for other main activities

*(Section 2.2 of Decree 94/2010)*

3.3. **The provision of land for the establishment of places of worship in towns**

Law 16/2009 provides that municipal town planning will provide land zoned for a community facility where newly implemented religious uses are allowed based on the needs and availabilities of municipalities. *(Section 4.1 of Law 16/2009)*

**How long do municipalities have to adapt their planning?**

✓ Municipalities have to adapt their general planning to Section 4 of Law 16/2009 within at most 10 years. *(First transitional provision of Law 16/2009).*

**How are municipalities’ land needs and availabilities decided?**

✓ Municipalities’ land needs and availabilities with respect to the establishment of places of worship are decided by taking into consideration the specific studies drawn up as part of the preparation of municipal town planning and also the suggestions or arguments put forward by churches, faiths and religious communities in the public consultation process run as part of the preparation of this planning and in the public information procedure or procedures regulated by planning regulations as part of the overall planning approval procedure. *(Section 3 of Decree 94/2010).*
Where should land zoned for community facilities where religious use is permitted be located?

✓ The location of the community facility for religious use must have good transport connections so as not to hinder the exercise of freedom of religion. *(Section 6 of Decree 94/2010).*

Does the Law preclude the admission or compatibility of religious uses in other built-up areas of the municipality not zoned for community facilities?

✓ The provision of land zoned for community facilities where religious use is permitted does not preclude the admission or compatibility of these uses in other areas of the municipality *(Section 5 of Decree 94/2010).*

Can religious use be excluded from the possible uses of land coming under community facility planning?

✓ If religious use is excluded it must be justified with a reasoned report *(Section 4.1 of Decree 94/2010).*

What are the rights of religious communities with respect to town planning?

✓ Churches, faiths and religious communities are entitled to participate in the planning process through the channels established by public participation programmes for municipal town planning and participation in the public consultation provided for by planning legislation for processing town planning. *(Section 5.2 of Law 16/2009).*

What information should municipal town planning reports contain?

✓ Municipal town planning reports should contain an assessment and justification of the quantitative and location needs of land for the establishment of places of worship in the municipality *(Section 3 of Decree 94/2010).*

What about municipal bylaws governing places of worship?

✓ If a municipality has a bylaw that regulates the opening of places of worship because of spatial concentration or the distance between them, it must respect the technical provisions established by Decree 94/2010. *(Section 4.3 of Decree 94/2010).*

How is the use of the facilities specified?

✓ Use of the facilities must be specified in a special plan *(Section 4.2 of Decree 94/2010).*
What documentation does town planning need to include in the case of establishing a community facility that has a gross floor area exceeding 1,000 m² or planned capacity for over 500 people?

✓ When the intention is to establish a place of worship on land zoned for community facilities that has a floor area exceeding 1,000 m² or planned capacity for 500 people, the special town planning documentation must include:

a) A justification of the suitability and advisability of implementing the new centre.

b) A study of the mobility generated by the new facility and its need for parking spaces together with the solutions envisaged to ensure that any potential shortcomings are remedied.

(Section 7 of Decree 94/2010).

3.4. The municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship

Law 16/2009 states that a municipal licence for the opening and use of regulated places of worship must be obtained before starting the activities of a new public place of worship (Section 9.1 of Law 16/2009). However, the Rationalisation and Sustainability of Local Administration Law 27/2013, of 27 December, provides that places of worship can be opened by the notification system. The Catalan Government has lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Court against this provision of Law 27/2013. Until the Court has ruled on this appeal the provisions of Law 27/2013 must be adhered to.

Which centres and activities do not have to apply for this licence?

✓ Publicly-owned buildings and premises mainly used for other purposes which host occasional or sporadic acts of collective worship do not have to obtain a licence for opening and use of places of worship and are not included in the notification system (Section 19.1 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ The licence for opening and use of places of worship is replaced by prior notification in the case of public or private centres whose purpose is conducting worship activities continuously over time when the areas used for this worship are not greater than one hundred square metres and the planned capacity does not exceed ninety people.

