

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

# Religious buildings in transition

## An international comparison

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# Introduction

## *Background, purpose and aims*

The study "Religious buildings in transition- an international comparison" is part of the project *Old churches new values - use and management of churches in a changing society*, funded by the National Heritage Board and the Church of Sweden and which ran from 2012-2015. The project concerns the Church of Sweden's church buildings as legally-protected cultural heritage: their preservation, use and future development.

In many European countries the traditional majority society has long been dealing with a situation of declining membership and redundant church buildings. The focus of this study is on the Christian society's tangible cultural heritage, that is, church buildings. In most of the countries covered by the study, there are individual mosques and synagogues that are listed and defined as a common social heritage, but they are in a clear minority.

The purpose of this study is to describe the conditions that give perspectives on and highlight the Swedish situation and which could provide a knowledge base for focusing further research. This is done mainly by giving an overview of the confessional (church-related) and legal administrative conditions that affect the state of the tangible religious heritage in a number of countries; how it is managed, the values that are enshrined in law and the development of possible redundancy problems.

We have chosen to focus on four main areas, *ownership, legislation, forms of finance and development*. The main issues we want to clarify and discuss are as follow:

- What are the different legal and political solutions that exist regarding ownership of the religious buildings?
- If the religious buildings are protected by cultural heritage legislation, how is this drawn up, and who has responsibility for oversight?
- What forms of public funds exist for the maintenance of religious, cultural and historical buildings and who administers them?
- What developments are taking place in different countries, especially with regard to possible redundant religious buildings, and how do these relate to the data we have acquired for each country?

Several authors have taken part in this study. Henrik Lindblad and Eva Löfgren have been responsible for the report in its entirety and are the authors of the introductory chapters, results and conclusions. National studies have been carried out by the following; Nevena Cvijetic (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Henrik Lindblad (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands, England and Germany), Eva Löfgren (France and Belgium) and Maria Mellgren (Italy). This version was translated into English by Ingrid Greenhow; the translation was funded by Historic England.

## *Material and method*

The material that forms the basis for the study consists of one section with investigations, annual reports and articles published on the websites of the religious communities, the state administration and the voluntary organizations. The second section consists of reports from international heritage agencies such as UNESCO and ICCROM, scientific texts and press cuttings from newspapers as well as magazines. This material is often, but not always, published electronically. In searches in national and international databases, we have used "religious heritage", "patrimoine religieux", "churches for sale," "église à vendre", "immobilier de l'église" and "fabrique d'église".

During the project period, two studies were published that should be mentioned specifically. *Law and Religious Cultural Heritage in Europe* (Tsivolos 2015) relates to the content and the history behind the legal concept of "religious heritage" as it has developed in Europe. In the anthology *Funding Religious Heritage* (ed. Fornerod 2015), the researchers in the project RELIGARE, Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe, report on the different forms of financing that characterize the management of the religious heritage of Europe.

### *The concept of secularism and World Value Survey*

The following study does not intend to address the concept of secularization, but because it is being used and debated both inside and outside the research community and is described as both a consequence and cause of the changes that the religious buildings are undergoing, we would like to briefly outline its implications.

Secularisation generally refers to the process whereby the role of religion and power in a community decreases. In *God Is Dead* (2002) the British sociologist Steve Bruce talks about the so-called secularisation paradigm, which was influential in sociological research from the 1960s until the 1980s, when it started to be questioned. Bruce has summarized the discussion on the secularisation paradigm, with the express purpose of verifying, explaining, nuancing, but also re-establishing this paradigm (Bruce 2002 and 2006). Bruce takes account of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman *Secularization and Pluralism* (1966) Bryan Wilson *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (1982), and Hugh McLeod *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe 1750-2000* (2003).

However, the concept has been challenged in recent decades. For example, some researchers maintain that the decline in church service attendance is certainly the effect of a change in religious practice but not necessarily of a decline in religiosity. Some researchers also speak of a re-sacralisation of society (Stark & Bainbridge, 1985, Strong & Fincke 2000 Hagevi, Backstrom 2004).

One way to analyse how values change geographically and over time is through the global surveys conducted since 1981 by the World Values Survey (WVS), an international network of researchers within sociology coordinated by the World Values Survey Organization. The latest studies took place during 2010-2014 and cover about 50 countries. In the article "Changing Mass Priorities. The Link between Modernization and Democracy" there is a diagram that describes how some fundamental values are shifting in 53 different countries (Inglehart & Wentzel 2010, Figure 1, p. 554, also reproduced in the report's conclusion below). The values consist of "survival values" and "self-expression values"; "traditional values" and "secular-rational values", where the latter category shows, how important religion is in various societies (Ibid, p 563). The diagram shows not only the various countries' position on the value scales but also among various conglomerates of countries or cultural circles.

What is interesting in this context is that Protestant Europe is placed as the most secular and individualized area in the world on the scale of values, with Catholic Europe in the middle. Sweden has an extreme position; according to this survey and yardstick, the country can be described as the most modernized and secularized country in the world, significantly different from global average values. Hagevi (2007) makes a critical review of Inglehart's surveys. However, Inglehart has discussed what he calls uneven secularization in an article from 2007 (Norris and Inglehart 2007). The results from WVS are confirmed by another recent international study, *Religion Monitor 2013. Understanding Common Ground. An International Comparison of Religious Belief*, commissioned by the Bertelsmann Foundation in 2013. A sample of 14 countries, including western and eastern Germany, in Europe, Asia, North and South America has been studied. The survey responses show very clearly that secularization has gone furthest in Europe, especially in the Protestant countries, and Sweden in many respects, is at the top with regard to secularisation and modernization of society. It is only in Sweden and eastern Germany that the proportion of people who regard themselves as believers is below 50 percent (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2013, Figure 1, p. 21). The report also notes that in recent decades Protestantism in particular has been least

successful in retaining members and in defining religion as a key factor in people's everyday lives (ibid, p. 21).

The referenced studies may partly explain the declining membership numbers and reduced attendance at church services being experienced by many of the established communities. The consequences are reduced finance, mergers of parishes and multiple closures and dispersals of churches or other religious buildings. The decline of the traditional religious practice, such as participation in religious services in churches, can be an expression of a long-term secularisation trend that particularly appears to encompass the Western world and the Protestant churches to an even greater extent than the Catholic and Orthodox.

### *Global organizations, reports and policies*

#### **International Religious Freedom Report**

One tool for gaining a current picture of the situation for the majority of religions in a global perspective is the *International Religious Freedom Report* issued regularly by the US Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The information is arranged by continents and countries and is quite diverse, depending on how much information has been acquired from each country. In most cases, the reports provides a good, reasonably up-to-date picture of which religions dominate, the percentage of the population, the relationship between state and religion and sometimes the upwards or downwards trends in membership. The number and type of religious buildings, "places of worship", are also considered and, where appropriate, if there is a redundancy issue (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour 2013). When the reports have been deemed to be useful for example, the countries in the survey, these have been used for the initial characteristics by country.

#### **UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS**

At the global level, no general texts or directives have been produced to manage the future of redundant religious cultural heritage. In 2003, however, ICCROM published a report on the management or conservation of cultural heritage in societies undergoing rapid change. The report *Conservation of Living Religious Heritage* (Boot et al 2003) contains a selection of articles from the 2003 ICCROM conference's Forum on Living Religious Heritage: Conserving the Sacred. In the introduction by Herb Stovel, professor in conservation, it is noted that the living religious heritage is threatened in a number of ways, for example in various contexts through loss of interest or understanding of religion. According to Professor Stovel, the rapid changes that society is undergoing are undermining the ability of traditional belief system to keep their places in a secular society, with increasing polarization and tensions as a result. The author also argues that cultural heritage authorities - often with a lack of understanding of the religious communities - with their conservation ambitions, are trying to freeze various aspects of the religious cultural heritage. In the worst cases, cultural heritage can also be used as a weapon in the competing claims of different faiths (Stovel et al 2003, p. 1).

The primary challenge for ICCROM conference was how an agreement could be achieved between the various requirements of conservation work and religious practice. Based on this challenge, Professor Stovel identified a number of questions for the conference:

How to maintain cultural values in the face of changing needs of religious practice

How to encourage support for shared use of such sites, and to promote mutual understanding (such as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem)

How to maintain sacred and heritage values in the face of increasing or decreasing interest in religion in society

How to maintain both sacred values and heritage character while responding to expressions of public interest and the desire for access

What happens to sacred values when a place or an object becomes a museum and how can these values be maintained in museum settings?

How can religious practices and traditions be kept alive and renewed while respecting the conservation professional's interest in minimizing change (Stovel and others 2003, p. 3 ff).

The interesting thing about these questions is that they are addressed from a global, multi-religious context with different principles and practices of heritage work. At the same time, possibly with some exceptions for the second question (which in this study might apply especially to Bosnia-Herzegovina), they have a direct bearing not only on the issue of religious heritage in Europe, but also in Sweden. Before the separation of the Church of Sweden and the State took place, the clearest problem was reconciling the maintenance of religious and secular values or living use and the heritage of a site. Today, the division between the religious and the secular in a church, which seen as both a living place of worship and a heritage that must be preserved, appears more problematic.

The conclusions of the 2003 ICCROM conference may point to solutions that may also apply to the Swedish and European situation. For example, it was concluded that a prerequisite for understanding the living religious heritage is that the intangible importance of physical objects is key to the objects significance. The intangible and the tangible cannot be separated because all physical heritage has intangible values. Another conclusion was that the care of cultural heritage is primarily the responsibility of religious communities; that conservation initiatives should be taken by them and that they should be carried out in cooperation with the heritage profession. This cooperation should be characterized by mutual understanding and a positive dialogue with full respect for the practice and the values that help to preserve the faith of that faith community. Strengthening the conservation of *living* religious heritage should, according to the report's conclusions, also be prioritized in global conservation policy (Stovel et al, p. 9 ff).

The final conclusion appears to flag up the establishment of a UNESCO convention or possibly an ICOMOS charter on the religious heritage. In 2005, in Chinese Xian, at the main ICOMOS meeting, the General Assembly, which is held every three years, a resolution was adopted on the religious heritage (ICOMOS 2005, p. 16). In view of the diversity of religious heritage in national inventories of World Heritage sites and the major challenges that social change will bring for their preservation, ICOMOS was challenged to establish an international programme on religious heritage/ environments in collaboration with UNESCO and other organizations. Except for the UNESCO Initiative on Heritage of Religious Interest (see: [whc.unesco.org/en/religious-sacred-heritage](http://whc.unesco.org/en/religious-sacred-heritage)), no such programme appear to have been established. Within ICOMOS however, an International Scientific Committee under the name of PRERICO (Places of Religion and Ritual) has recently been founded. The establishment of this committee, with a focus on religious heritage, might in the future lead to the development of such a programme.

In 2010, UNESCO held a conference in Kiev, Ukraine, on the theme of The Role of Religious Communities in the Management of the World Heritage Properties. The conference, to which representatives of various religious communities were invited, resulted in a document called the Kyiv Statement on the Protection of Religious Properties within the framework of the World Heritage Convention. As is clear from the title, the document is primarily about the religious heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List and thus covered by the World Heritage Convention (see below), but there are also a number of general observations about the religious communities' role in the management of cultural heritage and the importance of dialogue and respect between communities, governments and cultural heritage experts (UNESCO 2010).

UNESCO's World Heritage Convention of 1972 includes all tangible natural or cultural heritage which are considered to be of global significance. In April 2013 there were 962 natural and cultural heritage items on the World Heritage List (UNESCO 2014a). The Convention does not mention religious places or buildings, but the World Heritage List includes a large number of them. According to UNESCO, approximately 20 percent of all world heritage has "some sort of religious or spiritual connection" and this is the largest single category in the World Heritage List (UNESCO 2014b). The search tool in the list is not sufficiently developed to be able to select all the religious heritage and therefore this has to be done

manually. It is possible, however, to observe that in Europe, especially in countries like France, Italy and Germany, many individual churches and monasteries are designated as World Heritage. These types of buildings are also often part of whole environments that make up historic city centres. There are even some mosques in similar environments (in Europe, Asia and Africa). Few individual mosques appear to have been designated as World Heritage Sites: only four, of which two are in Turkey. When searching for synagogues there was not a single hit. However, many temples of various kinds have designated World Heritage sites with a number of examples in Asia, especially in countries like China, India, Japan and South Korea.

The UNESCO Convention of 2003, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, does not mention religious heritage in the Convention's definition of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO 2015a). UNESCO emphasizes that religions themselves are not covered by the convention, but it refers to practices and expressions that are inspired by religions. It mentions in particular Article 2 c) social practices, rituals and festivals (UNESCO 2015b).

In 2015, the world list of intangible cultural heritage protected under the Convention on Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity covered a total of 364 cultural heritage items. The list includes heritage based on religious celebrations and rituals, including several in Europe, one example being the "Procession of the Holy Blood in Bruges" inscribed in 2009 (UNESCO 2015c).

## *European Organizations*

### **The Council of Europe and the EU**

The Council of Europe is a federation of 47 states in Europe and neighbouring parts of Asia. The Council's activities cover human rights, democracy and legal matters. This includes Europe's cultural identity and diversity. The Council of Europe has drawn up a number of conventions, including the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the European Landscape Convention (2000) and the so-called Faro Convention or the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005).

The work on human rights (including freedom of religion), European culture and cultural heritage has led to the issue of problems of redundancy for churches and other religious buildings being raised in the Council on a number of occasions. In 1989, a resolution was issued, Resolution 916 (1989) on redundant religious buildings. The resolution was based on the report *Redundant religious buildings Doc. 6032* where, with the help of the consultant expert Angus Fowler, a snapshot of the developments in Europe is presented and there is a systematic study of the situation in more than 30 countries (Rauti 1989). The report also publishes the Charter for the reuse of ancient ecclesiastical buildings, which is the result of a conference entitled Reuse of religious buildings held by the Vatican and the Italian state in 1987. The Vatican's charter refers to previous cultural heritage documents, including the Venice Charter (the Venice document) from 1964, the European charter for Architectural Heritage (1975) and the Granada Convention of 1985. The charter states that there is great social value in preserving religious buildings. How this should be done is then set out in sixteen concrete proposals (see Rauti 1989).

In a report from the Council of Europe 2000 (Cathedrals and other major religious buildings in Europe, Doc. 8826), it is stated that cathedrals are among Europe's most important buildings in that they have the characteristics of universal cultural-historical value (Council of Europe 2000a). It claims to be well aware of the large number of religious buildings in Europe which no longer serve their original function and therefore risk decay, demolition or becoming subject to less suitable conversions (Council of Europe 2000a). Demographic movements, changes in religious practice and the construction of new religious buildings are listed as the main causes.

The report, which contains detailed explanations of the importance of knowledge inventories, care and maintenance planning and daily maintenance, emphasises that multiple use must be considered in order to deal with the future management of cathedrals and other major religious buildings in Europe. There



are three types of adaptation; for religious use, for other community uses with continued religious use, and ultimately for use other than for religious purposes (ibid, section E Adaptation). The last adaptation is deemed to be beyond the scope of the report, which is to keep religious buildings in use, sometimes through clever adaptation. There then follows a series of examples of what are considered to be examples of successful adaptations of churches in use. The report is summarised as follows:

The report is a plea for a creative but sensitive approach to the management of large religious buildings in use. There are three main observations. First that this is a matter of partnership between the state and religious bodies. Second that it is a question concerning a truly European heritage, irrespective of national boundaries, so that countries and churches with financial means should assist those that do not. Thirdly, that there is no standard approach that can be applied to all religious buildings in use; A major distinction lies between those that are as a whole or in part consecrated (essentially Catholic and Orthodox) and those which are not (ibid, section G, Conclusions, point 48).

As a result of the report, the Council of Europe issued a recommendation concerning cathedrals and other major churches, *Recommendation 1484 (2000) Management of cathedrals and other major religious buildings in use* (Council of Europe 2000b). As stated in the title, the recommendation deals in particular with how these great buildings to be managed and preserved against a background of the major costs involved. It also touches on the need for adaptation, for example, multiple use ("multifunctional use") and how different faiths regard this:

The religious communities have very different attitudes to the physical heritage. Some (such as the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches) regard the buildings and their contents as sacred. Others (such as most Protestant Churches) are very much open to multifunctional use of the premises. These differing attitudes should be respected for major religious buildings that are still in use. (Council of Europe 2000b)

The resolutions and recommendations issued by the Council of Europe can be seen as invitations to Member States to collaborate in finding solutions to the problems raised. The Council of Europe is also responsible for the conventions dealing with cultural heritage such as the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention 1985), the European Landscape Convention (2000) and the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, but not all countries have ratified these and the religious heritage is not mentioned specifically in any of them (Council of Europe 2005). However, it is apparent from the preamble to the Faro Convention that acceding States undertake to be aware of the good in the principle that heritage policies and educational input should treat all heritage equally and facilitate dialogue between cultures and religions. There is also other wording applicable to the religious cultural heritage (see Tzivolas 2014, p. 32 f). Finally, the Council is responsible for the European database herein, bringing together all member states' cultural policies.

The Vatican charter on the reuse of religious buildings does not appear to have had any major impact. It is also unclear whether the Council of Europe's resolutions and recommendations have yielded concrete results. The formation of various non-governmental networks and organizations and also the initiatives taken by individual communities and other organizations may indicate that the Council of Europe's recommendations have not been followed by the individual states (see below).

Within the European Commission work is also being carried out on culture, but it is more wide-ranging and general than in the Council of Europe and therefore does not have a specific focus on, for example, religious cultural heritage. Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty, which was signed in 2007, shows that the Union must 'respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (European Union 2007). According to the Commission, it is very important to preserve cultural heritage and therefore these principles are actively promoted within the framework of European cooperation. However, it is noted that the protection and restoration of cultural heritage are

primarily a national responsibility, and therefore there is no specific cultural competence or decision-making power in the field.

The national responsibility and authority also applies to religious communities, where Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that: "1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status which churches and religious associations or communities have in the member states under national law. [...]. 3. The Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations, and their identity and their specific contribution shall be recognized." (European Union 2010). Within the European cooperation there are thus no formal intergovernmental agreements on the protection and development of the religious cultural heritage.

## Voluntary and other organizations

The advent of an international organization such as the Future of Religious Heritage (FRH) can be seen as a non-governmental response to the partnerships that the Council of Europe called for in its recommendations and resolutions. The 2011 Belgium-based organization was established in 2010 as a network, initiated by the Churches Conservation Trust, English Heritage, the Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage and the Church of Sweden, amongst others to draw attention to the problems starting to arise in finding use and forms of management for churches and other religious buildings in many European countries.

In 2012 FRH focused on the theme "Extended use of religious buildings", which is seen as a possible solution to one of the major problems for the religious heritage of Europe, namely to find long-term sustainable use for the many buildings in danger of becoming redundant both operationally and financially. The theme has led to the organization of an international conference of the same name in November 2012. FRH was also running the EU-funded project ALTERHeritage, together with partners in Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, UK, Sweden (the University of Gothenburg and the Church of Sweden) and Germany, with exchange of knowledge about management and activation of religious cultural heritage that is or that may become redundant (Future of Religious Heritage 2015a). The organizations that FRH covers consist of series of voluntary and governmental organizations, associations and foundations, where the voluntary groups include the French organization La Sauvegarde de l'Art Français, the Dutch Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwenoch, the British Art Alive in Churches and Jewish Heritage UK (Future of Religious Heritage 2015b).

The EU-funded interdisciplinary research project RELIGARE, Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe Innovative Approaches to Law and Policy, was dealing with religions, belonging, belief and secularism (RELIGARE 2014). The project examined the conditions that currently enable and/or restrict religious practice. A key question concerned how different communities' and individuals' practice is consistent with the (secular) law, and the extent to which they are turning to their own regimes and courts. The purpose of RELIGARE was to examine how national and international policies should be designed to support meetings and dialogue between different communities, and ensure that human rights are observed.

## The Nordic countries

The Nordic countries work together within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic governments' official cooperation body (Nordic Council of Ministers 2014). In the area of culture, some work is going on with regard to cultural environments and cultural heritage, but nothing specifically dealing with the situation of religious heritage. The fact that there are no official statements or recommendations concerning for example the Nordic church buildings may be due to the Nordic countries, compared to the rest of Europe, being in many respects better placed to take care of the religious cultural heritage. In the Nordic countries there are still dominant majority churches or state churches in which the state has maintained a major great interest through legislation and financial support.

