

## **IX. FRANCE**

**Population: 59,453,000**

### **Religious make-up:**

Roman Catholicism: about 80% (church-goers: about 14%)

Islam: about 4 million

Protestantism: about 750,000

Judaism: about 700,000

Buddhism: about 600,000

Orthodoxy: about 150,000 - 200,000

Eastern Catholicism: about 150,000 – 300,000

Jehovah's Witnesses: about 125,000 (but about 220,000 church-goers)

Mormons: about 22,000

Scientology: 10,000 - 20,000

**Membership OSCE: Original - Helsinki Final Act: Original - Charter of Paris:  
Original**

**Membership Council of Europe: 05/05/49 - Membership U.N.: 24/10/45 - Member of  
the European Union**

### **A. CONSTITUTION**

## **Constitution of October 4, 1958.**

**Article II:** France is a Republic, indivisible, secular, democratic and social. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs.

### **Article 77 [Autonomy]**

(3) All citizens shall be equal before the law, regardless of their origin, race or religion. They shall have the same duties.

**The Declaration of the Rights of Man** appended to the Constitution:

**Article IV:** Liberty consists in the power to do anything that does not injure others; accordingly, the exercise of the natural rights of each man has for its only limits those that secure to the other members of society the enjoyment of these same rights. These limits can be determined only by law.

**Article V:** The law has the right to forbid only such actions as are injurious to society. Nothing can be forbidden that is not interdicted by the law, and no one can be constrained to do that which it does not order.

**Article X:** No one ought to be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious provided their manifestation does not derange the public order established by law.

**Article XI:** The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man; every citizen can freely speak, write, and print, subject to responsibility for the abuse of this freedom in the cases determined by law.

## **B. LEGISLATION**

Law of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1901 (extensively modified by Law No. 505 dated April 8, 1942)

Article 19: The associations will exclusively have as object the exercise of a religion.

Law of December 9, 1905 concerning the separation of the churches and the state. (modified by the Law of January 2, 1907, and the Law of April 13, 1908)

Law of January 2, 1907 authorizing associations under the scope of law of 1901 to conduct religious services.

Decree of October 7, 1998 n°98-980 instituting a Interministerial Mission of fights against sects.

Law No. 59-1559 dated December 31, 1959

Law No. 86-1067 dated September 30, 1986

Laws prohibiting discrimination

Law No. 72-546 dated July 1, 1972

Law No. 90-615 dated July 13, 1990