(Section 19.2 of Decree 94/2010).

What are the requirements for applying for a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship?

✓ Churches, faiths and religious communities that prove they are on the national Religious Entities Register may begin procedures for the award of the licence for opening and use or make the notification referred to in Section 19 of Decree 94/2010.

(Section 23 of Decree 94/2010).
Applications for a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship must include the following documents (Section 24 of Decree 94/2010):

a) Proof that the church, faith or religious community is registered in the Religious Entities Register or certification of the relevant ecclesiastical or religious authority.

b) A statutory declaration that it has liability insurance before the start of the activities of the place of worship.

c) An engineering plan in the case of new builds or expansion, renovation or rehabilitation of existing buildings or structures which includes the planning specifications and essential techniques. If the engineering plan is not mandatory by law, a plan of the building’s interior layout and the specifications of the activities to be carried out should be provided.

d) Estimate of the numbers of people who may attend the activity or activities.

What is the term for ruling on a licence for opening and use of places of worship?

The authority concerned has four months to issue its decision and notify the applicants for a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship from the date the application was received by the authority responsible for processing it. (Section 29.2 of Decree 94/2010).

The authority concerned may decide on reasoned grounds which demonstrate the exceptional nature of the case to extend the deadline mentioned in the previous paragraph by a period no longer than two months. (Section 29.3 of Decree 94/2010).

Once the term for responding to applications has expired with no notification having been given and unless the council can demonstrate it has tried to deliver it, the council’s failure to respond shall constitute constructive approval of the application. If the place of worship is intended to be sited on publicly-owned land, it will constitute constructive rejection. (Section 29.4 of Decree 94/2010).

Do places of worship have to apply for planning licences?

Under current planning legislation, the mandatory planning licence must be applied for simultaneously with the municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship in the following cases:

a) Construction works for new places of worship as well as enlargement, alteration, remodelling or refurbishment of existing buildings, structures and facilities that require an engineering plan.

b) First use and occupation of the buildings to be used for premises for worship.

c) If applicable, the change of use of the buildings and facilities when the place of worship is set up in an existing building intended for uses other than religious ones.

d) Any action which under planning legislation or bylaws requires a planning licence. (Section 21.1 of Decree 94/2010)
What other permits do places of worship have to apply for?

- Places of worship need the permits set by sector law for any other specific activities which might be carried out in them. Conferences, concerts, choral singing and recreation and leisure activities do not require such permits. *(Section 13 of Act 16/2009).*

### 3.5. Technical and material conditions to be met by new places of worship

Law 16/2009 provides that public places of worship must meet the necessary technical and material conditions to ensure user safety and hygiene of the facilities and to avoid inconvenience to third parties *(Section 8).* These conditions have been regulated in Decree 94/2010 and in all matters not covered by this regulation the technical regulations in force for public places are applicable.

#### Fire safety

- Places of worship must comply with fire safety requirements for spreading inside, spreading outside, evacuation of occupants, fire protection systems, intervention by the fire brigade and resistance to fire of the structure based on the specific characteristics of the activity.
- With respect to fire spreading inside and partitioning into fire sectors, the maximum area within a fire sector irrespective of its capacity may not be more than 2,500 square metres. However, larger fire sectors are accepted as long as they meet the conditions listed in Section 9.2 of the Regulation.
- In order to limit the risk of fire spreading to the outside of the building through its outer walls, it must comply with the technical regulations for public places.
- Places of worship must have all the fire protection equipment and systems established by the technical regulations for public places.
- The conditions for approach roads and working areas for the fire brigade and accessibility through the outer wall will be as established by the technical regulations for public places.
- The requirements in terms of the fire resistance of the structure will be those established by the technical regulations for public places. *(Section 9 of Decree 94/2010)*

#### Structural safety

- Constructions in areas that are supported by slab flooring must have a strength of 3.5 kN/m² and 4 kN of point load *(Section 11 of Decree 94/2010).*

#### Sealing and insulation

- Places of worship must have the necessary levels of protection against damp and sealing against rainwater as well as protection against flooding together with the thermal and noise insulation required by current technical standards *(Section 12 of Decree 94/2010).*
**Ventilation and air conditioning**

 Ventilation systems or devices must ensure a minimum volume of air renewal of twenty-two cubic metres per hour for each of the people that make up the centre’s maximum capacity.