At the same time, the Nordic countries are part of (as indicated above) a global perspective, where countries that are moving rapidly towards democratization, secularization and individualization have also undergone major urbanisation in recent years. It may therefore seem paradoxical that the churches appear so vigorous, with large majorities of the populations as members and relatively small problems in the individual parishes with regard to finances, or managing church buildings. However, there are now incipient differences both between the Nordic countries and within each country. The trend is beginning to resemble the one that has been going on for a long time both in many other European countries and globally.

## Results and conclusions of the international comparison

The purpose of this study was to describe the conditions that provide a perspective on the Swedish situation and to create a knowledge base for further research. The aim was to provide an overview of the confessional and legal administrative conditions that affect the state of the tangible religious heritage in a number of different countries; how it is managed, the values expressed in the legislation and the development of possible redundancy problems.

The focus is on Europe, predominantly on the Christian communities' tangible cultural heritage, i.e. church buildings. In most countries there are, for example, mosques and synagogues that are listed and defined as a social common heritage, but they are in a clear minority. By "religious heritage" we mean both buildings still used as places of worship, and those that were built for religious purposes, but today have a different function. In most of the countries that we have studied there are no exact figures on how many there are. For example, in France and Belgium, there is a large number of churches and monasteries that have had a different function since the late 1700s.

One example of a fundamental difference that characterizes the management situation in the various countries, is the difference between member-based associations, such as the Nordic Protestant churches which are associated with a membership subscription, and the adherent-based, such as the Anglican *Church of England* and most of the Catholic churches where the work is based on donations. What is the difference? In which respects are statistics on the number of members and adherents comparable and non-comparable? In Sweden, with its member-based majority church, there is the seemingly paradoxical fact that the average church member can be regarded as less faithful and active as Christian compared to those who are not members of the Church of Sweden. The explanation may be that many non-members belong to *a different* religious community and have made a choice based on active religious practice

The Church of Sweden carries out regular surveys of both members and non-members, about attitudes to matters of faith, church activities and also the cultural heritage. In 2007-2008 a detailed survey was carried out by Statistics Sweden on behalf of the Church of Sweden, about attitudes to faith, church buildings etc. (2008 Church Building survey). To the survey question "Do you believe there is a God, a supernatural power or force?" only 20 percent of the members responded that there is a God, while 32 percent of those who are not members said yes. To the question "When I visit a church is it because I want to encounter God," only 15 percent of members agreed, while 20 percent of those who are not members said yes. However, more non-members reject the existence of a God or respond in the negative that they go to church to encounter God, while many more members place themselves in the middle of the alternatives ("There is a sort of spirit or vitality", "I do not know what to believe," "Neither for nor against"), which may indicate that members, when compared with non-members, are not as active in thinking about the question of faith.

Although the Church of Sweden is losing members every year and more and more church buildings are at risk of becoming redundant, the situation is relatively stable as the organization is based on membership and membership subscriptions are collected by the Tax Agency, which means that the subscription is deducted directly from one's salary, like a tax. Many members are likely to be part of the church through tradition or because it requires an active effort to terminate one's membership. Taking part in church services or otherwise being involved is less important for the financial situation.

With the Church of England, the work is likely to be much more vulnerable as the church does not have membership but is based on active involvement, volunteer efforts and donations. If the church loses its importance as the centre of the village, people stop going to services and engaging in activities, so the trend is much faster, not only in relation to pastoral activities, but also economic redundancies and closures.

In order to summarize the results, we have chosen to use four overarching themes and issues. *Ownership*: What legal, economic and policy solutions exist regarding the ownership of the religious buildings? *Legislation*: What is the legal framework which includes the protection of religious buildings' cultural values and what agencies have oversight responsibility? *Economic conditions*: What is the economic system in the different countries, and what forms of financial assistance for religious buildings are there? *Development*: What developments are taking place in different countries, especially regarding the possible redundancy of religious buildings, and how does this relate to the data we have obtained for each country?

## *Ownership*

*Which different legal and political solutions exist regarding the ownership of the religious buildings?* Who formally owns the religious buildings in Europe should be a question that is easily answered, but this is not always the case. Even in Sweden the ownership of church buildings had to be explained in the relationship change in 2000. Often it is about responsibility for the management and maintenance being formally shared between several players and institutions, which means that the ownership issue is becoming less important. "Who is really the owner of the religious buildings?" was the heading of journalist Pascal Andre's article in the Belgian newspaper *La Libre* 15 years ago (André 2000). The article is interesting for several reasons; primarily because it provides a basic description of what André calls the Belgian *hybrid system*, based simply on a division of responsibility and ownership between church, municipalities and state. The fact that the article was newsworthy suggests that the Belgians at that time were aware of the situation. Finally, it is also worth noting that the article does not actually clearly answer the question in the title.

In an article in *Dagens Nyheter* in 2013, Svante Beckman distinguished between two imaginary "extreme" solutions regarding ownership of the Church of Sweden's buildings (Beckman 2013). The first suggests that the church owns the buildings and is given full freedom to do whatever it wants with them. The second solution, which Beckman calls "re-socialization", suggests that the community takes ownership and that the church can hire the buildings as needed. These two extremes can serve as a starting point for describing ownership in European countries, although all the countries we have studied use various forms of hybrid systems.

In the majority of countries in this study, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Bosnia -Herzegovina, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, the religious buildings are owned by their respective communities or congregations. This means that formal responsibility for the management and maintenance lies with the religious organization. The responsibility for practical issues is usually decentralized and rests with the respective community, while foundations and similar bodies often serve as decision-makers with regard to deconsecrating and sometimes even rebuilding. Here conditions vary somewhat between communities and between countries. The principle in all countries, however, is that the churches themselves are responsible for their own premises. An interesting question, which we have not been able to highlight in this study, is the extent to which the religious communities at the regional or central level, carry out their own development activities related to property management. Another issue, related to the first, is how cooperation between property managers and the so-called core business is organized in the different countries and communities?

In France, the municipalities own Catholic churches that were built before 1905, which was the year when church and state were separated from each other. Churches built thereafter are owned by the Catholic Church and the respective parish. The legal construct, "commune propriétaire - clerge affectataire", i.e. the municipality owns - the clergy uses, is based on the principle of legal protection firstly for religious practitioners and secondly for church building heritage. In addition to financial responsibility for maintenance and operation, however, municipal ownership means that the user does not have the right to make changes in the building without the consent of the owner.

The Belgian system is similar to the French but also differs from it on several important points. Here the municipalities are usually the owners of the Catholic churches and are responsible for the practical aspects of religious practice, such as building maintenance and heating. The parish's own funds are intended to cover the costs, but when they do not, the parish has the right to request the support of the municipality, which it regularly does. In practice, it seems to mean that maintenance measures often fail because neither parishes nor municipalities feel they can afford to pay for them. Interestingly, in Belgium, the state is responsible for salaries and pensions, not only for Catholic priests, but also for the clergy of a further five recognized associations namely the Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Anglican and Orthodox churches.

The Norwegian system is reminiscent of the Belgian system, but here the municipalities are not the formal owners of the churches. The Norwegian Church Act states that the church belongs to the parish, that is, it is the property of the congregation. Priests and the parish council are responsible for the business of the church, while the municipalities have financial responsibility for operation and maintenance.

### *Legislation*

*If the religious buildings are protected by heritage legislation, how is this drawn up and who has oversight responsibility?*

Even where information is lacking about the total number of religious buildings in a country, there are usually data on how many are listed. Sometimes it is also possible to find out how many buildings are currently used for religious purposes but the interconnection of data on religious use and protected/listed churches is often lacking. In the case of Germany, Sweden and Denmark, where all such information is available, it appears that the vast majority of the Christian communities' churches are protected and/or listed.

In relation to other parts of Europe, the Nordic countries' handling of legal protection of religious buildings differs. In Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland, the Protestant majority communities' churches are protected through specific legal texts or paragraphs. Other religious buildings, such as churches belonging to other Christian denominations, mosques or synagogues, are not covered by this legislation, but a small number are protected through other legislation. In Sweden, for example, three synagogues and a score of free church buildings are classed as historic buildings.

In Denmark and Finland, protection of the majority community's churches is enshrined in church law; in Norway, the churches are covered by both heritage and church legislation and in Sweden there is a specific chapter in the cultural heritage act. In all countries special rules apply to churches built before a certain year; in Sweden the boundary is 1940; in Norway 1650, in Finland 1917 and in Denmark over 100 years. Regarding the authority or institution that handles licences and that is responsible for adherence to the law, this varies somewhat between the Nordic countries. For Finland, Denmark and Norway, however, the principle is that the responsibility is shared between church bodies and national or local government. In Sweden, government agencies deal with matters related to the churches' heritage values and bear all formal supervisory responsibility. Formally, however, responsibility for the cultural environment is shared by everyone.

In the Netherlands, Bosnia-Herzegovina, England, Germany, France and Belgium, religious buildings are listed in the same way as any other building categories and are managed in accordance with national or sometimes regional cultural heritage legislation. Among the listed items are mainly the majority community's buildings and with the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina, these are primarily Catholic and Protestant churches. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, where nearly half the population is Muslim, there are no more listed mosques than churches.

Like other listed objects, listed religious listed buildings are subject to specific authorisation. Management and oversight responsibilities usually fall to regional and local authorities in collaboration

with central agencies such as the Netherlands' Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed and England's Historic England (for Bosnia-Herzegovina, data is missing about the formal situation). The religious communities' central or regional bodies, act neither as advisory nor decision-making bodies on these issues.

### *Financial conditions*

*What is the financial system in the different countries, and what forms of financial support are given for religious buildings?*

Among the countries studied, Sweden is in many ways unique in terms of public financial support for the management of religious buildings. In none of the countries studied does the state allocate a fixed annual sum for actions relating to the churches' heritage values. The size of the amount allocated is unique, both in absolute terms and in relation to the number of inhabitants. The principle behind the financial support is also the basis for other state antiquarian matters. It is based on the idea that the public assists the individual property owner in cases where the social shared cultural heritage entails additional costs. The state is thus not responsible for the entire cost of, for example, a restoration, but only for the additional expenditure that the cultural heritage protection entails in the form of special treatment or materials.

In Norway, Belgium and France, the secular municipalities are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the churches as a whole, i.e. including the historically-valuable elements and inventory. State and regional grants and loans (Norway) can also be found by searching for the buildings are listed. In France, however, the state invests primarily in its 87 cathedrals. In Italy, maintenance is financed through special taxes, state grants and private funds. With the prolonged economic crisis in the country, it appears that it may be increasingly difficult to get sufficient funding.

### *Development*

*Development: what development is taking place in the various countries, especially regarding the possible redundancy of religious buildings, and how does this relate to the data we have acquired for each country?*

When comparing the situation in different countries, it seems quite clear that in countries like England and the Netherlands, they have had to deal with an increasing number of redundant churches for a long time. In the latter two countries in particular, the trend in recent years has accelerated and in the Netherlands this applies to both the equally large Catholic and Protestant churches. For example, in Germany, France and Belgium, this development has been slower, although there are trends in the same direction. In the Nordic countries, Sweden and the Church of Sweden are ahead in a development which involves membership movement and redundant churches, although the full impact may not be as great. The churches in Denmark and Finland still appears to be relatively unaffected, with few cases of redundant churches, while the Church of Norway is in a state of transition similar to that which took place in Sweden before 2000, but with probable differences in solutions, and hence the consequences, in the separation between church and state.

The table below shows some basic data found in each country study. The data is sorted here by inhabitants per church, i.e. by population size and the number of church buildings held by one or at most two dominant communities in each country (population size is from 2013, while the years for other data vary slightly). This obviously does not provide a true picture of inhabitants per religious building in each country, as there are many more communities of different faiths. However, it is generally the established churches, which in some cases still are, or have recently been, part of the state, which retain the most and the oldest buildings and it is they who dominate the number of legally-protected buildings and thus the likely size of government grants or other funding.

Sorted by residents / church building	Inhabitants	Inhab/sq km	Church buildings (majority- community)	Inhab / building	Urban population	Urbanization /year	GDP
Finland	5425674	18	818	6632	84	0.47	47 244
Netherlands	16779575	498	4167	4027	89	0.74	49 128
England	53865800	411	15861	3396	82	0.76	41 054
Norway	5051275	14	1620	3118	80	1.03	99 636
Belgium	11161642	369	3700	3016	98	0.32	44 828
Sweden	9555893	24	3377	2829	85	0.74	57 134
Denmark	5602628	132	2352	2382	87	0.5	57 636
Germany	82020578	231	45500	1802	75	- 0.03	43 932
France	65560721	120	45000	1456	79	1.2	40 908
Italy	59685227	205	65000	918	69	0.39	36051
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3833916	75	-	-	39	0.86	4410

*Compilation of national data from each country study, ordered by inhabitants per church building.*

It may seem strange that Finland and the Netherlands are so close to each other in the number of churches per capita, considering what the redundancy development looks like in these countries: almost status quo in Finland and strong acceleration in the Netherlands. According to the World Values Survey, there are no substantial differences in secularization or individualization (see figure below). At the other end of the table it is clear that the Catholic-dominated Italy has by far the largest "church burden" per capita, then the Catholic - albeit more secular - France and then Germany, which has an equal number of Catholic and Protestant churches.

The needs and opportunities to use (for purposes other than religious services) and the ability to take care of the churches should also be dependent on factors such as population density (related to the number of churches) and the economy. Since the countries in the study, with the exception of Norway and Bosnia-Herzegovina, have a GDP of the same magnitude, these have relatively small differences of minor significance in this context. As noted above, the economic crisis in Italy appears to have reduced the opportunities for managing the churches. Urbanization probably has a greater impact, when a rapid migration to cities means that more and more churches in the countryside are no longer in use. To explain the current situation, however, we would have needed access to more historical statistics (in a country that was heavily urbanized during the 1800s, many churches would have been built in the cities).

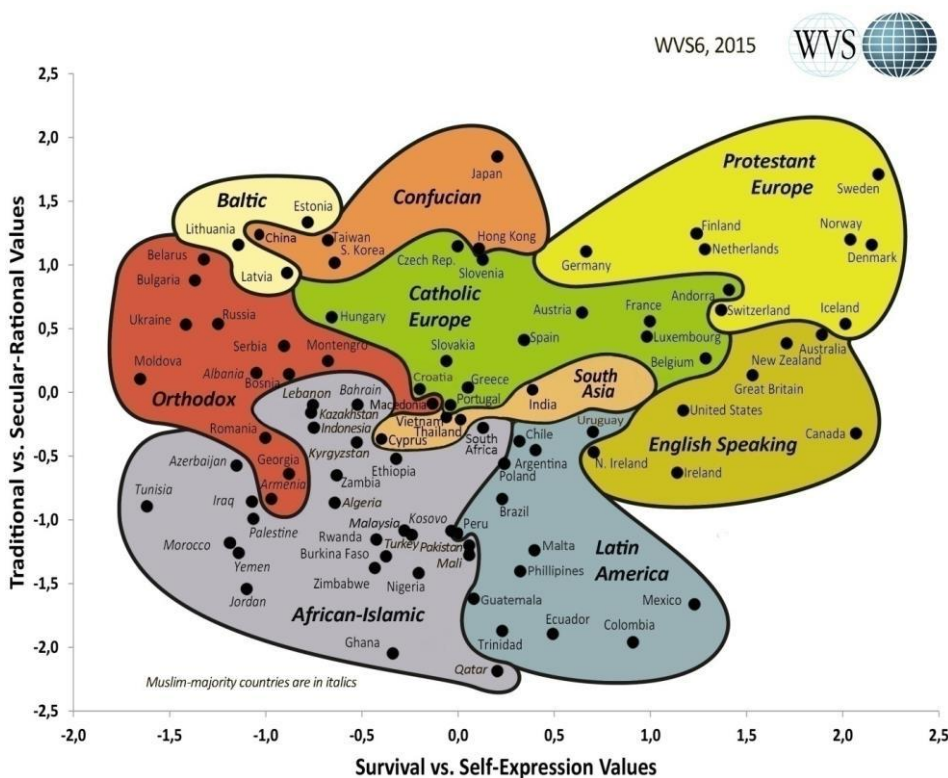
A very rapid contemporary urbanization rate, as exemplified by Norway and France, however, may indicate future problems in managing churches in the countryside. A slightly negative rate, as in Germany, should indicate a less dramatic future development. With regard to Sweden, we note that extensive urbanization during the 1900s led to the population base in many rural communities become increasingly poorer at the same rate, which should also apply to other Nordic countries with similar rates development of urbanization (where Norway lies slightly behind with about the same degree of urbanization as Germany and France today). This compares with England, which was industrialized earlier with extensive migration to cities during the 1800s, where many, very large churches were built which today are either disused or used for other purposes than the original.

We have not had access to statistics on emigration and immigration, where it can be assumed that there will be more and more redundant churches in countries that have strong influxes of groups with different faiths to than the historic, established communities. This can be assumed to apply in England at present, and in the future in Sweden and Germany, for example. Likewise, reverse conditions prevail in the countries from which people moved away and which have declining populations, with unused or abandoned buildings as a consequence. Other important data that were too difficult or time-consuming to collect and compile consistently, are, for example, the economy of the respective dominant communities with revenue based on the number of members or the equivalent, number of employees, etc.



In the report's introductory section and also above, the World Values Survey investigation have been considered, which can be said to measure the degree of secularization (traditional/secular values) and individualization and modernization (survival / self-expression values) in the countries studied. Of the eleven countries in our report the WVS has studied nine, as well as Britain. The latter may be difficult to apply in our study as only England is included. Italy has not been included in the WVS surveys. The results of the latest evaluation study from 2010-14 show, as stated in the introductory chapter and the evaluation map below, that Sweden has an extreme position globally. Norway and Denmark are relatively close to Sweden, being slightly less secularized but with a similar location on the horizontal scale of values. The countries that should have the greatest problems in terms of values, for example with shrinking congregations and redundant churches were hitherto those that fared best. Otherwise, Finland and the Netherlands are very close, but with completely different outcomes for the established communities and their church buildings. Germany, France and Belgium also belong to a sphere that in terms of values can be called Western European, while Bosnia-Herzegovina has a completely different position in the chart.

For most countries included in our study, it appears that a growing secularization/modernization of society has so far not led to a growing inability or decreasing desire to take care of the churches. Rather, it appears to be the opposite. One explanation may be that the established churches in several countries have been or are still part of the state. This may have partly have resulted in a form of internal secularisation of the religious community, which almost resembled government agencies, and partly an identification between the public and churches, independent of the degree of religion. The identification between citizens, church and state, and even the historical tradition (participation in traditional ceremonies, the churches as national or general cultural heritage that belong to "everyone") may have resulted in strong structures regarding legislation, organization and financial subsidies, which support the management of churches independent of how many people are interested in participating in religious services. Several of the churches also have, for historical and other reasons, very good finances with significant income and large assets.



World Values Survey's evaluation map; Cultural map - WVS wave 6 (2010-2014). Inglehart-Welzel 2015.

The rapid development in Sweden and Norway for both society and for the former state churches, however, may mean that the situation is totally different in the future. So far, there is a political majority

in favour of the Swedish scheme, which involves well-preserved and well-maintained, but increasingly empty churches. The accelerating decline in membership, with falling revenue as a result, and the lack of interest in the church by the younger generations, however, indicate that this solution is unlikely to last for very many years. In Norway, this trend may happen much more quickly. Once the Norwegian Church and state have been finally separated, and there is relatively limited legislative protection and scarce resources for management in the future, a similar situation may arise as in the Netherlands today, with redundant churches increasing at what appears to be an uncontrollable rate.

For the majority of the Swedish free churches, however, the situation in an economic, political perspective can be compared to that of several of the majority communities in other countries; limited involvement by the state with few protected buildings and modest contributions gives greater freedom of movement for the churches, but fewer opportunities to manage and conserve the cultural heritage.