(Section 13 of Decree 94/2010).

**Lavatories**

 Places of worship must have, depending on their capacity, lavatories that have natural or forced ventilation systems with direct outlets to the outside through independent ductwork according to the following criteria:

 a) Places of worship having a capacity not exceeding one hundred people must have one lavatory for each sex consisting of a washbasin and a toilet.

 b) Places of worship having a capacity between one hundred and three hundred people must have two lavatories for each sex, each consisting of a washbasin and a toilet.

 c) Places of worship having a capacity of over three hundred people must increase the facilities mentioned in the previous section by one toilet and half a washbasin for each sex for every additional three hundred people or fraction. The result is rounded down.

 d) In all cases at least one of the lavatories must be adapted for disabled people.

(Section 14 of Decree 94/2010)

**Minimum conditions for access and concentration of people**

 There are no restrictions on the establishment of places of worship due to the width of the road facing the plot where they are to be sited. However, in the case of roads with a width not exceeding six metres, only places of worship with a capacity of less than one hundred people can be opened

(Section 15.2 of Decree 94/2010)

 Places of worship with a capacity exceeding two hundred people must have lobby areas outside the rooms used for worship which are indoors or outdoors and with an area sufficient to allow a proportion of its users to gather in an intermediate area between it and public space. These lobbies or intermediate spaces will have a minimum area equivalent to one sixth of the area of the main room used for acts of worship which in no case may be less than thirty square metres. In places of worship that are located in urban areas with other dwelling, residential and hospital uses, the above areas will be enclosed and roofed.

(Section 15.3 of Decree 94/2010).

**Accessibility**

 Places of worship must meet the technical conditions for accessibility established by current legislation.

(Section 16 of Decree 94/2010)
Noise protection (1/3)

✓ Places of worship must comply with the provisions of legislation for protection against noise pollution
   (Section 10 of Law 16/2009).
✓ In general the premises must have at least the airborne noise insulation specified in the following paragraphs:

a) Inner and outer walls and bounding elements that are not in contact with other venues or premises: 37 dB (A).

b) Inner walls and bounding elements separating from other premises or buildings in contact: 55 dB (A). In this case, if the bounding element has doors or windows that open onto common areas in the building, they must have insulation of 30 dB (A).
   (Section 17.1 of Decree 94/2010)

✓ Places of worship which due the performance of their activities have electronic amplification appliances must have power limiting devices that prevent a level of noise emission of these appliances of over 90 dB (A). (Section 17.2 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Places of worship sited in urban areas with dwelling, residential and hospital uses that are located at a minimum distance of one hundred metres from them must increase their minimum levels of noise insulation to comply with the limitations on maximum immission resulting from the corresponding noise sensitivity map of the town.
   (Section 17.3 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Places of worship located in buildings where there are other uses or activities or in buildings adjacent to others must adopt the protection and insulation measures required to prevent the spread of noise by vibration through structural elements.

✓ In this respect, the overall level of noise impact pressure in habitable premises that are vertically or horizontally adjacent to or have an edge in common with the place of worship may not exceed 60 dB.
   (Section 17.4 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ To prevent the spread of structural noise, loudspeakers in rooms used for worship must be separated from structural elements by using anti-vibration mounts or anchors.
   (Section 17.5 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Bells in places of worship are excluded from noise protection conditions due to their traditional use.
   (Section 17.6 of Decree 94/2010).

3.6. Technical and material conditions required of places of worship existing prior to Law 16/2009

Law 16/2009 states that public places of worship existing when the Law was passed must meet the basic safety conditions established by Decree 94/2010 (Third Transitional Provision of Law 16/2009)
Evacuation

✓ Places of worship:
  - with a capacity less than or equal to 200 people located on the ground floor;
  - with a capacity less than or equal to 100 people which are on upper floors with an escape height not exceeding 28 metres with respect to street level.
  - with a capacity less than or equal to 50 people which are on floors with an ascending escape height not exceeding 6 metres, in all these cases must have at least one exit to the exterior with a minimum width of one metre.
  
  *Third Transitional Provision, 3 of Decree 94/2010*

✓ Places of worship that are on the ground floor or on floors with an ascending escape height not exceeding three metres and whose capacity is between 200 and 300 people must have either one exit to the outside with a minimum width of 1.5 metres or two exits each with a minimum width corresponding to the result of dividing the total number of occupants expected to pass through the door by 200. In no case may this width be less than 0.80 metres.

  *Third Transitional Provision, 4 of Decree 94/2010*

✓ Places of worship that are on the ground floor or on floors with an ascending escape height not exceeding three metres and whose capacity is between 300 and 500 people must have:
  - Either one exit to the exterior with a minimum width of 2.5 metres, provided that the maximum distance between the door and the farthest point of the centre is not over fifty metres;
  - Or two exits each with a minimum width corresponding to the result of dividing the total number of occupants expected to pass through the door by 200. In no case may this width be less than 0.80 metres.

  *Third Transitional Provision, 4 of Decree 94/2010*

✓ Places of worship exceeding the capacities listed above must meet the safety conditions of new build places of worship.

  *Third Transitional Provision, 6 of Decree 94/2010.*

✓ Places of worship which cannot meet the stated requirements will have to limit their capacity to adapt to the circumstances of each case based on the parameters set out in the preceding paragraphs.

✓  

*Third Transitional Provision, 7 of Decree 94/2010.*
Fire safety

✓ Places of worship must have fire extinguishing means and at least one 21A-113B capacity extinguisher for every fifty square metres, with a minimum of two, inside the centre and a fire extinguisher for every fifteen metres of corridors and external entrances.

(Third Transitional Provision, 2.a) of Decree 94/2010).

Structural safety

✓ Places of worship must have sufficient structural strength which must be accredited by a report prepared by a certified project engineer.

(Third Transitional Provision, 2.b of Decree 94/2010).

How long do places of worship that existed before 20 July 2010 have to comply with the basic safety conditions?

✓ Places of worship which existed prior to 20 July 2010 and do not have a municipal business licence may continue their activities provided they report to their local council before 20 July 2020:
  - Either they have been included in the Inventory of Catalan Cultural Heritage
  - Or that they meet the basic safety conditions specified in the Third Transitional Provision of Regulation 94/2010.

(Third Transitional Provision of Law 16/2009, amended to extend the deadline from five to ten years by Section 210 of Law 2/2014, of 27 January, on tax, administrative and financial measures and the public sector and the Fourth Transitional Provision of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Places of worship which existed prior to 20 July 2010 do not have to apply for a licence for opening and use of places of worship but rather must simply notify their local council that they meet the requirements – basic safety conditions – to continue with their activity.

(Third Transitional Provision, 1 of Decree 94/2010).

Which places of worship are not affected by the obligation to comply with the basic safety conditions laid down by the Third Transitional Provision of Regulation 94/2010?

✓ Centres which are included in the Inventory of Catalan Cultural Heritage or register for it before 20 July 2015, as the Places of Worship Law 16/2009 does not apply to them.

(Second Transitional Provision of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Centres which have a municipal business licence provided for in Law 10/1990, Act 3/1998 or other regulations in force at the time, or provided for in the regulation that replaces them such as Law 11/2009 and Law 20/2009. The municipal business licence will be deemed equivalent to the licence for opening and use of places of worship on the entry into force of this regulation.