### *Religious heritage: an international comparison*

One conclusion might be that in the short-term the impact on the ability to take care of churches and religious heritage is not primarily the degree of religiosity or secularism, the need for religious buildings for different purposes, the frequency of buildings, the use per capita and social trends such as urbanization and the like. The decisive factor is rather the existence of strong traditions with a high degree of identification by the public with the religious heritage and the consequent public and civil engagement with comprehensive legal protection, governmental and other grants. It is also essential that the churches have a good income through membership fees or church tax (collected by the state) and effective management with public or central church support. In countries where the municipalities have main financial responsibility, the management situation often seems to be under great strain. The Swedish model with clear dividing lines between religion and heritage, where the state supports only the latter legally and economically (with some exceptions), has so far proven to be successful materially with well-kept churches and cemeteries. However, in this divide there is an inherent contradiction between a vibrant use of church buildings and the churches and their contents being treated as museums or cultural heritage. In the ICCROM Conservation of Living Religious Heritage report quoted above in our introductory chapter, it states that the tangible and intangible cultural heritage cannot be separated because all physical heritage has intangible values and the intangible significance contains the key to the physical object's meaning. The current Swedish state system, which is completely focused on the protection and conservation of the physical heritage, does not promote the use of religious buildings, whether as churches or cultural heritage, which risks them being well-maintained but increasingly less used. It can be interpreted to mean that there is a slight contradiction in a secular state protecting religious heritage. The ICCROM report's conclusion that the religious cultural heritage is primarily the responsibility of society and conservation initiatives should be taken by them, (but in cooperation with the state) can be seen as a way to relate to this.

## National overviews

The following is an overview of the situation of the religious heritage in eleven European countries; Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, England, the Netherlands, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Belgium and France. The boundaries and the selection have partly to do with timeframes and partly the availability of source material. One approach has been to include both countries with conditions similar to those in Sweden, such as the Nordic countries, and countries with very different conditions such as Bosnia - Herzegovina and France.

International comparative studies have been conducted earlier. As mentioned in the introduction, a review was carried out as early as 1989 of the situation for religious buildings in thirty European countries (Rauti 1989). The descriptions of the different countries are still useful, but much data will have become obsolete. Considerably more recent is the report that the Scottish organisation Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS) published in 2008, *Research Report on Church-State Relationships in Selected European Countries* (Haynes 2008a). It compared the Scottish situation with redundant churches with a number of other countries.

Another study that deals with church-state relations in Europe is Frank Cramner's *Notes on Church and State in the European Economic Area* carried out as part of a discussion about the relationship between church and state in the United Kingdom (Cramner 2011). As the title implies, this contains detailed accounts of such relationships in a variety of European countries; however, there is no overall compilation or discussion in this work. In recent years, there are two research works that deal with economic conditions and statutory regulation specifically, namely *Funding Religious Heritage* (Fornerod 2010), carried out under the above-mentioned European project RELIGARE, and *Law and Religious Cultural Heritage in Europe* (Tsvolas 2014).

### *Sweden*

#### **National data**

Population 2013: 9,555,893

Population density: 2013: 24 people per sq. km

Population trend: +0.18% (2013).

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 57 134.1 (2011: 59 593.3)

Unemployment (2012): 7.5% (2011: 7.5%)

Urban population: 2012: 85% of the total population

Urbanisation per year: 0.74% (estimate 2010-15)

*Sources: Eurostat, 2015, the World Bank's population statistics 2014, CIA World Fact book 2015*

#### **Religious conditions**

##### ***Religions, number of members, development***

In the 2011 *International Religious Freedom Report*, the US government's annual survey of religious freedom in the world, it appears that in addition to the Church of Sweden, about 5 percent of the Swedish population are members of other Christian churches (US Department of State, 2011). The same source estimated there to be 450 -500,000 Muslims in Sweden, while other religions have very little representation, for example 9,000 practising Jews (US Department of State 2011). The national statistics are maintained by the Committee for assistance to religious communities whose latest data are for 2013. Of the major Christian denominations, Ekumeniakyrkan (the Uniting Church in Sweden) (which was formed in 2011 of the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the Mission Covenant Church) has close to 130,000 members, Pentecostals 109 000 and the Roman Catholic church around 107,000 members. The Islamic Cooperative Council had 110,000 members (Board for the support of religious communities in 2015). The last number can be compared with the total number of Muslims in Sweden listed above (which is presumably based on culturally-based affiliation).

For 40 years, the proportion of members of the Church of Sweden has fallen steadily every year. Since the relationship change in 2000, the decline in absolute terms has been between 60-90,000 per year, which means that the Church of Sweden had lost about 900,000 members by 2012. According to the church council's statistics, at the turn of 2012-13 the Church of Sweden had 6,446,729 members, representing 67.5 per cent of the population (Church of Sweden 2013). At the end of 2014, its membership had dropped to 6,292,264, representing 64.6 percent of the population (Church of Sweden 2015a).

These figures can be compared with 1973 when the number of members was over 7.7 million, or 95 percent of the population; or 1999, before the relationship change in 2000, when it was 7.4 million or 83.5 percent of the population. According to the Church of Sweden's membership forecast for 2014-30, the number of members is estimated to be 4,889,649 in 2030, a drop of 1,55,708 million compared to 2012. As the population of the country is expected to increase to 10,787,572 in 2030, membership decline based on the entire population drops to 45 percent in 2030 (Church of Sweden 2015b). According to the Church of Sweden's 2015 study on *Joint responsibility* based on this forecast, the number of members can be calculated up to 2050, and is expected then to comprise 3.5 to 3.7 million, i.e. almost half compared with today (Church of Sweden 2015c). The study, whose mandate, among other things, was to review the future of property management, led to an extensive discussion of how membership developments and other factors may affect the ability to carry out church activities and at the same time take care of the ecclesiastical cultural heritage in the future (see also below, under *Current situation and debate*).

The rapid urbanization has had a significant impact on the churches. In rural communities the declining populations may mean that there is no longer a basis for operating and managing the churches. Similar problems can be found in urban communities due to secularization and pluralism of society, as well as the lack of housing in town centres.

## Organisational, legal, financial and administrative conditions.

### *The dominant communities' organisation and finances*

The Church of Sweden is divided into 13 dioceses and 1,439 parishes (Church of Sweden 2012, p. 11). Members pay a membership fee, which, under an agreement between the state and the church is administered by the Swedish Tax Agency. The average in 2013 was 1 per cent of taxable income. The membership fee is used for salaries, and the operation and management of church buildings.

### *Authorities and legislation*

County administrative boards have regulatory responsibilities and are the licensing authorities in accordance with the cultural heritage act, while the National Heritage Board has national responsibility for adherence to the act. All churches built before 1940 are protected under the Heritage Act's fourth chapter and require authorisation for changes. This also applies to historically valuable objects in the churches and churchyards. The younger churches have a general protection with care requirements but without the need for authorisation: however they can be protected like the older churches through a special decision by the county council (before 2014 the National Heritage Board).

### *State funding, support*

The state church preservation compensation that is payable towards cultural history-related costs was agreed before the state and the church split on January 1, 2000. The funding, which is enshrined in the cultural heritage act, began to be distributed in 2002 and since 2010 has amounted to SEK 460 million per year. The church preservation funding covers about 25 percent of the costs of care, maintenance and operation of the churches: the rest is financed by the congregations themselves through the membership fees. The fact that at all works are subject to VAT, while churches may not deduct VAT, does, however, mean that 25 percent of the funding goes back to the state (Church of Sweden 2013, p. 62).

Compensation is renewed by parliamentary decision in five-year periods (see below). The Church of Sweden at the national level distributes funding across the country, based on applications from the parishes. The National Heritage Board and the county administrative boards are given the opportunity to comment on the distribution. The work on ecclesiastical cultural values and the funding shall, according to the agreement between the State and the Church, be evaluated every five years and the next checkpoint is reached in 2014, ahead of the five-year period 2015-19.

## Religious heritage / building stock

The Church of Sweden's congregations own and manage 3377 churches (31 December 2013). Of these, about 2,950 are subject to authorization, which means that they were built before 1940 or have been protected by a special decision of the National Heritage Board. The Church of Sweden council reports the number of churches and changes in the building stock annually to the government. The data is based on the church buildings register maintained by the council that has been developed since the relationship change (Church of Sweden 2014). For other congregations, no comprehensive documentation is available, according to verbal information from the National Heritage Board.

As shown above, the Church of Sweden's congregations own their churches and have responsibility for the management, i.e. care, maintenance and operation. The dioceses have until 2017 also been able to make contributions towards the rebuilding of churches motivated by functional reasons.

## Current situation and debate

The decline in membership is uneven in different dioceses and parishes which results in different conditions for the operation and management of church buildings. Many small churches have had to be combined into larger units for financial reasons. In 2000, the number of parishes was 2,517; in 2012 it was 1,382, a decrease of 45 percent. In the short term, this improves the economy, but increases the risk of churches becoming redundant. There are currently examples of congregations that own and manage ten or more protected church buildings, while they actually need far fewer churches.

The state funding currently covers about 25 percent of the total cost of the administration of the churches (care, maintenance, operating costs). In larger congregations, or in communities that comprise a number of congregations' cooperating bodies for property management, there is often a professional management with adequate resources for the system to work relatively well. In small congregations with many church buildings, there is a risk that cost of management will become too great for the congregation to be able to finance the work. So far, one strategy has been that in order to maintain the churches, vicarages, church halls house and other buildings and properties have been sold off. The number of sales of church buildings is still quite small. During the period 2000-2012, a total of 67 churches became redundant, of which 23 required authorization. Of these, the majority (18 ) were sold to another owner, and three to other religious congregations (Church of Sweden 2013c). So far, with some exceptions, most of the churches that were set aside or sold were small churches or chapels built during the 1900s.

In recent decades, only one protected church, Maglarps church in the diocese of Lund from 1917, has been demolished (2007). However, in the diocese of Lund as well as other church-dense parts of the country and even in remote areas e.g. the diocese of Karlstad diocese, there is a tendency towards increased redundancy, and reducing operations and accessibility of churches.

Examples of protected churches that have been set aside, sold and / or rebuilt in recent years:

- Viskafors church, Diocese of Gothenburg, built in 1918, closed 2003. Sold 2007, and converted to restaurant (first example of this in Sweden).
- Caroli church in central Malmö, diocese of Lund. Church for the 1800s, sold to a shopping centre in 2009.

- Örja church, Diocese of Lund, built in 1868, was sold in 2012 to a private individual for residential purposes. First example in Sweden of a church converted to a dwelling while the churchyards is still in use.
- Åtvids church, Diocese of Linköping. 1800s church next to a restored medieval church which is now the main church in the parish. The church is closed or has been used very little for many years. Demolition was discussed but now there are plans to rebuild for congregation and office premises.
- Östra Nöbbelövs church. Diocese of Lund. Medieval origins, closed in 1997. The congregation plans to convert it to a multi-faith cultural church.
- Normannebo church, Diocese of Gothenburg from the early 1900s, sold to a private individual in 2012 for residential purposes.

Questions about redundancy, sale or disposal of churches have attracted the attention of the media for many years, through news articles, editorials and features on TV and radio. A number of articles have also been published in newspapers or other media. A search in the Media archive for "redundant churches" resulted in about 90 articles in the national and local media between the years 1991-2013. As shown below, redundancy problems were discussed during the surveys in the 1980s and the early 1990s, which made their mark in the daily press. The discussion report *The Fathers' Church - at any price* came out 1990 during work on the Church Buildings Inquiry, which was conducted on behalf of the Church of Sweden's central board (see below). In connection with this, Håkan Wilhelmsson, Director of the Church of Sweden's training centre in Sigtuna, commented on a disused church in Eriksberg, Diocese of Skara. A longer quote is reproduced here as it is interesting how an influential representative of the Church of Sweden expressed himself at that time:

[...] The Church's job is to safeguard the living worship, not care for monuments. [...] What has now become clear at Eriksberg, was evident throughout the country before the turn of the century. We have too many churches and must lay some down [...] This has been accepted throughout church history. In the Middle Ages, the Diocese of Skara laid down hundreds of churches. It is just uncommon in our generation, the church has had an extremely rich period since the 1920s. Now we are short of money. Like the municipalities, we must prioritize [...]. (Telegrambyrå. 1992)

There are not many examples of responses from the heritage sector in the media. At the conference *The Fathers Church*, organised by the National Heritage Board in 1993 as part of the study in to the separation of Church and State, the regional director of cultural heritage Steine Rentzhog said "Not one of Sweden's approximately 2,500 churches should be lost, because each parish church with centuries of cultural history stored within its walls gives the district an unprecedented identity and rootedness for its inhabitants [...]." (Tidningarnars Telegrambyrå 1993).

Articles are otherwise relatively evenly spread over more than two decades and it is difficult to draw any specific conclusions about trends over time. A slight increase occurred in 2011, partly in connection with the former Dean of Lund and Professor of Ethics, HB Hammar, who wrote an article published in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* on October 2, 2011 (Hammar 2011). Under the headline "Time to tear down Swedish churches " Hammar begins by noting that there is a drastic drop in confirmation candidates, the church faithful are being replaced gradually by non-church goers and the consequence is inevitable; members are becoming fewer and fewer; since 2000, they have fallen by half a million. Hammar continues by saying that in this situation, the number of church buildings is something of a ticking bomb.

The conclusion is similar to what Håkan Wilhelmsson expressed 20 years earlier, but it is difficult today to find similar official statements by representatives of the Church of Sweden. The debate provoked over

1000 comments on the internet. The Church of Sweden's cultural coordinator responded to HB Hammar in a discussion in Studio One's live broadcast on 3 October 2011 and in a response in an edition of *Svenska Dagbladet's* online edition under the headline "Churches are not just for church services." The art historian Henrik Widmark of Uppsala University also published an article in the same series of debates; "The future of the churches concerns us all" (Widmark 2011).

Just one month earlier, an article had been published in *Dagens Nyheter* with the headline "How can churches be saved" (Barkman 2013). The article was based on an interview with Gunnar Granberg, former diocesan lecturer in the Diocese of Uppsala, and responsible for the publication "Large churches, small congregations" that resulted in a book of the same name. According to Granberg, the Church of Sweden had reached a point where "we need to start to get used to the idea that churches can be set aside. In theory, churches can be demolished, sold or mothballed." At the same time the debate in recent years shows that "there is strong popular opposition to such thoughts " One solution offered in the book is to rebuild larger churches by reducing the worship space and leaving room for the congregation's other activities such as cultural activities, choir practices, children's activities, conversation groups and even administration. In the newspaper article there is also a general discussion about the separation from the state and developments after this with reductions in membership and a weakening economy.

Even Swedish Television has drawn attention to the problem of redundant churches. In a feature on the Culture News programme of October 31, 2012 Minister of culture Lena Adelsohn Liljeroth was interviewed together with the Church of Sweden's cultural coordinator Henrik Lindblad and Dennis Toth, new owner of Örja Church, The feature was based on the heading of the article: "Since the Church of Sweden separated from the state 12 years ago, church attendance has decreased drastically. Today there are 800,000 fewer visits per year and churches standing there are falling into disrepair "(Swedish Television 2012).

In the above study *Shared Responsibility*, a series of measures is proposed to meet the challenges the Church of Sweden is facing in the future, including managing different ways to be more efficient, and that congregations should review their premises and dispose of the buildings (other than the church) that they do not need. The study also suggests that redundant church buildings should be taken over by the Church of Sweden's national level and then managed by the diocese (Church of Sweden 2015c).

### ***Research participants***

Reference is made to the detailed compilation of the *Church of Sweden's Cultural Heritage - Research Overview 2009-2014* (Persson Lofgren & Wetterberg 2014), which was drawn up as part of the research project "Old churches - new values. Use and management of churches in a changing society," funded by the National Heritage Board and the Church of Sweden. The report was prepared by the Department of Conservation, University of Gothenburg in collaboration with the Church of Sweden's research unit for the conference *Religious heritage as memory and opportunity*, the Council of Uppsala, 1 - 2 October 2014.

## Denmark

### National data

Population (2013): 5,602,628

Population density (2013): 132 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>

Population trend (2013): + 0.23%

GNP per capita USD (2012): 57,636.1 (2011: 303.9 61)

Unemployment (2012): 6.4%

Urban population (2012): 87% of the total population

Urbanization per year (estimate 2010-15): 0.5%

Sources: *World Bank Population 2015 CIA World Factbook 2015*

### Religious conditions

Folkekirken (The Church of Denmark) is Denmark's state church with the Queen and the Danish Parliament as the supreme authorities. According to the Church of Denmark's statistics, the number of members on 1 January 2013 was 4,430,643. This represented 79.1 per cent of the then 5,602,628 inhabitants in Denmark. Membership is decreasing every year. According to the Ministry for Gender Equality and Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Church had 154,000 more members in 1990 than in 2013, corresponding to 89.3 percent of the population (Danish Church Ministry statistics 2014). According to *the International Freedom of Religion report, IFRR, 2011* half of the members of the Church of Denmark attended church at least once a year for events such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and the Christian holidays, but only two to three percent regularly participate in religious services (the US Department of State 2011).

The second largest religion is Islam according to the IFRR. In 2011 it included about four percent of the population, or about 230,000 individuals (ibid). The Muslim population is concentrated in Copenhagen, Odense and Aarhus. Groups of less than one percent of the population include (largest to smallest): Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Serbian Orthodox Christians, Jews, Baptists, Buddhists, Mormons and Pentecostals. On 1 January 2012, there were 38,614 Catholics, an increase of just under 7,000 over 20 years. According to the Centre for the Future of Religion, a research centre at Aarhus University, which compiles and annually publishes *Religion in Denmark*, the following denominations were recognised in 2012: 89 Christian, 8 Hindu, 13 Buddhist, 23 Muslim, three Jewish religious communities and five other faiths. The number of registered communities has increased from 24 to 115 in less than 20 years (*Religion in Denmark 2013*, p 6).

### Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions

The Church of Denmark is divided into 10 dioceses, which in turn consists of 1350 pastorates and about 2100 parishes or congregations (Folkekirken 2014). Since the Church of Denmark is a state church, most of the work (excluding salaries for priests which are paid by the state) and the management of the buildings are paid for by a church tax. This corresponds to an average of 0.88 percent of taxable income, which in 2013 is expected to be DKK 6.3 billion (Ministry of Church Affairs 2013). This is also complemented by government subsidies, which according to the cited source, constitute 12 percent of the Church of Denmark's total income. Baptism is the basis for membership, but it is possible to relinquish membership after baptism (Haynes 2008a, p 23). According to Frank Cranmer's report *Notes on Church and States in the European Economic Area in 2011* is the Church of Denmark the state church in Europe where the government and parliament exercise the greatest control of all (Cramner 2011, pp 7-8).

Since 2012, Denmark's national agency for cultural heritage has been called the Ministry of Culture and Palaces (formerly the Cultural Heritage Board, which was merged with other bodies including the Art Committee). However the Danish Church comes under the Ministry for Church Affairs, which has



overall responsibility for the churches (see below). National responsibility for the accumulation of knowledge and expertise about (the older) churches lies with the National Museum, which publishes the series *Denmark's Churches* (Danmarks Kirker 2013).

The Church of Denmark's church buildings, churchyards and inventory are protected under the "Act on the Church of Denmark's churches and churchyards". According to § 2, Chapter 2, construction and demolition must be approved by the Ministry for Church Affairs. Extensions, alterations or modifications to church buildings as well as the preservation of inventory that is older than 100 years must be approved by the "diocesan council" (corresponding to the diocesan board in Sweden) after advice from, inter alia, the Royal Inspector of Buildings and the National Museum. For more recent buildings and inventory, the parish council (corresponding to the church council) makes decisions based on the advice of the National Museum (Kirker og kirkegårde, page 31 ff. Haynes 2008a, p 22, Tsvolas 2014, p.135 ff).

Denmark has about 9,000 buildings protected due to their national significance. These are identified by the Ministry of Culture and Buildings. Buildings of local importance are protected by the municipal council. Within the scope of this study it was not possible to find out how many of these are free churches or other religious buildings. All listed items can, however, be found in the Cultural Heritage Board's database.

All recognized and registered associations may seek public funds for the maintenance and restoration of their buildings (Fornerod 2006, p 7). In Denmark there is also a government grant for all types of protected buildings comprising a total of DKK 40 million (Haynes 2008a). However, the administration of the Church of Denmark is paid for the most part by the church tax.

### Religious heritage / building stock

The Church of Denmark's church buildings as of 1 January 2012 numbered 2,354 (Ministry of Church Affairs 2013). In 2000, the number of free church buildings, including the Catholic Church, was 339. Haynes' report indicates that there are more than 120 mosques, two synagogues, eight Buddhist temples and five Hindu temples in Denmark (Haynes 2008a, p 22). According to the Danish Wikipedia built the first Danish – and also the first Scandinavian - mosque was built in Hvidovre in 1967 (Wikipedia, Denmark, 2013a). According to the same source, the Jewish community in Denmark owns a synagogue in Copenhagen at Krystalgade, built 1830-33 (Wikipedia, Denmark 2013b).