(Second Transitional Provision of Decree 94/2010).
Do pre-existing places of worship have to apply for a licence for opening and use of places of worship?

✓ Places of worship which existed prior to 20 July 2010 do not have to apply for a licence for opening and use of places of worship but rather must simply notify their local council that they meet the requirements – basic safety conditions – to continue with their activity.

(Third Transitional Provision, 1 of Decree 94/2010).

3.7. Occasional use of publicly-owned facilities for religious purposes

Law 16/2009 provides that the public authorities shall ensure that churches, faiths and religious communities receive equal and non-discriminatory treatment in the assignment and authorisation for use of public facilities and spaces, exclusive use of the public domain, temporary occupation of public roads and use of private properties to carry out occasional religious activities. (Section 6 of Law 16/2009)

How can you apply to use a public facility for religious activities?

✓ Organisers must apply for authorisation from the relevant authority under the terms established in the property regulations of local councils and where applicable in municipal bylaws at most twenty days in advance. Organisers must provide the authority with at least the following information:

   a) Identification of the organisers.
   b) Address of the building or premises where the activity will take place.
   c) Date and duration of the celebration.
   d) Nature of the event.
   e) Forecast number of attendees.

(Section 20 of Decree 94/2010)

How long does the local authority have to reply to these applications?

✓ The authority has five days to make its decision and notify the applicant. Failure to do so entails constructive rejection.

(Section 20 of Decree 94/2010).

3.8. Precautionary measures

Law 16/2009 provides that in cases of imminent danger, the mayor of the respective municipality shall order in a Decision and after hearing the person concerned the closure and evacuation of public premises that do not have a municipal licence for opening and use of places of worship or are in breach of it or violate the regulations for the premises or facilities required to ensure health and safety in the premises. (Section 11 of Law 16/2009).
In which circumstances may precautionary measures be taken?

✓ To ensure public health and safety, and provided that serious risk or imminent danger has been previously demonstrated, after consulting interested parties the authority may take the precautionary measure it deems most appropriate pursuant to Section 11 of Law 16/2009, of 22 July, and in accordance with the provisions of Law 30/1992 on the legal regime of public administrations and common administrative procedure. (Section 34.1 of Decree 94/2010).

Are precautionary measures permanent?

✓ Any precautionary measure is necessarily temporary, does not involve a penalty and cannot be maintained after the time when the imminent hazard or danger ends or the measures required to ensure public health and/or safety have been put in place. (Section 34.2 of Decree 94/2010).

In which cases can no precautionary measure be taken?

✓ Precautionary measures cannot be taken when the place of worship has a licence for opening and use or has given notification of its opening and meets the technical or material conditions required by this regulation, unless it has altered them for any reason thereby generating serious hazard or danger. (Section 34.3 of Decree 94/2010).

3.9. Annexes

How is the capacity of places of worship calculated?

✓ Places of worship that have seating specified in their engineering plan must have a ratio of one person per seat. In the case of centres which do not have individual seating, the maximum density is one person per 0.60 linear metres of bench. The result obtained by applying the standard is rounded up. The number of seats or the length of seating that is not individual is subject to maintaining the maximum escape distance to exits as set by regulations. (Section 10 of Decree 94/2010).

✓ Places of worship that do not have seats defined in their plan must have a ratio of one person per square metre of net floor area used for worship. For the purposes of this calculation, net floor area used for worship means the area reserved for attendees at acts of worship, excluding corridors, vestibules, presidential and side areas, as well as toilets and lobbies. Areas for additional activities such as workshops, classrooms and meeting rooms are excluded from the capacity calculation specified in this section and will be computed in accordance with the standards provided for in the technical legislation applicable to them. (Section 10 of Decree 94/2010)
4. Religious diversity in Catalonia

4.1. Religious Map of Catalonia

General evolution

The composition of the Religious Map of Catalonia and its evolution shows that the Catholic Church still has a large majority in Catalonia with more than 83% of places of worship. During the years of Franco’s dictatorship (1939-1975) the bond between the Catholic Church and the state was very strong. A relationship was formally established in which political and religious authority were linked: the state was Catholic and the Church had a monopoly on the transmission of society’s beliefs and values.