As shown above, the administration of the Church of Denmark is financed by a church tax (Haynes 2008a, p 22, Tsvolas 2014, p 136, Fornerod 2006, p 7). The tax goes directly to the congregation which then decides how the funds will be used. For the "poor" congregations with very old churches, it is also possible to apply for limited state funding (Fornerod 2006, p 7).

### Current situation and debate

Haynes' report shows that demographic changes with urbanization and growing city suburbs meant that many rural communities have extremely small congregations. However, only two churches closed permanently in the past 35 years (calculated from 2008), but several have been closed temporarily (Haynes 2008a, p 21).

In his article "When God moves out. Abandoned churches past and present", Jes Wienberg gives several historical examples of abandonment, demolition and reuse of churches in Denmark as well as in Sweden and several other countries (Wienberg 2010). According to the author, during the 1900s there were also examples of Danish churches with other functions. For example, the St. Nikolaj church near Stroget in Copenhagen, which burned down in 1795 and was rebuilt in 1914, housed a library, and later a model collection, and now serves as an art gallery. In Rønne on Bornholm, a free church from 1900 has served as a store for Bornholm Museum since 1976. A former house of prayer and chapel from 1892 in Overland Lerte in Southern Jutland has been a clock museum since 1998. In Silkeborg in Jutland, an

architects' office is housed in a free church from 1923. Vesterø Harbour Church on Læsø from 1954 has been a spa since 2008 (Wienberg 2010, p 67). The majority of these buildings are free churches.

According to an article in *Jyllandsposten* in 2010, a decision was made in 2007 to close ten churches in Copenhagen (Pedersen 2010). Here a process started in 2013 with the aim of closing another 14 (according to other sources, these are about 16) churches. The reason is said to be the demographic development with fewer residents in the parishes, while the number of churches has increased since the 1960s. The decision was taken by the Copenhagen diocesan council and appears in some cases to go against the individual parishes. However, at the end of the day it is the government, the Ministry of Church Affairs or the Ministry of Culture which decides (14 churches will close in Copenhagen in 2013). In a notice in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* published on April 11, it stated that "two of the sixteen churches to be closed next year are now up for sale" (Two churches for sale 2013). According to the notice, Samuels Church and Blågårds Church are to be sold, but Kirkefondet, (The Church Fund), the owner, would prefer that the church premises be used for social or cultural purposes. "Business or discos are not ok" (ibid).

Regarding the free churches building stock, an article in *Kristeligt Dagblad* on 1 May 2000 describes a situation with a reduction in membership and churches for sale. According to the article, the number of churches, including the Catholic church in 2000 was 339, a decrease of five since 1990 (Vincent 2000).

### **Public debate**

According to the article in *Jyllandsposten* in 2010, a wide circle of Copenhagen's politicians wanted empty the churches to be bought up and converted into kindergartens and cultural places for young people. The outcome of this proposal is, however, uncertain.

The Danish Kirkefondet was established in Copenhagen in 1890 with the aim of bringing the churches closer to the public by building more churches in the city. Today the fund works across the country, including the use of churches and strategies for congregations in a redundancy situation. The document "Uses for churches facing closure" discusses a principled approach to alternative use and ownership of disused churches (Kirkefondet 2013). The document describes a number of factors and outcomes from everything from the sale or transfer of churches to other churches or for sale for commercial purposes. As the fund has its base of operations in Copenhagen, it has been heavily involved in the current debate there. In 2104 the fund issued two reports in collaboration with Realdania and Dansk Bygningsarv. In *New use for Danish churches*, the background and the challenges of the closure and sale of churches are described (Kirkefondet and Real Dania 2014A). Half of the report consists of ten case studies of closed and converted churches in England and Holland. *Catalogue of Ideas. New use for six Copenhagen churches* contains as the title indicates, six examples of churches that have been converted for new use (Kirkefondet and Real Dania 2014b).

In connection with the planned church closure, Bishop Peter Skov-Jakobsen stated during a debate that there are 200,000 fewer Copenhagen residents today than when many of the churches were built, about 100 years ago, "The church must not become an open air museum, which puts its money into buildings and in the past. The challenge for the church today is to get Jesus up out of the display case" (Weiss Moses 2012)

### **Research participants**

In Denmark, the Centre for Ecclesiastical Research, located at the University of Copenhagen, has four research areas include Christianity and church practice and communication, the institutional and social conditions of the churches, the churches' contribution to the identity and context in Danish society and finally the general development of religion in Denmark (Centre for Ecclesiastical Research 2014). Relevant to this report is that the Centre for Ecclesiastical Research took part in the European and EU funded research project RELIGARE, which was implemented between 2010 and 2013 and whose goal was to investigate religious diversity and secular models in Europe (RELIGARE 2014). The project has

resulted in a final report, and a number of other reports and works published on the website. Only one of these concerns cultural heritage issues directly, *Funding Religious Heritage*, by the French researcher Anne Fornerod (2010a) which is included elsewhere in this report. (Fornerod is incidentally also the editor of the anthology of the same name, published by Ashgate, spring 2015.)

Aarhus University houses the Centre for Contemporary Religion (CSR), whose area of work is to collect, analyse and disseminate knowledge about contemporary religion and religiosity, globally and in Denmark (Centre for Contemporary Religion 2014).

## *Finland*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 5,426,674

Population density (2013): 18 people per sq. km

Population trend (2013): +0.06%

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 47 243.7 (2011: 50 790.7)

Unemployment (2012): 7.3%

Urban population (2012): 84% of the total population

Urbanization per year (estimate 2010-15): 0.47%

*Sources: World Bank's population in 2015, Eurostat, in 2015, CIA World Factbook*

### **Religious conditions**

#### ***Religions, number of members, development***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was formerly the state church but is now characterized as the national church that interacts with the state (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 2014). At the end of January 2012, there were 4,146,056 members or 76.4 percent of the total population. The Finnish church loses members every year and during the 2000s, the loss increased relatively steadily. In 2012 14,108 people joined, while 41,079 seceded (ibid).

The Finnish Orthodox Church is also characterized as a national church, and, according to Petri J. Raivo (2010, p. 12), about one percent of the population are members. From the survey carried out by Angus Fowler for the Council of Europe in 1989, it appears that the church had 56,000 members, down from 80,000 in 1930 (Rauti, 1989, p. 51)

According to the report from IRFR the official statistics show that 19 percent, over a million of the population, has no religious affiliation. Other religious groups make up about one percent of the population.

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions.**

#### ***The dominant communities, organization and economy***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is organized into nine dioceses with 430 congregations, of which 368 are Finnish-speaking and 62 are Swedish-speaking (January 1, 2013, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 2014). Formally, it is a community subject to public law, which means that church and state collaborate in different ways and that the church's systems and administration are governed by an ecclesiastical body (Finlex 2014). Furthermore, the Church has the right to collect its dues in the form of a church tax (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 2014). A parishioner pays church tax to the congregation or religious community association, which is determined based on the member's taxable income in municipal taxation. In 2008, parish tax revenue comprised 87.2 per cent of church tax from parishioners (Church Office 2008). The Finnish Orthodox Church is a national church according to Finnish law. It is organized into three dioceses and 25 parishes (Orthodox Church of Finland 2013).

#### ***Authorities, organization***

The national authority, the National Board of Antiquities, (Museiverket) is responsible for (some) supervision and for advice and knowledge-building for church buildings belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church (see below). For secular protected buildings, regional supervision applies.

#### ***Legislation religious heritage / cultural monuments***

The Ecclesiastical Act (1054/93) includes buildings that belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The law automatically protects churches built before 1917. Churches that are younger than this can be protected on the initiative of the Chapter Assembly or the National Board of Antiquities (Museiverket 2014). Ecclesiastical law protects churches, with their fixed furnishings and artwork and this includes buildings and structures, such as bell towers, mortuary chapels, port buildings or enclosures belonging to

the graveyard. Decisions about protection are taken by the church council. In 2002, the National Board of Antiquities, supported the Ecclesiastical Act, made representations on the protection of fifty churches built up until the 1970s (ibid). When it comes to the protected churches, the congregations decide, and before the Church Council addresses the congregation's decision, it seeks the opinion of the National Board of Antiquities. In cases where the Church Council approves the congregation's decision, the Ministry of Education determines the decision before it can be enforced (Church Office 2008).

The Finnish Church has 818 churches. The Protection of Buildings Act applies to historically valuable buildings, not church buildings. Provision for church buildings is governed by church law.

### ***Public funding, support***

According to data from 2008, the congregations fully cover the cost of maintenance of the churches. The financing of this is done with the help of the church tax. For churches used only occasionally, the National Board provides funding for fire safety. These churches are usually cold, without any heating and therefore have had the organ removed (Church Office 2008).

## **Religious heritage / building stock**

### ***Building stock by denomination (dominant)***

In 2008 the Evangelical Lutheran Church had 818 church buildings, but any of these may have been sold thereafter (Church Office 2008). The Finnish Orthodox Church underwent dramatic changes during World War II. Before the war, the church's core area was in Eastern Finland and particularly in Karelia. During the war, nearly 90 percent of the churches and chapels were destroyed and two-thirds of those belonging to these churches were forced to leave their homes (Raivo 2002, pp 11-12). After the war, the Finnish Orthodox Church rebuilt the majority of their church buildings, ideally in a traditional classical-influenced wooden architecture, mostly in North Karelia. In 2002, the 25 congregations owned 41 churches, 75 chapels and two monasteries (Raivo 2002, p. 17).

### ***Administration and finance***

The Evangelical Lutheran Church's central body, the Church Board, has no governmental or other public funds to allocate for the maintenance and upkeep of church buildings. However, congregations with weak finances can be supported from the Church's central fund, to which all parishes pay a fee based on the number of members of the congregation. The amount distributed annually as building grants from the Church's central fund in 2008 amounted to approximately SEK 80 million (Church Office, 2008).

For most churches there are no care and maintenance plans and the systematic implementation of care measures is not very common. In 2008 the Evangelical Lutheran Church gathered data on the financial costs of the historically-valuable church buildings. The intention was for this to be presented as a basis for the possible introduction of a government grant (ibid).

## **Current situation and debate**

According to an unconfirmed report from 2008, at that time no churches had been laid down since the First World War, not counting those who have fallen out of use due to fire or war (Church Office 2008). Angus Fowler's survey shows that one church has been demolished since 1945; however, there is no mention of which church it is, and that some ten churches stand as ruins (Rauti 1989, p 51).

The current restructuring of the Finnish municipalities leads to mergers of parishes (Church Office 2008). This may eventually lead to more redundant churches. The churches that are not in regular use, a total of about 30, (2008), are used for summer weddings and a few church services, often in the old style where the church lacks an organ. As a rule, congregations use newer churches for services (ibid).

According to an article in *Hangötidingen* of 4 April 2013 48 percent of the country's churches operated at a loss in 2011, which may result in the need to sell property (Heinrichs, 2013). The article exemplifies the Hangö church community which struggles with increased costs for the

properties, while the parishioners, on both Swedish and Finnish side, and the revenue they bring, are decreasing drastically. The church council in Hangö had begun investigating the possibility of selling all three properties in Hangö.

In recent years at least one church appears have been sold. An article in *Hufvudstadsbladet* of 23 May 2013 shows that the church council in Vantaa parish in Nyland decided to sell the church in Fagersta to a private individual for EUR 207,000 (Fagersta church in Vantaa sold in 2013).

According to the article, the church was then "ripe for demolition", having been built in 1960, and according to an inventory of 2002 "a noteworthy item from a safety perspective." The church had been used as a meeting place for local young people and when it was to be sold, its importance as a meeting place for young people was emphasised. The reason for the sale was said to be that the congregations cannot afford to maintain all their properties under the current economic circumstances.

A similar situation is described in the Finnish-Swedish paper *Kyrkpressen*, where the congregation in Kristinestad discussed selling Ulrika Eleonora Church, a wooden church from 1700 that is only used in the summer (Sandberg 2012). The reason was that there were three more churches and the old church costs EUR 18,300 per year in operation and maintenance, which the congregation did not feel they can afford. According to the pastor, Martti Toivanen who is quoted in the article, it is a fact that fewer and fewer people have to finance increasingly expensive property. He emphasizes that the church cannot deal with property maintenance, and also says that the National Board of Antiquities has made it impossible to use the churches in a sensible way.

An example of the sale of a free church comes from Lovisa, where, according to the newspaper, Östra Nyland Methodist church was for sale in 2011 (Kurri 2011). The Lovisa congregation comprised just a handful of members, and the intention was that it would instead acquire a smaller place, perhaps an apartment, for their operations.

## Norway

### National data

Population (2013): 5,051,275

Population density (2013): 14 people per sq. km

Population trend (2013): + 0.33%

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 99 635.9 (2011: 99,091,1)

Unemployment (2012): 3.1%

Urban population (2012): 80% of the total population

Urbanisation per year (estimate 2010-15): 1.03%

Sources: Eurostat, 2015, the World Bank's population in 2015, CIA World Factbook

### Religious conditions

#### *Religions, number of members, development*

The Church of Norway was the state church from 1537 until 2012 when a constitutional amendment was introduced which means that religious activity is no longer the responsibility of the state. The amendment is the beginning of a development of the Church as an independent corporation ( Church of Norway 2014). In 2012, according to Statistics Norway, members numbered 3,848,295 (Statistics Norway 2015), which corresponds to 77.2 percent of the population. In 2005, membership stood at 3,938,723 which then corresponded to 84.9 percent of the population (Botvar & Urstad 2012). Even now, over 80 percent of children born are baptised in the Church of Norway, but only 10 percent attend religious services once a month or more. In an article from the same source, it shows that in 2102 about 8.7 percent of the population belonged to other congregations and 5.6 per cent are not members of any congregation.

According to *the International Freedom of Religion report*, IFRR, 2011, other Christian communities had 266,900 members, which accounts for 55 percent of all members of the religious group outside the Church of Norway (US Department of State 2011). The number of members of Muslim communities is increasing and in 2011 there were 106,700 (ibid). The Catholic Church is increasing rapidly due to immigration and, according to the same report, is the biggest of the other Christian communities with 83,000 members. The Pentecostal Church comes next with just over 40,000 members. According to the online *Store norske leksikon* the next biggest are the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church with 21,000 members, then the Baptist Church with 10.800 (Store norske leksikon 2013).

Buddhists, Orthodox Christians, Sikhs, Hindus and members of the Jewish constitute less than 5 percent of the population. The Norwegian Humanist Association has over 80,000 members in 2013 (Human-Ethical Association 2013). The Association has developed alternatives to Christian rituals such as non-religious confirmation and is working towards an alternative view of life education in schools.

### Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions

#### *The dominant community's organization and finances*

The Church of Norway has no independent funding based on admission into membership or the equivalent. Therefore, the Church is funded largely by government grants and local taxes. Responsibility for the Church is shared between the parish and the municipality. According to the Norwegian Church Act (the Church Act), churches are the parish's property and the church council is responsible for the management of the churches while the parish council is responsible for church activities.. The church council consists of two members from each parish in the municipality, a dean or a priest, and a representative appointed by the municipality (Sørmoen 2015). The states municipality is responsible for covering the cost of buildings, operation and maintenance based on the budget from the church council (The Norwegian Church Act 2015). The central support for property management and church building issues is exercised by The Church Employers and Interest Organisation (KA), which is an organization formed by and for church institutions and foundations. KA's Department for Church Building and cultural heritage management provides, inter alia, management support in the form of advice and training

for congregations, responsibility for the national Church Building database, the national church building inspections that take place every four years, and climate and environmental work in property management (The Church Employers and Interest Organisation 2015).

### ***Authorities, organization***

The Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Riksantikvaren) (established 1912) is the central state heritage authority and is responsible to the Ministry of Climate and the Environment for the implementation of cultural heritage policy. The Directorate is also the licensing authority for churches that are automatically protected and provides advice for those that are listed (see below) (Riksantikvaren 2015). Norway is divided into 19 regions or counties and 428 municipalities, where the capital city of Oslo is both a county and a municipality (Regjeringen.no. 2015). Counties are organized into county councils, roughly corresponding to the Swedish county councils and regions. For each county there is a county governor, who is a government official at the regional level (similar to the Swedish county administrative board). The county councils, which are independent from the state and independent of the County Governor, comprise, inter alia, the regional cultural heritage administrations, and have oversight of protected cultural monuments and also advise the public (Troms Fylkeskommune 2015). The County Governor is responsible for, inter alia national interests being safeguarded in each area. The system whereby the county councils and not the county governors are responsible for cultural sites has led to some problems over the years, including where the central authority, the Directorate of Cultural Heritage, cannot give instructions to the counties (Sørmoen 2015). Finally, the municipalities are responsible for non-Sami, recent cultural heritage (buildings from 1649 and other cultural heritage from post 1537) and Sami culture less than 100 years old." For example, construction and demolition applications should typically go through the municipalities which then pass them on to the regional level (Fylkesmannen 2015). Furthermore, municipalities are responsible for financing the care and maintenance and repair of parish churches (see below).

### ***Legislation religious heritage / cultural monuments***

In Norway, all churches built before 1650 are protected by the Cultural Heritage Act, through the requirement for permits for modifications. Churchyards, funeral monuments older than 1537 (Sami monuments older than 100 years) are also automatically protected. All churches built between 1650 and 1850 are listed ("listeförte"), as well as some built after 1850. The listed churches, which represent 46 percent of the entire stock (Sørmoen 2015), shall be managed in accordance with the so-called church circular. Churches and graveyards can also be protected by a special decision of the Directorate of Cultural Heritage. Changes to protected churches should be handled according to both the Church Act and the Cultural Heritage Act. Applications are submitted through the bishop to the Directorate of Cultural Heritage which has oversight of the protected churches. From 1 May 2013, the county councils are the responsible cultural heritage authorities with regard to changes to the surrounding environment of the listed churches (Directorate of Cultural Heritage 2015).

### ***Public funding, support***

See below under Management and Finance

## **Religious heritage / building stock**

### ***Building stock by denomination (dominant)***

According to data from 2010, the Church of Norway then had 1620 church buildings. Of these, about 980 were protected as heritage (2008). Of the heritage-protected churches, 28 are stave churches, some 180 are medieval churches (of which 160 are stone churches) and about 500 churches were built before 1850 (Church Office 2008). The database Kirkesøk provided by the Church of Norway's employer organization KA, shows that in 2013 there were 1623 church buildings (Kirkesøk 2013). At the same time, there were 36 Catholic churches, 126 mosques and two synagogues (Sørmoen 2010). No information on the number of church buildings belonging to Christian free churches has been obtained.



### ***Administration and finance***

Norwegian church congregations are responsible for the management of the churches. The Norwegian municipalities contribute to financing the care, maintenance and repair of churches. There is also a state system of interest-free loans for the care of churches, which, however, is not permanent and so far been exempted twice in the state budget (Sørmoen 2015). State and municipal gross expenditure for the operation of the churches in 2008 amounted to about NOK 3 billion annually. Most of this is covered from the municipal budgets (over 2 billion). The municipal contribution is dependent on the economy in the municipality where the church is located. The congregation has to compete for funds with other public activities such as schools. Because the number of parishes in each municipality varies, like municipal finances, there is a big difference in how much municipalities grant to church activities (Church Office 2008). Other religious communities receive state aid, the size of which depends on the number of members.

### **Current situation and debate**

In the investigation report *The art of being a church*, there is a section on “left-over” or redundant churches (Church of Norway 2005). It noted that during the recent public debate on church buildings, maintenance of churches and the municipal economy, the issue of redundant churches has been a theme. Several congregations have too many churches in relation to the population or the number of members. Low utilization rate, changed settlement patterns and strained finances can lead to the question of how individual churches can become redundant. It is noted that in Norway very little research has been done on this, and reference is made instead to a Swedish study (Churches and the public space. A survey of the role of church buildings in Swedish society, from 1995), on public perceptions of redundant churches and their possible closure. From this survey it appears that the attitude in Sweden is that there are no redundant churches. The report argues for an alternative use of redundant churches for cultural purposes and mentions good examples such as the Jakob cultural church in Oslo, the ruined church at Sola, Vaelstrand cultural church and Nykirken (the children's cathedral) in Bergen (Church of Norway 2005).

An undated article on the Danish Church Fund's website, written by Max Ingar Mørk from KA confirms that Norway has little experience of new use of churches. According to the author, there are some examples of cultural churches, children and young people's cathedrals and that these experiences would be of interest (Mørk). He also believes that it shows that the issue is becoming increasingly topical in Norway, but that the time is not yet ripe for the big debate in recent years, Oddbjörn Sørmoen, Director of KA's Department of Church Building and Cultural Heritage Administration, and active within the European organization FRH, has written several articles on churches as cultural heritage, partly in light of the contemporary development of redundancy problems. One example is the article Churches - more than we think, published in 2014 in *Aftenposten*, where the author argues for the importance of the religious heritage of the community and that churches affect and involve people regardless of faith or denomination (Sørmoen 2014 a). In the article Churches – a threatened heritage in the journal *Fremtiden for fortiden* he sets out the situation of churches in Norway, before the separation from the state, in an international context, and compares it with conditions in countries such as Sweden and the UK (Sørmoen 2014 b).

### **Research and other players**

The Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU) was set up in 1994 as a subsidiary of the national authority, the Directorate of Cultural Heritage Administration, by the Ministry of the Environment as an independent national research institute. NIKU is organized as a project-based organisation, carrying out both contract research and other services within heritage and planning. NIKU is also home to the digitized documentation project Norway's Churches (publication of all the churches took place from 1958 to 2003), development of methods and guidelines to prevent moisture and climate damage in churches and the project on values in Norwegian churches, commissioned by KA (NIKU 2015).

## *The Netherlands*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 16,779,575

Population density (2013): 498 people per sq. km

Population trend (2013): +0.44%

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 49 128.1 (2011: 53 540.6)

Unemployment (2012): 6.8%

Urban population (2012): 89%

Urbanisation per year (estimate 2010-15): 0.74%

*Sources: World Bank's population in 2015, Eurostat, in 2015, CIA World Factbook 2015*

### **Religious conditions**

#### ***Religions, number of members, development***

According to a 2010-11 statistical survey, 55 percent of the population said they were religious and hence 45 percent are non-religious (Central Bureau voor de Statistiek 2012). 28 percent were Catholics, 8 percent Reformed, 6 percent belonged to the Protestant Church, and 4 percent were Calvinists. According to the same survey, 4 percent were Muslims and 6 percent were Hindus, Jews and Buddhists (ibid).

According to the Dutch report *Guidelines on ways of dealing with religious objects*, active membership is decreasing in the various churches for each generation (Museum Catharijneconvent 2012). Amongst the pre-war generation, only 29 percent say they have no religion and 58 percent are active members or attend religious services at least occasionally. Among younger generations, 54 percent say they are non-religious, and only 25 percent actively participate or visit churches (ibid, p. 10). According to information on the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands' official website, more than a quarter of the approximately four million members are regularly involved in church services (Catholic Church in the Netherlands, 2014).

According to the *Guidelines on ways of dealing with religious objects*, membership of the Catholic and Protestant churches is declining by 170,000 members per year (it is unclear how this figure is calculated: the majority would consist of Protestants). If this decline continues, there is a risk that the traditional Protestant churches will be close to eradication around 2050 and the Catholic congregations a few decades later. Most Catholic dioceses have been restructured and parishes have been merged. On average, this involves to four or five parishes, but up to eight parishes can be merged into one. A similar development is taking place in the Protestant churches, which means that many churches are becoming redundant (Museum Catharijneconvent 2012, p. 7).

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions.**

#### ***The dominant communities' organization and economy***

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands was formed in 2004 through the merger of two reformed (Calvinist) churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands. After the Reformation, the Reformed Church (which divided in the 1800s), was the established church of the Netherlands. Parallel with this was the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which was established in 1556 (World Council of Churches 2013).

According to its official website, the Protestant church has 2.1 million members (Protestantse Kerk 2014). It is organized into around 1800 congregations and has 2,200 priests. According to its own description, the church is structured on a "bottom-up" basis, from the congregations, which are ruled by a church council, with no bishops or dioceses. Nationally, the Church is managed by a General Synod, roughly equivalent to the Church of Sweden Synod, and by an Evangelical Lutheran synod for the Lutheran minority in the Church (ibid).

According to information from Radboud University, in 2012 the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands had just over 4 million members, which then corresponded to 24.1 percent of the population (Radboud University, Kaski 2014). It is organized into seven dioceses, managed by controlled by the bishops, who together form the Dutch church province. The archbishop of the archdiocese of Utrecht is the permanent chairman of the church province (The Catholic Church in the Netherlands, 2014).

### ***Authorities, organization***

The national authority for cultural heritage is the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed) (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed 2014). The authority belongs organizationally to the government's Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Its area of work involves overall responsibility for the management of cultural heritage, handing out government grants, responsibility for monitoring, advice to local authorities and maintaining the national register of monuments and historic buildings. Furthermore, it has decision-making authority for all matters relating to archaeological remains.

### **Legislation religious heritage/cultural monuments**

Protection is implemented through a listing procedure under Monumentenwet (1988/2011) or the Monuments and Historic Buildings Act (2008/2011). A total of 60,000 properties are protected under national law. There are also lists of provincial monuments (400) and local monuments (40 000). For the number of protected church buildings, see the Building stock by communities.

### ***Public funding, support***

According to the Dutch constitution, the church and state are separate and responsibility rests on the individual congregations to fund the operation and management of church buildings. However, there is a system of tax subsidies and financial deductions for church buildings (Fornerod 2010a, p.4). The national heritage authority has a permanent budget for care and maintenance of protected historic monuments and buildings, which is close to EUR 50 million per year. From 2012, it will invest EUR 37 million per year in the restoration of these monuments, EUR 17 million in loans and EUR 20 million in grants. The programme consists of three areas: damage, conservation / preservation and reuse of historical buildings. Within the conservation area there are 25,000 listed buildings and these include churches and other protected religious buildings (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed 2014). The system has evolved over time and appears to have become less favourable for churches.

According to Wies van Leeuwen in the article "Believing in Churches, Church Buildings in the Netherlands - Conservation and New Functions", the total contribution towards restoring listed buildings in 2004 amounted to EUR 55 million (van Leeuwen 2006). 40 percent of the total, equivalent to EUR 22 million, should have gone to church buildings (probably including all protected church buildings and facilities). The government grant at this time was not to exceed 70 per cent of the total cost. An important change in the system was to be made this year when government grants would only go towards repair, according to van Leeuwen, since the state somewhat prematurely decided that major restorations were no longer necessary. Furthermore, grants should not exceed 55 percent of the total cost, and not amount to more than EUR 100,000 (per church) over five years (van Leeuwen 2006, p. 263).

### **Religious heritage / building stock**

#### ***Building stock by denomination (dominant)***

There is no information to indicate the total number of buildings constructed for religious use, or as Christian churches in the Netherlands. According to the table below, taken from Museum Catharijneconvent's guidance from the 2012 *Guidelines on ways of dealing with religious objects*, at that time there were more than 5,660 churches still in use. The table also shows that all "indigenous" Christian communities' churches, with the exception of the old Catholic churches, had declined over the three years. Those with an increase in numbers were mainly mosques and Jewish places of worship.

Number of church buildings in the Netherlands still used for religious purposes	2008	December 2011
Protestant Church in the Netherlands	2,638	2,540
Other Protestant Churches	1,560	1,466
Roman Catholic Church	1,707	1,627
Baptists	134	125
Evangelical Churches etc.	705	631
Temples, Sufi, Buddhist, Mormon	61	66
Miscellaneous	712	350
Old Catholic Church	31	32
Judaism	51	54
Islam	399	440
Eastern Churches, foreign	130	147
Total	8,323	7,647

From *Guidelines on ways of dealing with religious objects*, p. 6, 7. It specifies source: Nelissen, *Geloof in the Toekomst*, p. 44, and J. Sonneveld, *Inventarisatie Kerkelijke Gebouwen in Nederland, December 2011*.

According to the Monuments Register, the national register of listed buildings in the Netherlands, a total of 4425 church buildings or facilities are listed, of which 3032 are churches, 272 are chapels and 404 are monasteries (Monuments Register 2013). No data on the proportion of listed churches that are still in use is given. It is not unlikely that many of the listed buildings no longer have a religious function. In the above article from 2006 by van Leeuwen, however, it is stated that the number of listed church buildings is 3677 (van Leeuwen 2006, p 258). The difference in the number in the two sets of data may partly depend on the definition of a church in the calculation, partly on the validation of numbers but also of course on the rapid developments in the Netherlands with hundreds of churches being laid down each year.

### ***Administration and finance***

There is no church tax in the Netherlands and the individual parishes finance the administration of the churches (see above).

### **Current situation and debate**

The aforementioned mergers of congregations mean that more and more churches are becoming redundant. According to the *Guidelines on ways of dealing with religious objects*, in recent years an average of 27 Catholic and 33 Protestant churches have been closed annually (Museum Catharijneconvent 2012). The same applies to religious orders; between 1975 and 2008, 1500 monasteries closed and now there are only 160 left. In total, this means that during the last three years (counting from 2012) 100 churches and monasteries have closed down each year (Museum Catharijneconvent 2012).

The drastic changes in the Netherlands have received much attention in debates and in the media. The internet edition of the Catholic newspaper *The Tablet* published on 4 December 2013 contains an article on a report from the Dutch Bishops' Conference to the Vatican (1000 Catholic churches in Holland to close by 2025, 2013). It depicts a Church whose accelerated decline in membership figures and church attendance is expected to result in two-thirds of all churches being closed in 2025. Of all Catholics, only 5.6 percent regularly attend church services (compared with the rough figure of 25 percent on the Church's website, see above) and even baptisms and weddings are falling sharply. During an eight-year period, the number of priests fell by a quarter, from 999 to 743. However, fewer appear to have left the church in 2013 compared to 2012 (7,500 at the end of October 2013 against 15,766 for the whole of 2012: this compares to the figure of 170,000 above). The report was reproduced inter alia by other Catholic media as well as by the Reuters news agency.

An article by Reuters of 3 May 2012 states that two churches were closing per week and that from 1970 to 2008 205 Catholic churches were demolished and 148 were converted to bookshops, health centres, restaurants and housing (Heneghan 2012). According to Reuters, the closure of the churches led to such large amounts of redundant ecclesiastical objects that the National Museum of Church Art, Museum Catharijnecovent in Utrecht, could not accept any more items. Many of them were given a new life abroad instead.

One of the most recent articles in the ecclesiastical e-magazine *Reformatorich Dagblad*, from 10 December 2014, is an interview with the archbishop and cardinal of Utrecht, Dr. W. Eijk (Aartsbisdom Utrecht: van 300 naar 20 Kerken 2014). As a result of secularization, the archdiocese's congregations have been merged and the number has decreased from 326 in 2007 to 48 in 2011. By 2030, it is estimated that there will only be 20 parishes. Since it is likely that each congregation will only have only one church, the number of churches is likely to be reduced from more than 300 in 2007 to around than 20 churches in 2030 (ibid)

## *Bosnia Herzegovina*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 3,833,916

Population density (2013): 75 people per sq. km

Population trend: - 0.11%

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 4 409.6 (2011: 771.3 4)

Urban population (2012): 39%

Urbanisation per year (estimate 2010-15): 0.86%

Sources: *World Bank Population 2015 CIA World Factbook 2014, the International Monetary Fund in 2015*

### **Religious conditions**

Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of two parts: the federation of Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine (FBiH) and the republic Republika Srpska (RS). The federation consists of ten cantons, comparable with counties, which in turn consists of 79 općina, comparable with municipalities. Republika Srpska consists of 62 municipalities and one separate district, the city of Brčko (BD) (Agencija za Statistiku BiH 2014). The biggest faith group is the Muslims, with about 45% of the population, the Orthodox with 37%, Roman Catholics 13% and others 1%, largely made up of Protestants and Jews. The information varies depending on the source: the US World Factbook indicates a lower percentage of Muslims than the Bosnian sources (comparison CIA World Factbook 2014 Agencija za Statistiku BiH 2014 EuroCath / info Institutional Information Portal of Europe's Bishops Conferences 2014 and Biskupska konferencija BiH 2013).

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions**

According to the 2004 Act on freedom of religion, and the Church and religious communities' legal status in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the religious communities and the state are separate (Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014). However it is highlighted in article 14 of the Act that:

The state, on the basis of equality for all, can provide material support for churches and religious communities for the conservation of the cultural and historical heritage, health , educational , charitable and social services offered by churches and religious communities , under the premise that churches and religious communities provide these services without discrimination , and in particular discrimination based on religion or beliefs (ibid).

The premises on which the material support to religious communities are determined are somewhat unclear. There are critical voices, including from the non-profit foundation Centar za stupanje gradanskih interesa, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre CPI (Centar za stupanje gradanskih interesa) 2014). Criticism has concerned the transparency of donors. CPI is a non-profit foundation that collects, analyses and publishes information of interest to citizens. The foundation aims to provide the public with controlled, easily-accessible data relating to governance and financial sector for increased transparency and an increased civil society. The organization believes that the contributions to religious communities granted as part of the political, ethnic, religious power struggle, come at the expense of other areas of society. For example, one of the main state institutions, the National Museum, has been closed since 2012 due to funding problems and the National and University Library and the Historical Museum are expected to suffer the same fate.

### ***History***

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is a tradition of the reuse of religious buildings. With the Ottoman Empire's rule and the introduction of Islam in the 1460s, there are examples of churches that were converted into mosques. One such example is *Crkva sv. Marije* in the town of Jajce. It was built in in the 1200-1300s and converted into a mosque *Sultan Sulejmanova Džamija* in 1528. Several fires damaged parts of the

mosque and after the last fire in 1832, only the walls remained. With the establishment of Austria-Hungary in the country, in 1878 the church / mosque had no official owner. In 1892 it was designated as a cultural monument and transferred to the National Museum in Sarajevo (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika 2014). This type of "historical ownership" of sites has been the subject of great debate between ethnic groups and religious communities today. Many restoration projects and building works have been delayed and in some cases completely prevented because of this, such as the mosque in Livno (Hrvati se protive novom nacrtu dzamije 2011). During the Socialist regime, after the Second World War and onwards, many sacred buildings were abandoned, closed or were transformed into storage facilities. During the war of 1992-1996 the sacred buildings became the target of systematic destruction and were used as a tool for ethnic cleansing (Hadzimuhamedovic 2011).

## Religious heritage / building stock

In 1989 it was estimated, according to the then Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina's statistical bureau, that there was a total of 162 sacred buildings with special heritage designation (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika 2014). In 2009 the figure was 228, of which 120 were mosques, about 90 churches, 16 monasteries and two synagogues, listed as national monuments by specific legislation (ibid). In the same year there were estimated to be 1876 mosques in the country (Allievi 2009). Between 2007-2010, 10-14 new religious buildings were built each year in Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine (Agencija za BiH statistiku 2014). In the Republika Srpska, 250 new churches were built in the last 15 years, which means about 16-17 churches per year since 1998 (Dodik: Crkva ima značajnu ulogu u srpskom narodu 2013).

During the war of 1992-1996, according to the State Commission for preservation of national monuments, a total of 2771 architectural cultural heritage buildings were destroyed (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika 2014). 713 of these were demolished or damaged and 554 were burned down or rendered completely useless (Derkovic 2010).

How many of these are sacred buildings is unclear. According to the Islamic society, Islamska Zajednica, 614 mosques, 557 mesdzida, i.e. sacred buildings without minarets, 954 mekteba, Koran schools, 15 tekije, Sufi religious buildings, 90 turbe, mausoleums, and 1425 vakufskih objekata, Islamic building objects belonging to the very first buildings that were built during the Ottoman Empire, were destroyed (the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2014). According to the Catholic community, 269 Catholic churches and 63 chapels were destroyed (Radio Slobodna Evropa 2009). According to the Serbian Orthodox Church (Srpska pravoslavna crkva) 125 Orthodox churches, 66 church halls and 172 churches were completely destroyed and 50 were damaged (Vucenovic 2009). Newly-built sacred buildings must now be registered with the Ministry of Justice (Ministarstvo pravde u BiH). To get statistics for these registrations requires a review for each specific municipality and this has proved too extensive a task (Allievi 2009).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is no general protection for sacred buildings. The Heritage Protection Act from 2002 shows that listed buildings should be protected by all and sundry, especially the Federation's cantons and municipalities, refraining from interventions that can damage a national monument or jeopardize its preservation or restoration. The legal framework also includes reconstructing damaged or destroyed buildings/sites. In 2003 amendments were added that mean that only state cultural heritage monuments built before 1960 are covered by these special protection laws. This resulted from a large number of petitions being submitted to the Commission about the memorials built after the war in 1996. The protective legislation therefore also includes monumental sacral buildings built before the year 1960. Among these monuments, 67 are listed as particularly vulnerable and in need of urgent measures to prevent their complete destruction. Seven of these are mosques or mosque ruins, and two are church ruins (Ugrozeni spomenici see Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika 2014).

A memorial is protected on the basis of its historical, artistic, architectural, symbolic value, etc. The symbolic values apply primarily to sacred buildings and include religious values, traditional values, the relationship to rituals and ceremonies, and the significance to a group's identity (ibid).

There are several examples of cultural heritage sacred buildings where municipalities are delaying and stopping restoration and reconstruction processes. One such is the mosque of Carsijska Džamija u Stolcu, where the municipality opposed the restoration and the government of the Federation BiH ensured a restoration grant that was only given when the work started (Hazdimuhamedovic 2005, p. 72).

## Current situation and debate

The discussion of redundancy is not relevant in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sacred places converted into museums appear to be rare in the country. There are two examples in Sarajevo, where the oldest synagogue in the city and one of the older Orthodox churches are now museums. The fact that in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina new religious buildings are being constructed or rebuilt tends to (re)ignite tensions between groups and people rather than unite them. Sacred buildings are used in many cases as a symbol of power, to determine who / what has the power in a specific municipality / region. There are other churches in use nearby. Another example is the construction of an Orthodox church near the Memorial Centre in Potocari, on a hill just above one of the biggest mass graves from the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995 (Srebrenica: a church close to genocide memorial 'provokes' 2013). Srebrenica municipality banned the church building, but the decision was revoked by the Ministry of Physical Planning in the Republic of Serbia (Camil Duraković: Bojim se da će inat crkvu neko htjeti da rusi! 2013).

The domestic debate mainly concerns the question of whether religious buildings (churches, mosques, a hamam, etc.) should be restored or rebuilt at all. One example is the Ferhad Pasa mosque in the city of Banja Luka in Republika Srpska. The mosque, from 1579, was destroyed in the war on 7 May 1993 (Derkovic 2010). The municipal authorities removed all traces of the mosque and deleted it from the city's master plan. The site was set aside for a park or other public institution which precluded reconstruction. The Islamic community appealed to the Office for Human Rights and in 1999 was granted the right to rebuild the mosque (Riedl Mayer 2002). In 2001 the inauguration of the reconstruction of the mosque ended in riots with 30 people injured and one death. In 2003 the site and the ruins of the mosque were designated a national monument by the Commission for the preservation of national monuments, which gave the Republika Srpska responsibility for putting protective measures in place and beginning reconstruction (Derkovic 2010). In 2012, there were several incidents of vandalism at the site of the nearly completed mosque (Hronika 2012).

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is a lack of cultural research institutions and there is virtually no culture of scientific research work in the country (Nikolic, 2012, p. 47). As research objects, sacred buildings are mostly handled by architects, conservators, curators and art historians. The Commission for the preservation of national monuments (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika) publishes the magazine *Bastina* (Heritage) where the articles on sacred buildings occur frequently. The articles can be likened to reports and documentation of restoration processes related to the sacred buildings. A key player in this context is Amra Hadzimuhamedovic, architect and professor at the International University of Sarajevo, as well as a member of and also an employee of the State Commission for preservation of national monuments (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika).

Another important player in the care of the religious heritage is ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, which is a non-governmental organization devoted to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites. In Bosnia-Herzegovina there is also an ICOMOS National Committee, Nacionalni Komitet ICOMOS u Bosni i Hercegovine, with its president Vjekoslava Simčić - Stanković, professor at the School of Architecture in Sarajevo. Several international cultural heritage players have been operating in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the war in the 1990s, including the independent



Swedish organization Cultural Heritage without Borders. The organization was formed as a response to the need for relief efforts that occurred after the war when the destruction of cultural monuments was extensive and systematic (Cultural Heritage without Borders, 2015).