Yet religion did not end with the Catholic Church, and still less so in Catalonia. In the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century Catalan Protestant churches grew in importance and had schools, a hospital and several biblical associations in the country. In 1918 the Jews established their first synagogue and then a religious school. Later on Baha’i groups, Jehovah’s Witnesses and then other Christian millenarian churches such as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also settled in the country. Buddhists, Hindus, Orthodox and Muslims began to open their places of worship in the second half of the 20th century. Catalonia became plural. The increase in migration starting in the 1990s meant that the components of the Catalan religious map increased even more in quantity and variety.

As a result the connection it had been assumed existed between modernity and secularisation was pushed into the background. The modernisation of a society does not in reality entail the disappearance of religion. In any event, the modernisation of a society generates pluralism.

Evolution by religions

Today Catalonia has 1,360 non-Catholic places of worship. Some of the main features of this mosaic are the following:

(a) Most non-Catholic places of worship in Catalonia belong to evangelical churches (725). It is the religious tradition that has grown most over the last two decades and created most places of worship during this time. Nowadays Protestantism encompasses a wide range of denominations, churches and organisations that make up a diverse, heterogeneous and fragmented panorama.

(b) Islam is the third most represented faith in the country with a total of 256 mosques. It is thus some way behind the evangelical churches. The first mosque opened in 1974, but it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that the establishment of mosques was finally consolidated in Catalonia and took on special importance among the other religions present in the country.

(c) The Jehovah’s Witnesses with 118 kingdom halls are in fourth place in the table of religious faiths in Catalonia. The first kingdom hall in Catalonia was founded in 1973 in Barcelona. From then on expansion of the Jehovah’s Witnesses was frenetic and constant until the end of the 1990s when their growth rate began to slow down.
(d) Next there are 68 Buddhist centres. Buddhist communities, like their Hindu counterparts, started out in Catalonia with some Catalans who were drawn to Eastern practices and today they are attracting more and more followers.

(e) The Eastern churches have 55 places of worship, mostly chapels lent by the Catholic Church for a few hours. The Eastern churches were introduced into Catalonia in the early 20th century as a result of a small Greek community which in addition to a cultural meeting point decided to set up a religious community, the Greek Orthodox Church, in Barcelona. In the 1960s in the same city, a group of Catalans interested in Orthodox rituals founded a Catalan Orthodox church which is currently under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Serbia. The other patriarchates with a presence in Catalonia are Romania, Bulgaria and Moscow as well as Greek Catholics, Ukrainians, Copts and Armenians.

(f) There are 27 Hindu centres. The first small groups of people interested in Hinduism came together in Catalonia in the 1970s. In general they were young hippies who in some cases had travelled to India to learn more about the Hindu tradition. A wide range of new communities have been set up in recent years.

(g) The Seventh-day Adventist Church has 24 churches. It arrived in Catalonia with three young missionaries from California in 1903. However, it was not until 1940 that it opened its first church in the country. Since then it has opened new places of worship, more cautiously at first and later on in the late 1970s and during the 2000s in a more consolidated way.

(h) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has 15 churches. It was founded in Catalonia seventy years after the Adventist Church, also set up by a group of missionaries in this case initially in Madrid.

(i) By order of numbers we next come to Sikhism with 10 gurdwaras. Sikhism arrived in Catalonia in the late 1980s when small groups of Sikhs met up in private homes. In the 1990s the number of immigrants from the Indian Punjab increased and led to the opening of the first Sikh temple in the country in Barcelona.