## *England*

### **National data**

Population (England, 2013): 53,865,800

Population density (England): 411 inhabitants / sq. km

Population trend (England): + 0.77%

GDP per capita (2012) UK: 41 053,7 USD (2011: 40 972.0)

Unemployment (2012) UK: 7.8%

Urban population UK (2012): 82% of the total population

Urbanization rate UK, estimate for years 2010-15: 0.76% per annum

*Sources: England: Office for National Statistics 2013, UK: The World Factbook 2015, World Bank Population 2015*

### **Religious conditions**

#### ***Religions, number of members, development***

One of the most recent investigations into religiosity in England (and Wales) was carried out in 2011. According to this, 33.2 million, or 59.3 percent of the population claim to be Christians. The second largest religious group is Muslims, comprising 2.7 million or 4.8 percent of the population. 14.1 million people, or about a quarter of the population were without a religion, according to the study. The percentage of Christians has declined significantly since the last survey in 2001. According to that survey, 71.7 identified themselves as Christian, 14.8 percent reported that they had no religion and 3.0 percent identified themselves as Muslims. According to the 2011 survey, London is the most multi-faith region with the highest proportion of people who identify themselves as Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Jews. North-East and North-West England have the largest proportion of Christians and Wales has the highest proportion of people who say they have no religion (Religion in England and Wales in 2011, p.1). According to the last survey in 2001, just under 10 percent of the population in Wales attended church regularly, which was slightly less than the proportion in England and Scotland (English Wikipedia 2015).

In 2012, the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey was carried out, which shows slightly different numbers. This shows that a total of 46 per cent feel a connection (affiliation) to Christian communities, 6 percent to non-Christian, and 48 percent have no affiliation with any denomination. The corresponding figures from the first survey in 1983 are 67 percent Christian, two percent non-Christians and 31 percent with no connection (Parks et al 2013 Figure 01 p. V1 and Table A1). Thus there is a very clear secularization and decline of Christian communities in this study, but it may also depend on how the questions are posed, compared with the referenced studies above.

Otherwise in England there is no state registration of religious communities and they have no government support, apart from grants they can get towards the care and repair of their protected buildings (see below) (Haynes, p 8, 2008a).

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions**

#### ***The dominant communities, organization and economy***

The Church of England has an official status as the church in England with the monarch as its head. However, it is not formally a state church, with its established character rather being defined by a number of relationships between the Church and the State. At the coronation, the monarch promises to protect and manage the church's position and activities, but has no spiritual mission or responsibility. However, the Church's bishops are appointed, through the Prime Minister, by the monarch. 26 of the Bishops also have seats in the House of Lords (Le Mon 2012, p 8ff). The Church of England is organized in two provinces, Canterbury and York, each with its own archbishop, as well as 43 dioceses in England

and abroad. In 2012, the number of congregations, according to Finance Statistics 2012, was 12,578 (Church of England, 2015).

The Church of England is not a membership organisation, and therefore it is not possible to estimate how many adherents it has. Instead, the data can be used to show how many feel they belong or feel connected to the Church (Le Mon 2012, page 9 f). The above survey, BSA from 2012, showed that 20 percent believed they were associated with the Church of England. Affiliation had thus halved from the first survey in 1983, when association was 40 percent (Parks et al, 2013. Figure 01 p V1 and Table A1's XX). However, there is also a difference between a sense of belonging and active commitment. The Church's own annual survey shows that only 2.2 percent of the population goes to church, or attends church services once a week (Le Mon 2012, p 10).

For other Christian denominations apart from the Church of England and the Catholic Church, or the Catholic Church of England and Wales as it is formally known (see below) association varies slightly over the years, but over the entire period it is constant at 17 percent (Parks et al, 2013. Figure 01 p V1 and table A1 p XX).

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has its origin in the medieval church in England. After the Reformation in 1534 it was reintroduced temporarily during the 1550s, but only in 1850 was it formally reinstated by the Vatican, when it was divided into 12 dioceses. This division does not resemble the medieval system and the buildings are relatively new, whereas those in the possession of the Church of England are older. The Catholic Church is now divided into five archdioceses, Birmingham, Cardiff, Liverpool, Southwark and Westminster, as well as 22 dioceses, which in turn are divided into multiple parishes. The bishops collaborate in a system known as the Bishops Conference. The Archbishop of Westminster is the chairman and frequently a cardinal (The Catholic Church in England and Wales 2013).

While the decrease in numbers for the Church of England, according to the BSA, is very clear in the last 30 years, the case is not the same for the Catholic Church (Parks et al 2013). In 1983, association with the Catholic Church stood at 10 per cent and in 2012 it was 9 percent. At its highest, it was 12 percent in 1984. According to another survey, Ipsos Mori in 2009, 9.6 percent of the population, or 5.2 million, regarded themselves as Catholics in England and Wales (A million more Catholics in England and Wales, of according to poll 2009).

The Methodist Church, the Methodist Church in Britain, emerged in the 1700s, and was formally established in 1784 and finally broke with the Church of England in 1795 (The Methodist Church in Britain, 2013). The Methodist Church is divided into parishes or churches or groups of churches (circuits) and districts (36 including Scotland). The highest governing body is the annual meeting, the Conference (ibid.) According to the World Council of Churches' website, the Methodist Church in Britain has, 5,900 congregations and 293,661 members: it is unclear for which year the figures are valid (World Council of Churches 2013). According to the Methodist Church's own figures, the number of members (2007) is 267,257, but over 800,000 had active contact with the church.

### ***Authorities, organization***

The British Department of Culture, Media and Sports has national responsibility for the cultural heritage of England. English Heritage (from 2015 Historic England) is the Department's expert advisory body, and also manages a large number of historical buildings and ancient monuments. The local authorities (municipalities) are usually responsible for oversight and authorization decisions, with the exception of some bodies that have power of decision (the Ecclesiastical Exemption, see below)

### ***Legislation religious heritage / cultural monuments***

The most important laws which include churches and other historic buildings are the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Within this framework there are two main categories of protected religious heritage; those specifically designated by the state as ancient monuments (archaeological sites) of national importance and buildings of special historical or architectural values, listed in a list compiled by the State (Tsivolas, 169 and Legislation UK).

The buildings or facilities listed in the national list are divided into three different categories, based on their assessed value, "Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest; Grade II \* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; Grade II buildings are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them" (Department for Culture, Media and Sports 2010).

They are therefore protected by authorisation under the Act and permission must be sought to change the interior or exterior. Normally, the application is made to the local authorities, i.e. the municipalities. However, there have been exceptions, "the Ecclesiastical Exemption" for a number of religious communities which instead apply for permission for change to the church "authorities", i.e. the diocese or equivalent. The exception applies to congregations of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the United Reformed Church. Regulations and the procedures required to maintain it are described in detail in the publication *The Operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption and related planning matters for places of worship in England* (Department of Culture, Media and Sports 2011).

For those churches that belong to The Church of England, the local congregations apply to the diocesan advisory body, the Diocesan Advisory Committees for the Care of Churches, or for cathedrals, the so-called Fabric Advisory Committees. The two organizations, the Council for the Care of Churches and the Cathedrals' Fabric Commission for England have national responsibility for parish churches and cathedrals in the Church of England (Haynes 2008a p 11 f). However, the exemption applies to interiors, while changes to the church's exterior require the permission of the municipality, which consults English Heritage in the case of the churches listed as the most valuable, that is Grade I or II \* (English Heritage 2013).

### ***Public funding, support***

The Church of England is the established church in England, but it receives no direct financial support from the state (Fornerod 2010, p. 5). The main national support for the legally protected buildings is the Repair Grants for Places of Worship, run by English Heritage and the state lottery the Heritage Lottery Fund. The latter funds heritage projects, totalling about £375 million per year in the UK. Within the Places of Worship programme, between GBP 10,000 and GBP 250,000 can be allocated for each project. In 2001, the special premium Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme, was initiated, which in an evaluation in 2005 was found to have distributed £24.7 million to 9,600 Listed Places of Worship, of which 90 percent belonged to the Church of England (the Heritage Lottery Fund 2013, p. 41). Per year, this amounted to more than £ 5.5 million pounds, or just under SEK 57 million, i.e. slightly more than one-tenth of the Church of Sweden's preservation funding.

English Heritage also supports, along with the Wolfson Foundation, a separate grant for cathedrals, Grants for Cathedrals. With regard to the largest foundation, the Churches Conservation Trust, in 2008

the Department for Culture Media and Sports in 2008 accounted for 70 percent of CCT's cost (Haynes, 2008, p 12). a contribution that has dropped sharply following the recent government cuts. The annual report for 2011/12 shows that the contribution was just under £3 million of a total revenue of just under £6.5 million (Churches Conservation Trust 2012). It is also possible to apply for local or municipal grants or loans for the repair of historic buildings including churches. In practice, these are modest grants, since they must compete with all other municipal activities (Haynes, 2008, p 13).

## Religious heritage / building stock

### ***Building stock by denomination (dominant)***

An article in *Conservation Bulletin* (English Heritage) in 2004 showed that over 18,000 religious heritage buildings (places of worship) were listed and that close to 13,000 of these belong to the Church of England (Halsey, 2004, p. 2). However, it later emerged that the figure was too high and that it was closer to 14,500 listed buildings and sites (Chaple 2009, p 4). According to the Church of England, 85 per cent of the 14,500 buildings belong to them, which corresponds to around 12,300 buildings (Church of England 2013). The total number of churches belonging to the Church of England given by the Church itself in Finance Statistics 2012 was 15,861 in 2012 (Church of England, 2015). The other churches are owned mainly by the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. Even communities as the Quakers and Unitarians have a significant number of listed buildings, while all other communities have only a few listed building (ibid). Detailed figures of the total building stock are available in the *Research report on church-state relationships in selected European countries* from 2008. In the report, the author Nick Haynes gives an overview of the situation in some European countries, including England. The report contains a detailed table of the total stock of religious buildings, as well as those listed (Haynes, 2008, p 10):

Faith Group	No. of Places of Worship	No. of Listed PoW	% Of Listed PoWs *
Anglican	16151	13000	80
Roman Catholic Parish Churches and other public churches / chapels	3465	625	18
Methodist	5312	541	10
Baptist Union Corporation	1809	283	16
United Reformed	1115	290	26
Synagogues	n / a	30	n / a
Mosque (purpose-built)	n / a	1	n / a
Total t	27852	14 770	53

The author may have specified an overly high ratio of the number of listed religious buildings, at least for those belonging to the Church of England, but otherwise this appears to be an adequate source of comparison between the English communities' building stock. The striking thing in the compilation is not only the Church of England's total domination, but also its large proportion of listed buildings, both within its own portfolio and in comparison with other communities.

### ***Administration and finance***

The responsibility for the management, care and maintenance of churches falls mostly on the churches themselves and their biggest income comes from donations. The grants received from the state average 10 percent of the total spending on the care and maintenance of church buildings, the other 90 percent is thus the responsibility of the church itself (Fornerod 2010, p 6). As for the Church of England, the Church Commissioners manage the central funds, which mainly finance pensions and the like, but they can also make grants and loans for restoration. The Church Commissioners also finance a significant part of the Churches Conservation Trust's activities.

In 1969 the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) was set up, whose purpose is to take over churches declared redundant by the Church of England and which possess exceptional historical, architectural or archaeological significance. The Foundation was initiated by the Church and the State through "The Pastoral Measure", a "Church of England Law," which was also decided by Parliament (ibid p. 13). Nowadays, CCT aims to not only care for the churches but also to interact with the local community to revitalize churches again (Churches Conservation Trust 2013).

Other foundations include The National Churches Trust, which helps practically and financially with the repair of churches and chapels that are over 100 years old; The Historic Chapels Trust, which takes over redundant historically-valuable chapels of various denominations (other than those that can be taken over by CCT), and Friends of the Friendless churches, which has taken over 19 churches to date (Haynes, 13).

### **Current situation and debate**

The English churches and especially the Church of England's decline in membership and activities, and subsequent redundancy problems have been described in several reports recently. The following summary is based primarily on Nick Haynes' 2008 report (see above) which in turn is based on the detailed analysis *How Do We Keep Our Parish Churches* by Trevor Cooper (2004). A report on the disposal and closure of churches was conducted by Linda Monckton at English Heritage in 2010. Church attendance and membership have been decreasing steadily for most of the Christian communities for many decades

The latest survey, the English Church Census from 2005, showed that 6.3 percent of the population regularly attended church that year. Compared to a similar survey in 1998, several Churches had experienced a decline in the number of churchgoers; the United Reform Church with 43 per cent, the Catholic Church with 27 percent, the Methodists with 24 percent and attendance at the Anglican Church, the Church of England, had decreased by 11 percent. The Pentecostal Church, however, had increased by 34 percent and the Orthodox Church by 2 percent (ibid p. 8).

According to Haynes (2008) one result of the decline is that since 1969, 350 of the Church of England's churches have been demolished, 900 have acquired a new use and 335 churches have been taken over by the Churches Conservation Trust. It is estimated that during this period about 30 churches per year became redundant. The basic problem is small congregations with few and aging members.

According to Monckton's report, 1795 Church of England churches closed from 1969 (Monckton, 2010). This is equivalent to eleven percent of its churches. A third of the closed churches belonged to the most valuable categories (Grade I or II) according to the national register. However, the majority of closures, 1280, occurred between 1969 and 1989, while 514 churches were closed in the last 20 years. This means that annual closures decline every decade. During the 1970s, the average was 79 per year; during the 1980s, it was 49 and in the 1990s there were 28 closures per year. During the early 2000s, the decade figure fell to 24 churches per year (Monckton, p 2 ff.).

Today, over half of all the closed churches have a new function, while 20 percent have been demolished or are scheduled for demolition. However, 75 percent of all demolitions occurred in the first 20 years. Taken together, including future plans for churches that are preserved but have not yet acquired a new function, or have plans for this, 46 percent of the churches are used by other communities, or for cultural or social purposes, 26 percent have been taken over by the Churches Conservation Trust, one per cent by other organizations and the remaining 27 percent have commercial applications (or plans for these): homes, offices, shops or light industry (ibid p. 9). The closure and sale of churches applies to many congregations. According to an article in *The Economist* in 2002 the Methodist Church had at its zenith over 14,000 Methodist Chapel. Today, the Church owns just over 6000 chapels and sells off about 100 each year (Pints in the Pews 2002). The article is just one of many dealing with the problem of redundancy and the possible solutions that may be applicable. Since this issue has been officially recognized in England since the 1960s, and thousands of church buildings belonging to different communities have been sold for different purposes, the issue has been discussed in the media and elsewhere for a long time.

## *Germany*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 82,020,578

Population density (2013): 231 inhabitants / sq. km

Population trend (2013): - 0.19%

GDP per capita US \$ (2012): 43 931.7 (2011: 45 870.6)

Unemployment (2012): 6.5%

Urban population (2012): 75% of the total population

Urbanization rate (estimate 2010-15): -0.03% per year

Sources: Eurostat, 2015, the CIA World Fact Book 2015 and World Bank Population 2015

### **Religious conditions**

#### ***Religions, number of members, development***

Germany has no state or national church and religious communities are not required to register. However, there are formal agreements ("concordats") between the individual federal states and the two national churches, the evangelical church (Evangelische Kirche Deutschland, EKD, consisting of Lutheran, Reformed and regional churches in the Union) and the Roman Catholic Church (see below). The agreements ensure that the communities can obtain membership fees through income tax, are exempt from certain taxes and are represented in the antiquarian decision - making process for church buildings (Haynes, p 18 f).

There are no official statistics on religious affiliation in Germany, but a number of studies that show affiliation. In 2010, it was estimated that 61.4 percent of the population belonged to a Christian community, and this includes the two national churches, evangelical free churches and Orthodox churches (Leis-Peters 2012, p. 26).

For the Evangelical Church and the Roman Catholic Church, however, there are precise membership figures as membership of these churches is registered in the population register, depending on the charge levied by income tax (ibid). In 2011, members of the Roman Catholic Church numbered 24,472,817 and in the Evangelical Church there were 23,619,648 (Religious Studies Media and Information Service 2013). As the population in 2011 was 81,751,602 this corresponded to 29.9 and 28.9 percent of the population at that time (Eurostat 2013).

For other religions and their congregations, exact figures are rare, but there are estimates. Mosque associations and their umbrella organizations reckon on about 550,000 active Muslims, while scholars of religion reckon there are about 4 million people in Germany with a Muslim connection. Of the more than 210,000 Jews, just over half are registered in umbrella organizations. There are also more than 270,000 Buddhists and approximately 100,000 Hindus in Germany. Adding all the numbers together, just over 67 percent of the German population has some type of religious affiliation (Leis-Peters 2012, p. 27 and Religious Studies Media and Information Service 2013).

The two national churches demonstrate large regional differences. Parts of Bavaria are almost exclusively Catholic, while parts of Hesse in southwestern Germany and Schleswig -Holstein in the north have a clear Protestant majority. This structure stems from the development after the Peace of Augsburg in 1551, where it was agreed that those who rule over a territory also determine the religion. Some rulers came to join the Reformation, others kept the Catholic faith (Leis -Peters 2012, p.24).

In eastern Germany, where the evangelical church dominates, church members are in the minority, which can be explained both by secularization in the GDR, but also because it is this church which is losing the most members (Leis-Peters 2012, p. 28).



Both the Evangelical and the Catholic Church have had a decreasing membership for a long period. The Evangelical Church has lost the most members, an average of 244,000 members per year. This means that the Protestant Church in Germany has evolved over 50 years from comprising the great majority of the Church, to today being the smaller of the two national churches. The explanation is largely due to active resignations, which mainly concern young people. In 1995, 295,000 renounced their membership, a figure that dropped to 145,000 in 2010. Other reasons for the decline are an aging population and migration (Ibid p. 29). Between 2007 and 2010, the two churches lost about one million members each. According to one forecast, within 30 years each church could lose up to a third of its members and half of its income from membership fees (Gothé 2013, p 1 ff.). A major reason for resignation is avoiding having to pay the membership fee (Haynes, 2008, p. 18).

Activity among members is low. In the Evangelical Church, a survey showed that four percent of members regularly attend morning service on Sundays; for the Catholic Church, the corresponding share is 14.8 percent (ibid p. 2).

## Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions.

### *The dominant communities, organization and economy*

The Evangelical Church is divided into three levels, national (EKD), regional churches or member churches (22) and congregations (15,471) (Evangelical Church in Germany 2011, p. 7). All regional churches also have superior regional units that may be structured differently. The greatest economic or decision-making power lies at the regional church level, and the administrative management together with the synod of the regional church that determines the Evangelical Church's direction (Leis-Peters 2012, p 31).

The Roman Catholic Church in Germany is divided into seven archdioceses and 20 dioceses, with a total of 11,500 parishes. More than 15,000 priests are employees of the Church (Catholic Church in Germany in 2013). As mentioned above, the two national churches charge a fee from their members. The membership fee is a percentage of income tax (see below) and is collected by the state (Leis-Peters 2012, p 24 f, Fornerod 2010, p 3). Church tax was introduced in the first state, Lippe, as early as 1827, followed by several other states in the 1800s. After Germany became a federal state, church tax was incorporated into national law during the Weimar Republic in 1919. The tax is currently facing criticism both externally and from within the churches, as some see it as an unhealthy relationship between Church and State (Barker 2000, p 5 ff.).

For the Evangelical Church, the membership fee comprises about 40 percent of the total revenue. In 2011, this amounted to more than EUR 3.9 million. Other income consists of income from the extensive social services (e.g. childcare, schools and health care) that the church provides, income from property (totalling 20 percent), subsidies and grants (nearly 18 percent), public facilities (17 percent), collections and gifts (2.7 percent) and government grants (2 percent). The declining membership figures and economic fluctuations thus strongly affect the Church's overall economy (Leis-Peters 2012, p 32 f).

For the Roman Catholic Church, the church tax comprises the main source of income, and currently covers 80 percent of costs with the help of the nearly EUR five billion collected annually. The church also gets some income through donations, fundraising, public funding and returns on assets (Catholic Church in Germany, 2013).

### *Authorities, organization*

Germany consists of 16 federal states (referred to as "states"), each of which has its own heritage legislation (see below) and its own cultural heritage authorities (Haynes 2008 p 18 f). These states do not coincide with the 22 evangelical regional churches, whose territories derive from the political division, i.e. the German states and duchies of the early 1800s (Evangelical Church in Germany 2013).

### *Legislation religious heritage / cultural monuments*

As stated above, all states have their own heritage laws, which have different names and content, but as shown in Tsivolas' (2014) review, it can be argued that the whole of Germany has relatively extensive legislative protection for cultural heritage. Ownership is subject to major restrictions, and permits need to be sought (from the respective state authority) for most activities (Tsivolas, p 142 f. In his review he refers to Robbers, G., 2010. *Religion and Law in Germany*).

The objects protected by heritage legislation vary depending on the laws of the state, which, according to Haynes (2008), can be divided into different areas; in southern and eastern Germany and in Lower Saxony, buildings are automatically protected if they meet certain criteria according to the law. In northern and western Germany, the protected objects are listed, using a form of listing system. Some states have a mixture of these systems. In all cases, religious buildings appear to be handled in the same way as all other buildings and facilities. However, the criteria for protection, based on the history, technology, design, authenticity, rarity, etc. are, according to Haynes, the same in all states. In 2008, an estimated one million objects were protected, with the largest concentration in Bavaria and Saxony.

However, according to Haynes, it is not possible to identify the total number of protected religious buildings. Of the 32 World Heritage sites in Germany (in 2008), eleven were religious sites and others contained churches, etc. in urban centres (Haynes, 2008, p 19). One explanation for the difficulty in identifying the total number of religious buildings is that because databases are administered by the states, they are not necessarily coordinated at the federal level.

According to Tsivalos (page 143) the majority of the states' legislation requires that the religious dimension of cultural heritage is taken into account. This means that for church buildings (or equivalent) in use, the law prevents the authorizing authority from handling them in the same way as other (secular) monuments. In several cases, an historic building's religious function is given a higher level of protection than the cultural object and use is prioritised above preservation (Tsivalos 2014, p 143).

### ***Public funding, support***

All religious communities can apply to the state to be formally registered and will receive (if they are approved) certain benefits such as tax credits (Haynes, 2008, p 18). The two "people's churches" church buildings and their care are funded by the church tax (see below), donations from members and subsidies from the federal government, states and municipalities. The majority of contributions towards the preservation of ecclesiastical cultural heritage come from the 16 federal states, which have their own grant schemes with different. In the former East Germany this is covered by a federal programme of urban renewal, which includes city churches (ibid, p 19 f).

## **Religious heritage / building stock**

### ***Building stock by denomination (dominant)***

According to Gothe's article, the Protestant church owns about 75,000 buildings, of which 21,000 are churches (Gothe 2013, p 1). Of these, 16,600 are listed. According to the EKD in the report Facts and Figures 2013, the figure in 2013 was 20,648 churches and chapels of which 16,000 are listed (Evangelical Church in Germany 2015).

The Catholic Church owns about 60,000 buildings and 24,500 of these are churches and chapels, of which 23,000 are listed. The number of religious buildings owned by other communities is unclear.

### ***Finance and administration***

A member of a registered community pays about nine percent of his total income tax in church tax. The fee is collected by the state and then goes to the church to pay for staff salaries and maintenance of the buildings (Barker 2000, p 5). There is now also a local church tax known as "Kirchgeld" which works differently in different states. In some states it is a voluntary fee, in others mandatory. It can also take the form of a fixed sum, or be dependent on income (ibid, p 6 f). The reason for the imposition of the local fee is that revenue from the federal church tax is falling, as it is completely dependent on income and many are exempt from paying the tax (Ibid, p 5f).

As in the UK, there are foundations or associations which in some cases have taken over the management and ownership of churches that the congregations do not use, or have been unable to maintain. In 1973, the Förderkreis Alte Kirchen in Marburg was established in the state of Hesse. The aim was to create awareness about the problem of disused and derelict churches and over time it has started to take over the churches abandoned by congregations (Rauti 1989, p 61).

## **Current situation and debate**

One consequence of the German churches' declining membership and deteriorating economy is that some congregations have merged, which has led to some church buildings becoming redundant (Lueg 2011, p 3). According to Gothe, between 1990 and 2010 "only" 202 Protestant churches have been sold, and 75 of these have demolished. Earlier, 242 Catholic churches were laid down, of which 30 have been demolished. One assumption is that 3 percent of all Catholic churches will be taken out of service (Gothe 2013, p 2). With the current building stock (above) this corresponds to 735 churches. According to the

EKD in the report Facts and Figures 2013, this year the number of abandoned churches or churches set aside for other purposes was still low. Between 1990 and 2005, 41 churches and chapels were converted (for other purposes), 26 were rented out, 202 were sold and 75 demolished. 130 were closed (decommissioned) and of those 79 were in need of repair. During the same period, 296 new parish halls and "multi-purpose centres" were built, which meant that while 340 existing churches were abandoned 363 new religious buildings were built (Evangelical-Lutheran Church 2015).

In an article in the international edition of *Der Spiegel*, under the heading "The Last Supper: Germany's Great Church Sell-Off", a drastic picture is painted of what the newspaper thinks is happening. Declining church attendance and serious financial difficulties are forcing both the Catholic and Protestant churches to sell off their church buildings "en masse". Some are being demolished, others converted to restaurants or indoor climbing centres. According to the EKD's CFO Thomas Begrich, 340 churches were closed between 1990 and 2010 and, he says, this is just the beginning. According to the article, churches are being demolished across the whole of Germany, or being turned into schools, warehouses or gyms. The situation is the same for the Catholic Church, with churches standing empty even in the traditionally Catholic Bavaria.

This article was referenced by FRH in the organization's newsletter in August 2013. Angus Fowler, who is active in the organizations Future for Religious Heritage and Förderkreis Alte Kirchen (FAK), and Bernd Janowski, director of the latter, then commented on the article in a post on the FRH website. According to the authors, the picture given in the article is greatly exaggerated. The churches that have been demolished all date from after World War II and it is the Catholic Church, in particular which has acted in this way in some regions.. They point out that the German situation is not nearly as dramatic as in the Netherlands, Belgium or England, and that the article should also mention all the voluntary work that has developed since 1973, when FAK was founded (Fowler & Janowski, 2014).

## *Italy*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 59,685,227 (Eurostat)

Population density (2013): 205 inhabitants per sq. km. (World Bank)

Population trend: + 0.3% (2012)

GDP per capita 36 051 USD (2014)

Unemployment (January 2014): 12.7%. Unemployment figures vary widely between regions and age groups. In southern Italy, unemployment is more than double that in the north. Youth unemployment in the country was 41.6% in January 2014.

Urban population: 68.6% of the total population (2012)

Urbanisation per year 0.39% (estimate 2010-15)

*Sources: World Bank's population in 2015, Eurostat, in 2015, the Foreign Policy Institute in 2015, Sweden Abroad in 2015, CIA World Factbook 2015*

### **Religious conditions**

Historically, Italy is a Roman Catholic country and the Catholic Church, Chiesa Cattolica, is still the predominant religious community. The church is divided into 224 dioceses and around 25,500 parishes (Crimella 2015).

Christianity reached Rome during the first century AD and became the dominant religion in the area that now constitutes the modern nation of Italy. Today, a large majority, almost 90% of the population, are Roman Catholics. Approximately one in four Italians goes to Mass every Sunday.

There are around 700,000 Orthodox Christians, while the evangelical and Protestant denominations together have over 500,000 members. The Jewish faith has around 30,000 adherents. Extensive immigration to Italy has meant that there are an estimated 900,000 Muslims and 100,000 Buddhists in the country (Foreign Policy Institute, 2015).

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions**

#### ***Legislation religious heritage / cultural monuments***

The legislation governing the church heritage in Italy comes under both civil law and canon law. In civil law, cultural heritage is governed by the law known as "Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio, ai sensi della legge 10 dell'articolo 6 luglio 2002, n. 137" (Decreto Legislativo 22 gennaio 2004, n. 42).

The canon law *Codice di diritto Canonico* controls the entire church activities, including buildings. The law was enacted in 1917 (can. 1497 CIC part 1917) and renewed in 1983. The canon law describes the general conditions for when a church can be used for civilian purposes (Can. 1222). This is when a church is no longer used for public worship, and it is not possible to restore it. The law does not help in determining a church building's future use (Cavana 2012, p 4).

In 1988 the Papal Commission for Cultural Heritage (La Pontificia Commissione per i Beni culturali della Chiesa) was established. The Commission's task is to safeguard the Catholic Church's cultural heritage and its preservation, but does not have legislative powers (Pontificia Commissione per i Beni culturali della Chiesa).

#### ***Public funding, support***

There is a form of public funding divided annually between the state, the Catholic Church and other religious communities, which comes from taxpayers and where the citizen being taxed chooses where the money should go by ticking a box on the tax return. This system is called *Otto per mille dell'IRPEF* (roughly "eight per thousand"). This fund is used, along with funds from private donors, often banking foundations, to support initiatives and activities for the conservation and restoration of religious buildings

at risk of decay (Cavana 2012, p 19). On the declaration form, there are twelve options. The state is one alternative, and the rest comprises eleven different religious denominations, including the Catholic Church. Other eligible entities include various Christian, but also Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu communities. By ticking one of the boxes, 0.8 percent of a person's income tax per year goes to the chosen religious community.

The money generated by *Otto per mille dell'IRPEF* for the Catholic Church is used in part by the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana (CEI), as the law (art. 48.1. No. 222/1985) provides, in order to meet the population's opportunities to exercise their faith, where maintenance and conservation issues are included for buildings owned by the Church. In recent years, however, returns from *Otto per mille dell'IRPEF* which go to the state - and as prescribed by law - can be used for the preservation of cultural heritage, including projects relating to preservation of church cultural heritage of great historical and artistic value. It thus becomes clear that regardless of ownership, ecclesiastical cultural heritage is regarded as an integral part of the whole national heritage and as such also has access to public funds that come directly from tax revenues (Cavana 2012, p 20).

Banking foundations also finance matters that come under the headings of religion and spiritual development, and arts and cultural heritage. Today these foundations are the largest funders with regard to the restoration of important churches in many Italian cities, especially in the central and northern parts. Among the churches that receive financial support from the banking foundations are churches that are in state ownership through the Fondo Edifici di Culto (FEC). The foundation promotes conservation measures for churches and chapels based on a model used in the German-speaking countries, and which are already in use in South Tyrol. According to this model, local banks (Raiffeisenkassen) help through their foundations, the conservation of small mountain chapels in order to promote tourism. In some cases, the conservation efforts of the Foundation are preceded by first acquiring the property in order to ensure an appropriate use for the building, or rather to prevent a use that would be perceived as inappropriate (Cavana 2012, pp 19 -20).

In addition to this system there are funds that come directly from general government funds intended for the conservation of churches belonging to the State, through the Agenzia del Demanio and FEC or other institutions.

## Religious heritage / building stock

### ***Building stock and management by communities (dominant)***

The Catholic Church owns and manages over 65,000 churches around Italy, according to the Ufficio Nazionale per i beni culturali Ecclesiastici (UNBCE) at CEI (Crimella 2015). In Italy, the concept of religious buildings includes libraries, museums and archives that have grown up next to the church. The church building can be regarded as the tip of an iceberg that hides other important features such as those mentioned above. Through the centuries, a heritage that carries the memories of an entire geographic area - a city, a village, a district - may have been created adjacent to the church. Sacristies, especially in the largest churches, also include a very rich heritage, often of both general and religious interest. It is estimated that around 70% of Italy's artistic heritage originates from churches (Rauti 1989, 4-5). Large parts of the religious heritage in Italy have very high historical values and this in turn means that such heritage has long been the subject of extensive international tourism (Cavana, 2012, p 17).

While older churches are being abandoned due to secularization and lack of maintenance, new churches are still being built in the major city suburbs, where much of the urban population lives. The building stock is declining, but is being built up continuously in this way. The capital, Rome, can serve as an example: there are over 900 churches and the city skyline is filled with domes and bell towers. Since medieval times, the number of churches in the centre of the city has remained fairly constant. However, as many as 600 of the city's churches have disappeared over the centuries, a third of them due to the changes that came about after 1870 when Rome became the capital of the newly-formed nation of Italy. Inside the ancient city walls there are now more than 400 churches, chapels and oratories. Outside the walls there are at least as many churches and about 300 of them originated in the 1900s (Magnusson

2001, p 99). A recent example of the building of new churches in the outskirts of cities is the major action in Rome for the Jubilee Year 2000. In 1994, the Vatican announced its intention to build 50 new parish churches to mark this anniversary. A famous example is the new church of Dio Padre Misericordioso built in the shabby suburb of Tor Tre Teste east of central Rome. The American architect Richard Meier was commissioned to design the church and the result has become something of an icon for the so-called millennium action (Linde Bjur 2007, 39). In this example, the new church became a factor that lifted the district and acquired a significance far beyond that which was anticipated.

### ***Administration and finance***

The Catholic Church has more than 65,000 churches owned and managed by the congregations. A large part of the churches in Italy, which have a monumental character and very high historical and artistic value, is owned and managed by the State through the Agenzia del Demanio and Fondo Edifici di Culto (FEC) (Cavana 2012, pp 17-18). Agenzia del Demanio is governed by the Ministry of Financial and Economic Affairs (Ministry of Economic Affairs e delle Finanze) and works to meet public interests related to the management of the state cultural heritage (Agenzia del Demanio 2015).

The Ministry of the Interior (Ministero dell'interno) is responsible, through the FEC, for a heritage that is spread over the whole country and consists of more than 700 churches and monasteries in addition to various types of secular buildings as well as forest and wilderness areas. The churches that FEC owns all have high historical and artistic values, and the majority are located in central and southern parts of Italy. Several of the churches are presented in text and images on the Fund's website and can be searched in alphabetical order and by region. In Rome there are 70 examples and in Naples over 50 (Ministero dell'interno 2015 *Le chiese*). The aim is to ensure the protection and conservation and restoration of this heritage. The conservation and restoration work is often carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Culture and Tourism (Ministero per i Beni e le attività culturali e del Turismo, MIBACT), and funded directly by the FEC, from revenues coming from operations, or through sponsorship (Patrimonio del Fondo Edifici di culto 2015). The annual amount that the FEC is assigned by the state is around EUR 1.8 million (Ministero dell'interno 2015, Patrimonio del FEC). Guidelines for the management and preservation of the religious heritage *Linee guida per la tutela dei beni culturali Ecclesiastici* (2014) are on MIBACT's website. It is in effect the local cultural heritage authority for buildings and landscapes (Soprintendenza per i Beni e Architettonici Paesaggistici) governed by MIBACT which is engaged in the management of the built heritage, including valuable churches. Regarding the management of the oldest churches, which have multiple historic layers below ground level, the local cultural heritage authority for archaeology (Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici) in each city, province or region is involved.

## Current position: redundancy, solutions, shared use, recycling, decommissioning, sale, demolition

The issue of redundancy in Italy almost exclusively concerns Catholic church buildings because this body dominates by its size and the wide geographical spread of its churches (Cavana, p 3). In a country with such an exceptionally high number of religious buildings, it is natural that many of these are abandoned over the centuries and acquire new functions. The situation has its origin in the historical conditions that prevailed before and during the formation of the Italian nation, and in current circumstances with increasing urbanization, secularism and economic crises.

The formation of the modern nation of Italy (*Risorgimento*) occurred during the late 1800s through the merger of several kingdoms. Formally, the kingdom of Italy was founded in 1861 and later became the Republic of Italy. Rome became the capital of the new united Italy in 1870 when the city was conquered by the Papal States. The Pope withdrew to the Vatican until a peace treaty, the Lateran Treaty, was concluded with the Italian State in 1929. This made the Vatican a sovereign state that has existed ever since alongside the secular Italian state. After the unification of Italy, many monasteries and papal palaces were confiscated by the new government. Religious communities were dissolved and their assets confiscated (Magnusson, p 98). The state used many of the buildings for its own use, monasteries and papal palaces became ministries and government offices, while others were developed without permission, and were used as warehouses and storerooms.

For a period after World War II and especially in the 1950s and 60s, a large number of art objects from the churches were put up for sale, exported abroad or appeared on the second-hand market in Italy. Although the view of the religious heritage has changed since then - to the benefit of conservation and restoration - there have been problems in the approach to and management of the church's heritage. These, in brief, consisted of a lack of cooperation between church and state, insufficient protection against decay and destruction and lack of staff for monitoring and enabling access (Rauti, 4-5).

Of the churches that were up for sale in spring 2010, it is noted that more of these were located in rural areas than in cities, spread across the country, with a concentration in Tuscany, Emilia Romagna, Lazio and Umbria, i.e. in the centre and north of the country. According to Immobiliare.it these were seldom the private chapels of noble families, and in most cases they were not parts of larger buildings without a free-standing annexe. Through the years – inheritance after inheritance - these have become properties that now belong to residents elsewhere, who might see the maintenance costs as a major burden and therefore decide to sell them off (Bronzo). In many cases, churches and monasteries have been converted into private homes and rural tourist accommodation (*agriturismo*) (Vanucci 2015 Lorusso 2015)

Italy is currently grappling with a deep economic crisis, and many different types of public activities have found it difficult to obtain funding. In this situation, it becomes even more difficult to finance the maintenance and restoration of monuments and buildings; hence these are more likely to decay and fall into a state beyond redemption. Many churches outside the cities are located in areas that are sparsely populated, such as the Alps and the Apennines, where a community of 500 to 1,000 inhabitants has to care for 10 or 20 churches and chapels. Some churches manage their commitment thanks to the responsibility which members of the church feel towards their church and with contributions from owners who feel responsibility for the region of their birth (Crimella). It is not only churches in rural areas that are living precariously. A recent example can be found in Naples, Italy's third largest city with over one million inhabitants, where about 200 churches in the historic centre are closed and abandoned. For a long time they have been decaying, without maintenance, into an abandoned state that is unparalleled. It has gone so far that even those who live next door to these church buildings no longer see them. Restoration and finance have long been promised but in practice nothing happens (De Maddi).

## **The public debate, studies and reports, research position**

### ***The public debate***



In the 1980s, two important conferences were held dealing with the importance of the religious heritage. A national conference in Milan in 1987 concerned the Italian Church and its cultural properties, *Conference on the Italian Church and Cultural Property*, and later that year a conference was held on *Re-use of Religious Buildings*. A discussion started about who has responsibility for the current difficult situation with a cultural heritage that was not being cared for in the manner it deserved, and ultimately risked ending up in a situation beyond redemption. Both church and state acknowledged their responsibility for this far-reaching state of decay. This conference was the first occasion in Italy where a document was presented and approved: *Charter for the Re-use of Ancient Ecclesiastic Buildings* (Rauti, p 6).

During the 2000s, a public debate emerged on redundant religious buildings and the consequences of many churches no longer have a religious function. In 2009, the fact that the Italians are now looking for more original buildings to live in, and that redundant churches now constitute a large part of these, very quickly in newspapers, both in major newspapers and in local newspapers around the country. From a market perspective, this appeared positive, while the Church expressed concern that church buildings might be given a new use that is not considered compatible with the original use of the building and its history. An increase in sales of former religious buildings has been identified and home buyers are now exploring a new market: church buildings (*Panorama* 2009-03-31, *Marketing Journal* 2009-04-05). The churches on the housing site Immobiliare.it that were up for sale were spread across the country and located both in urban centres and rural areas. Their representative Carlo Giordano welcomes this new trend where churches are converted into homes because a new owner can let these properties go on living, instead of falling prey to the test of time and, at worst risk, being demolished (*Wall Street Italia* 2009-03-31, *Eolopress* 2009-04-01). The newspaper *Corriere della Sera* pointed out that the phenomenon in Italy is not at the same level as the United States, but it is evolving and becoming more visible. Mario Breglia, chairman of *Scenari Immobiliari istituto di studi e di ricerche*, believes that this provides a financial benefit to this heritage that it did not previously have. In cities and in places where there is a real estate market, values are now flourishing that in his view did not previously exist (Letizia).