(j) The Bahá’í Faith has nine meeting points. It has been in Catalonia since around 1949 when the first meeting group was set up in Barcelona. Two years later a new group began meeting in Terrassa.

(k) Taoism has six centres and began to consolidate its position in Catalonia in 1979. Strangely enough the first Taoist centre was founded by a Chinese Catholic priest. The other centres were opened after 2000.

(l) Judaism has four synagogues in Catalonia. The Jewish community has been in Catalonia since medieval times although following the expulsion of the Jews from Catalonia it ceased to exist, at least visibly. It was not until the early 20th century that the Jews once again occupied a public building with the founding of the synagogue of the Israelite Community of Barcelona.

(m) In addition to the above faiths there are over 43 places of worship which do not belong to any of these religions. They are places of worship that have doctrinal peculiarities which do not allow them to identify with any of the mainstream faiths and they are very much in a minority in Catalonia.
4.2. Barometer about religion and managing diversity

In 2014 the Catalan Government produced its first Barometer about religion and managing its diversity. It was a pioneering study, the result of an agreement with the Centre for Opinion Studies, which provides information about how Catalans see themselves from a religious point of view. The study also shows how Catalans perceive religious diversity and their views on policies for managing this diversity.

The Barometer about religion and managing its diversity has been drawn up using a sixty-question survey sent to a sample of 1,600 people aged over 16. The findings are representative for the whole of Catalonia and for each of its provinces.

Unlike other studies, this survey has also been given to immigrants so its findings provide us with a fairly accurate snapshot of the current position of Catalan society with respect to religious issues. In particular, the sample includes 2.5% of respondents from other European Union countries and 16.5% of respondents from the rest of the world. The fieldwork was carried out between 11 November and 8 December 2014.

A mostly Catholic society but with a significant presence of other faiths

The Barometer about religion and managing its diversity reveals a mostly Catholic society (52.4%) but one with a significant presence of Islamic (7.3%), Evangelical (2.5%), Buddhist (1.3%) and Orthodox (1.3%) communities. 12% of the population say they go to acts of worship once a week or more, 11.8% at least once a month, 10.2% at least once a year and 65.8% never. Only 8.7% of the population claim they would like to go to a place of worship more often. Although the level of knowledge about these communities is generally low, Catalans are fully aware of the need to know about religious diversity in contemporary society. 61.1% of respondents think that it is very or quite important that the public should have basic knowledge about religions to understand certain cultural and artistic expressions or political situations. In this respect, seven out of 10 respondents are in favour of schools teaching a subject that provides all children with information about the main world religions.

Catalans respect religious diversity and are supportive of the idea that government should increase its cooperation with religious groups. The Barometer also reveals the opinion of the population of Catalonia about the establishment of a diversity of religious groups in our country. In this respect, 55.1% of respondents said they very much or quite agree with the fact that the various religious groups can open new places of worship around the country.

Only 5.3% of the population perceives tension and/or hostility between people of different religious groups in their town. Most believe that there is respect in spite of there being little interaction (53.5%) or there is a good relationship (35.7%). Moreover, 52.9% of respondents said that religious diversity enriches the cultural life of Catalonia, while only 14% consider that it threatens the lifestyle of our country.
The majority of respondents (58.1%) believe that government and religious groups should cooperate with each other more than they do today. As for policies to be implemented at the municipal level, over 60% of people agree that local governments should meet representatives of religious entities and attend religious entities’ acts of worship and that religious entities should be consulted in matters affecting them. In addition, 60.5% consider it quite or very important that government should promote interfaith dialogue and 66.3% believe it is very or quite important that the different faiths should cooperate with each other.

4.3. Religious festivals calendar

All religious traditions are governed by their own festivals calendar which sets both the main day of the week as well as the celebrations throughout the year. Sometimes the celebration of these festivals is accompanied by rules about participation in rituals, fasting or abstinence from certain foods or activities. In the case of some religions, these rules are regulated by law through the Cooperation Agreements with the national government.

Below is the 2016 calendar for the celebrations of the main religions with greatest presence in Catalonia. Bear in mind that this is an indicative and informative calendar:

- Festivals governed by the lunar calendar may move backwards or forwards.
- There are religions in which the festivals celebrated vary considerably depending on the religious sect to which they belong. There are also significant differences when communities take different countries as their reference point.
- In no case does the information contained in this calendar commit the communities or their believers.
- For more complete and updated information, please contact the representative bodies of the respective religions.

5. Publications

5.1. Guides to respecting diversity of beliefs

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs has begun its Guides to Religious Diversity collection. The purpose of each volume in this collection is respect for the diversity of beliefs in a given area: schools, health, prisons and public roads.

All the guides have the same structure: the legal framework, principles, recommendations, best practices and annexes. The additional information includes information sheets about the major faiths present in Catalonia, legislation on religious freedom, the interfaith calendar and other resources.

These guides are aimed primarily at professionals in each sector and are also useful for public service managers and users. The texts have been prepared by the Directorate General of Religious Affairs and the relevant ministries with the help of other experts.
5.2. The Islamic Festival of the Sacrifice. Description and health regulations

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs has brought out a variety of materials as a reminder that the slaughter of animals for human consumption must be carried out in approved slaughterhouses and that the animals have to be transported to these establishments with appropriate transport health documentation. Slaughter of animals in private homes is prohibited and may be penalised.

In these materials published together with the Public Health Agency of Catalonia, the Catalan Food Safety Agency, the Directorate General of Immigration and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, Food and the Environment, the Government of Catalonia points out that butchers are the regular suppliers of meat for both the day of the Festival of the Sacrifice (Eid al-Kabir or Eid al-Adha) and for the rest of the year. Catalonia has an extensive network of butchers which cater for the demands of the different religious groups living in our country. The usual butcher can guarantee that the meat eaten is safe for the health of families and can supply meat with the guarantee that religious precepts were followed at the time of slaughter.

The booklet *The Islamic Festival of the Sacrifice. Description and Health Regulations* is divided into the following chapters:

1. Religious aspects of the festival
   1. 1. A festival with different names
   1. 2. How is the date of the Festival of the Sacrifice determined?
   1. 3. What does the Festival of the Sacrifice commemorate?
   1. 4. How do Muslims in Catalonia celebrate the Festival of the Sacrifice?
   1. 5. Which animals can be sacrificed?
   1. 6. Which rituals must be followed to perform the sacrifice?

2. Legal conditions which must be met to carry out the slaughter and sale of meat
   2. 1. Where and under what conditions can the slaughter be performed?
   2. 2. Official control in slaughterhouses
   2. 3. Legal recognition of Islamic ritual slaughter
   2. 4. Which slaughterhouses can slaughter animals by a religious rite in Catalonia?
   2. 5. Where can you buy the meat with an animal health guarantee and a guarantee that it complies with religious precepts?

3. Risks of eating meat not from the slaughterhouse

4. Contact list

5. Legislation

6. Slaughterhouses that slaughter sheep for religious rites Catalonia

A leaflet summarising this information has also been published in Catalan, Arabic and Urdu.
5.3. **Language reception guides**

The Directorate General of Religious Affairs supports the publication of the language reception guides produced by the Plataforma per la Llengua (Pro-Language Platform) in partnership with the various religious entities which are significant for the respective national groups.

The arrival of foreigners in Catalonia in recent decades has had a visible effect on the religious situation as the composition of existing communities has diversified and new ones have been set up. As a result the Directorate General of Religious Affairs supports the publication of language reception guides produced by the Plataforma per la Llengua in partnership with the respective linguistic communities. It is a collection of booklets designed to help religious communities mainly made up of newcomers become aware of the language situation in our country and discover similarities between their native language and Catalan and encourage them to use Catalan.