Many commentators in the newspapers have expressed opinions about what is an appropriate or inappropriate new use of a church that no longer has a religious function. The Church has expressed reservations with reference to numerous examples where the Church considered that the new activity was incompatible. In the autumn 2008, the Vatican's Culture Minister (Chairman of the Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura), Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, presented three conditions for a diocese to be able to dispose of a religious building: the absence of believers in the congregation, little or no artistic value or memorial value and an overly-heavy maintenance burden. In particular, Ravasi emphasized that it is necessary to keep an eye on who the potential buyer is, and the intended new use of the religious building (Zizola). In 2009, Cardinal Giovanni Batista Re, the Vatican's bishop minister, asked through the newspaper *La Stampa* for the greatest respect for former religious sites and buildings. The cardinal called on both government officials and private property owners to respect the vestiges of religion and Christian religious symbols that are handed down through the generations. He argued that it is not possible to do whatever one wants with a building that once was sacred and that there must be sensitivity to both culture and religion when it comes to buildings that carry a collective memory and are still identified as buildings of the faith. He said that erasing and distorting places that are symbols of faith resembles tearing out pages of valuable manuscripts. Buying a church and converting it into housing, shop or restaurant, he believes collides head on with the respect and sensitivity that he thinks the former religious site deserves, especially in a nation with so many Christians such as Italy. This, he says, is, however, the fate that former religious buildings in the country often meet during the sales boom of such buildings (Galeazzi).

Repeatedly during the 2000s, newspaper articles also noted that as a result of growing secularisation, redundant church buildings are a growing problem around northern Europe and that the same trends are also starting to be seen in Italy, although not to the same extent. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* has repeatedly pointed to the problem of redundant churches throughout Europe and to religious buildings being exposed to risk. The network Future of Religious

Heritage (FRH) is highlighted as a key player working to protect the built religious heritage of Europe. Examples of countries where the problem of redundant church buildings is huge are Holland and England, with reference to sources Erfgoed.nu and The Churches Conservation Trust. Churches in the French countryside that are also living precariously have also been noted (*L'Osservatore Romano* 2013-08-31, 2013-12-01).

In times of economic crisis and increasing homelessness, there is a risk of squatters not only in just empty residential buildings but also in churches. In October 2013 the abandoned church of San Cirillo Alessandrino in the Tor Sapienza in Rome's eastern outskirts was occupied. The occupiers were thirty homeless people who referred to Pope Francis' statement that the church should open its doors to the needy. The families moved into the church led by a group calling itself "Resistenza abitava Metropolitana", which had been fighting for a couple of years for the right to housing in Rome (*La Repubblica* 2013-10-13).

One input in the public debate comes from an artistic direction, from the photographer Andrea di Martino who started to use his camera in 2008 to document church buildings all over Italy that have a new function. He called his story *La Messa è finite. La Rinascita delle Chiese sconsacrate in Italia* and used his camera to capture the buildings' new identity. The project resulted in an exhibition that was shown in different parts of the country (Marinelli). The photographer was awarded the Premio Amilcare G. Ponchielli prize for his project in 2010 (photographers.it).

#### ***Current research issues and research players***

During the 2000s, some universities, including those in Trento and Salerno, conducted multi-year research project linked to redundancy, new use and conservation, mainly in the fields of technology, architecture and law. At Dipartimento Ingegneria Civile Ambientale e Meccanica (Dicam), University of Trento, the research project on "Il riuso delle Chiese sconsacrate: problemi di accessibilità e sicurezza in relazione al loro Valore storico e documentali" ran between 2003 and 2005. The project concerned the re-use of church buildings and the problem of accessibility and safety in relation to historical value, and the results included the publication *Opportunità di Rinascita per le Chiese Sconsacrate* (2008) with the project manager Antonio Frattari as editor (Università di Trento). Frattari participated along with R. Albatici at the XXXIII IAHS World Congress on Housing Transforming Housing Environments through Design in Pretoria in South Africa in 2005 with a contribution on the adaptation of former church buildings for new use, *Adaptation of redundant churches to alternative uses in the Italian context* (Frattari, Antonio Rossano Albatici).

A national conference on new sustainable uses of former religious buildings, *Gli Edifici per il culto dimessi - nuove destinazioni d'uso sostenibili*, was held in Rome in 2004. One of the organizers was Flavia Fascia from the Federico II University in Naples, who was also the editor of conference publication *Gli Edifici per il culto dimessi . Nuove Destinazione d'uso sostenibili* (2005). Fascia has carried out research into new uses of religious buildings in Naples at the Department of Architecture at Federico II (docenti.unina.it).

Federica Ribera at the University of Salerno carries out research into religious architecture, churches and monasteries that are no longer in use, with a particular focus on the location and criteria for reuse. Based on a study of the sacred space (*spazio sacro*) not as something static but as something constantly changing, she has developed criteria for the sustainable reuse of buildings. The new features should be compatible with their "physical structure" and construction. This is something that is being developed in the provinces of Salerno and Avellino (Università degli Studi di Salerno).

Giovanni Santi at the Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile at the University of Pisa has studied some of the more significant abandoned churches in urban environments in the area of Pisa, Lucca and Livorno along the Tuscan coast, with a focus on new use. These are presented in the volume *Segni dell'abbandono sul Recupero di chiese urbane tra Pisa Lucca Livorno*. Edizioni ETS 2012 (Santi Giovanni).

Paolo Cavana's research at the Università di Roma, LUMSA, Dipartimento Giurisprudenza, includes an analysis of how the new use of the redundant church buildings relates to legal texts. He has participated in both national and international conferences that deal with the problem of redundant churches. See, inter alia, Cavana, P. (2012) "The issue of redundant places of worship. *Stato, Chiese e pluralismo confessionale*", p 1-37. Isabella Bolgiani's research at the Università cattolica del sacro cuore, Facoltà di giurisprudenza in Milan, focused inter alia on how the new function of a religious building relates to civil and canon law (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore).

## France

### National data

Population (2013): 65,560,721

Population density (2013): 120 inhabitants/sq. m

Population trend: percent (2013): + 0.47%

GDP / capita US \$ (2012): 40 908.3 (2011: 43 809.7)

Unemployment (2013): 10.4%

Urban population (2012): 79%

Urbanization rate (estimated 2010-15): 1.2%

Sources: Eurostat, 2015, Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques 2013 CIA World Factbook 2013, World Bank Population 2015

### Religious and political conditions

A majority of the French population regards itself as Catholic, but the percentage is decreasing. According to a survey conducted by the opinion body Institut d'Etudes et de Conseil, CSA, in the spring of 2012 (22,101 people), 56% of French men and women consider themselves to be Catholics (Institut d'Etudes et de Conseil, 2013). The percentage of Muslims was around 7%, Protestants about 2%.

In 1998, the national Insee, corresponding to Statistics Sweden, carried out a survey of French daily life (Niel 1998). The survey included questions about religious practice. The survey found that 16% of people regularly took part in religious activities within the communities to which they belonged. 35% said they felt an emotional affiliation to a religion, while 25% claimed they had nothing to do with religion and neither practiced or experienced an emotional affiliation. In terms of age, gender and ethnic background, activity was higher amongst older people, women and people with a foreign background.

In 2009 the Catholic journal *La Croix* commissioned the Institut français d'opinion publique (IFOP) to conduct a survey regarding the practice of Catholicism (de Gaulmyn 2009). The results showed that 15% regularly visited a church (at least once a month) and 4.5% went to church every Sunday. Like the results from 1998, which applied to all religious practitioners, the practicing Catholic was older than the average age and to a somewhat greater extent was female. Most practicing Catholics were found in the eastern parts of the country, in the region in the far south-west and in the eastern parts of the Paris region.

In 2012 IFOP carried out a new survey commissioned by *La Croix*, with a somewhat different focus. The survey, 'Les français et le Catholicisme 50 ans après Vatican II' (The French and Catholicism 50 years after the Second Vatican Council), was intended to find out what changes in attitude to Catholicism had occurred since 1961 when a similar study was carried out (Institut Français d'Opinion Publique, 2014). Of the 969 people surveyed, 80% responded that they were baptized in the Catholic church, compared with 92% in 1961. Of the 80 percent, 72% said they had baptized or planned to baptise their children in church. For the entire group, that is, even the unbaptized, the figure was 58%. Regarding participation in Sunday worship (*la messe*) 46% of all respondents said they never participated, compared with 26% in 1961.

### History - Roman Catholic church buildings

In France, secularism and reuse of Roman Catholic buildings has a long tradition (Fornerod 2006a). The revolution of 1789 meant that the property of the Catholic church was confiscated and turned into biens nationaux. Many church-buildings were sold and rebuilt in order to serve new purposes, others were demolished.

The anti-clerical current was strong throughout the 1800s and in 1905, during Maurice Rauviers' regime, a law was adopted on the separation between the state and the Roman Catholic Church, Loi du 9

décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat (Légifrance 20 13, and the French national Assembly in 2013). The law does not cover the area of Alsace-Lorraine which, at the time of the adoption belonged to Germany. After the first and second world wars, when the area had once again become French, the situation did not change, and the Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and Jewish denominations still receive government subsidies in Alsace- Lorraine. As recently as 21 February 2013 the so-called Constitutional Council confirmed that the special arrangement between the French State and the religious communities should continue in the departments of Bas -Rhin, Haut-Rhin and Moselle (Constitutional Council in France 2013). At the time the law was adopted, many of the Catholic 'cult buildings', *edifices cultuels*, had long been defined as historical monuments (Fornerod 2006a, p. 16ff).

## Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions

Catholic France is divided into 95 dioceses excluding territories outside Europe. Since 2006, the Catholic Church has been divided into 15,000 congregations (Catholic Church in France in 2013, Bazil 2011). The number of parishes has more than halved since the 1980s. Religious practice in the country is governed by three main legal texts: the act of 1 July 1901 on associations, the act of 9 December 1905 on the separation between church and state and the act of January 2, 1907 which deals with public worship.

In the 1905 Act, it stipulates that the state (the republic) is neutral on the question of religion and neither recognizes, pays for or subsidizes any cult practice (Article 2). In the act's 13th article, it also states that the church building (and this means the Catholic) will continue to be used for worship until such time as a formal decision on liquidation has been taken. The connection between the church building and the practice of religion was strengthened by an additional Act of 1907 (Loi de 2 janvier 1907 concernant l'exercice des Cultes public, Légifrance 2013). In the fifth article states:

(...) A défaut d'associations cultuelles, les edifices affectés à l'exercice du culte, ainsi que les meubles les garnissant, continueront, désaffectation sauf dans les cas prévus par la loi du 9 décembre 1905 à être laissés à la disposition des fidèles et des ministres du culte pour la pratique de leur religion. [When religious congregations are missing, the buildings destined for cult worship, as well as their inventory - except in cases of settlement envisaged in the 1905 law – shall continue to be available to the faithful / believers and for the use of the priests.]

The purpose of the article's wording was to secure and protect continuity in the practice of religion at a time when this was highly politically-contested. According to the researcher Anne Fornerod, confirming the jurisprudence of the religious function actually excludes other use (Fornerod 2006b, p. 237). In fact the churches are used for other purposes, particularly for those that may be associated with cultural heritage. The situation indicates that the legislation is poorly suited for church buildings in the present day. Today, it is also at odds with the political project to democratize access to culture, a project that finds expression in the public's growing interest in heritage.

Church buildings are in the words of Fornerod, the subject of a potentially contradictory movement; on the one hand, efforts to maintain the practice of religion in these buildings whose religious function is protected by law; on the other hand, the desire to make the churches into national and local heritage that is available to the public (ibid, p. 239).

### ***The relationship between church and municipalities***

The law meant that the French municipalities remained the owners of church buildings built before 1905, while the church came to own those built thereafter. Despite having ownership, the municipalities have no automatic right to use the church, which belongs to the religious practitioners. "Le propriétaire de l'Eglise, lorsqu'elle antérieure est à la loi de separation (la commune pour les Églises et l'Etat pour les cathédrales) ne peut exercer aucun droit d'usage de l'Église sans l'accord de l'affectataire." (Circ edifices Cult 25 mai 2009).

On several occasions this difficult relationship creates conflict between the Church and the secular representatives of the municipality. One example is the coastal town of Sainte-Marie-de-la-Mer where

since 1953, the municipality has, despite the church's protests, taken charge of visitors to the church's terrace (Bretesche 2009). The argument is that the terrace, which is accessed via an external staircase, cannot be regarded as part of the building intended for religious worship under the 1905 Act. The Administrative Court of Marseille decided in the municipality's favour on 22 April 2008, while the Appeal Court reversed the decision and emphasized that a church building forms a whole and that the terrace is a part of it. In the verdict it was stated that the terrace should also be subject to user access rights. The case was finally treated by the highest court of appeal, le Conseil d'État, which decided in favour of the municipality. The decision was based on the notion that the church is divided in two; the interior space designed for religious practice, and the terrace designed for defense (Conseil d'Etat 20 juin 2012, Commune des Saintes Maries de la mer, req. n° 340648).

Who is responsible for the older church buildings' maintenance is not made clear in the legislative text from 1905, and in line with the decreasing number of religious practitioners, the issue has become more intractable. The natural response would be the owner, but in the current situation, many municipalities are unable to bear the cost of maintenance. When the law was enacted, France was divided into about 38 000 municipalities and as many parishes and a higher proportion of residents were practicing Catholics. Since then, the number of municipalities has fallen to just 36,700, while the number of congregations has more than halved and the number of worshippers has decreased just as drastically (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques 2013). Taxation in the numerous, very small municipalities is weak and the economic conditions for maintaining the properties are and have been since the Act's inception, poor (Rauti 1989 Barrès in 1913, the Observatoire du Patrimoine Religieux 2013).

Local government administration and provision of buildings built before 1905 have given rise to criticism (Sägesser 2009, p 99ff). The situation means that the public is offering adherents of the so-called historic faiths and especially Catholicism, free premises for worship. New communities, even if they are half a century old, have to finance and maintain their facilities.

Regarding cathedrals, 87 are owned by the French State which has property responsibility for 86 of them, the exception being managed by the Corsican regional administration (Lesegretain 2010 and Le Centre des monuments nationaux 2013). The Ministry for Culture and Communications is directly responsible for administration and maintenance and therefore has its own curators and other experts in the field of restoration. In addition to the 87 state-owned cathedral there are a further 67 cathedrals in France. They were either built as cathedrals and lost their status in the context of the French Revolution, for example, those in Arles, Saint Malo and Tréguier, or were erected after 1905, such as those in Pontoise and Le Havre (Lesegretain 2010). These 67 buildings were handed over to the municipalities in 1905 as parish churches, and the municipalities are currently having major problems in maintaining these huge structures.

## Religious heritage / building stock

In 2013, the politically-independent organization Observatoire du Patrimoine religieux (OPR) estimates the number of religious buildings at 100,000, or an average of 2.5 per municipality (Observatoire du Patrimoine Religieux 2013 and de Foucaud, Isabelle 2013). Of these, 95% are Catholic, and about 45,000 of them are parish churches. OPR also state that there are about 2,200 mosques, some 3,000 Protestant cult buildings and about 280 synagogues (Observatoire du Patrimoine Religieux 2013, Schmidt 2006). In 2016, the national bishops' organisation, Conférence des évêques de France, published the results of an inventory of Catholic church buildings in France (Conférence des évêques de France 2016, État des lieux des églises en France, septembre 2016, Département Art Sacré). According to this report, the number of parish and diocese churches presently amounts to approximately 42 000. The conclusion was that church buildings are less threatened by redundancy and decay than is usually communicated via media.

It is predominantly Catholic chapels and monasteries that are currently redundant. For Muslims and Protestants, on the other hand, there is a shortage of places of worship. The following section therefore only considers Roman Catholic church buildings.

### ***Cultural heritage: organization, law***

In France, there is no general protection of church buildings similar to that found in Norway or Sweden. The Heritage Law, the Code du Patrimoine, offers six different forms of protection, which may also include church buildings. Responsibility for classification lies with the body for Architecture and Heritage, which comes directly under the Ministry of Culture.

A classified building (edifice classé, according to the 1913 Act) is totally or partially protected on the basis of its national, artistic, historical, etc. values. All changes and interventions require a permit from the regional cultural heritage management. Buildings that listed are included on the supplementary inventory list of historical monuments (Inventaire supplémentaire des Monuments Historiques, in accordance with the 1913 Act ') are, like the listed buildings totally or partially protected on the basis of their national, artistic, historical, etc. value. Changes and interventions require permission from ABF (l'Architecte des Bâtiments de France) and the mayor.

Buildings located on a classified or listed site, or at a distance of 500 meters from a building that is classified or included on the list of historical monuments, are also subject to ABF and the mayor. This also applies to buildings located in a protected urban area (zone sauvegarde) or a so-called ZPPAUP (Zone de Protection du Patrimoine Architectural, Urbain et paysager). Buildings whose preservation is mentioned in a city plan, PLU (Plan Local d'Urbanisme), enjoy municipal protection.

In the 1905 Act, Article 13 provides the six reasons that can be cited as reasons for the "shutdown" or "disuses" (désaffectation) of a church building (Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concernant la séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat / Légifrance). The two most common are that no religious activity has been going on in the church during the last six months, and / or that the building is in such a poor condition that its future is threatened.

Taking a church out of religious use requires permission from the bishop. On behalf of the city council, the prefecture, the French equivalent of the provincial government, can then issue a regulation. The city council, which is responsible for building maintenance and management, cannot in other words, take a church out of use by its own decision, even if it has received the approval of the priest.

### **Current situation and debate**

Although most French parish church buildings do not have the same importance as the previously mentioned one in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, their great significance for the local community is often emphasized. A survey completed in 2016 among 1000 French who claim to be Catholic, shows that 71 % are positive to the idea of turning churches into other public functions such as libraries or concert halls (Caisse d'Épargne pour *La Fondation du Patrimoine, Les Français et le patrimoine de proximité* Survey, February 2016). The survey concerned the cultural heritage of the local community and people's willingness to volunteer to sustain this heritage. 55 % answered yes to the question "Are you willing to dedicate your spare time to preserve, maintain and increase the value of the local heritage?". The fact that church buildings were included in the survey seems to set off from the notion that most French consider these buildings to be a secular cultural heritage as much as religious sanctities.

In an investigation commissioned by the French Senat in 2014, 3000 mayors replied to questions concerning the municipality's and the public's economic responsibility for religious buildings (*Les collectivités territoriales et le financement des lieux de culte* Rapport d'information n° 345, 2014-2015, Hervé Maurey. Fait au nom de la délégation aux collectivités territoriales, Sénat. 17 mars 2015). Apart from the survey, the investigation included more than twenty in-depth interviews. The results show that in 73 % of the municipalities there is only one Catholic place for worship, and it is owned by the municipality. Almost half of the mayors replied that the costs for this building is considerable, but at the

same time 60% declared being sympathetic to the existing system of financing maintenance through public means. In the interviews, the mayors describe how the significance of the church building involves much more than its religious contents. The church, they express, constitutes a historical and cultural monument, an architectural gem and a symbol of the municipality (put in this very order). People experience a strong sense of connection and affection (*attachement*) to/with the building, which is founded on emotion and culture. One of the respondents, quoted in the summary of the investigation, says: "We [the municipality] own a 13<sup>th</sup> century church. It is a monument that is heavy to maintain but the church is very beautiful, it is an important part of the cultural heritage, even though I am not religious. It has a strong human signification. It is a cultural heritage to preserve." (TNS Sofres, *Les collectivités territoriales et le financement des lieux de culte*, Présentation des résultats de l'enquête quantitative et qualitative, 2015. Summary of the report to the senate, p. 9). Others speak of the building as the soul and identity of the village. The mayor in a municipality of less than 2000 inhabitants writes: "Un village sans lieu de culte, ce n'est pas un village.", a village without a place for worship is not a village" (Ibid).

One of the most important questions of the investigation concerned the ability and willingness of the municipality to bear the costs for administering and maintaining the church buildings. The investigator concludes that there is a consensus on the idea that (nb: old, Catholic) churches should be preserved and because they may be considered as *secular* monuments, their maintenance should be funded by public means. *How* they should be preserved, whether it should be done in cooperation between the state and the municipalities, or/and with the help from local volunteers, are questions yet to be answered.

A comparison between France and Sweden shows that despite the differences in public financial support, the concept of the Catholic respectively Lutheran church buildings as a national, secular cultural heritage, is very strong in both countries. Both systems are based on this perception and that is also how places of worship that belong to the traditional denominations may be so remarkably favored, from a financial point of view. In France, more than 40 000 buildings and sites are protected as historical monuments or potential historical monuments (*inscrits*). About 34 % of these are religious buildings, mainly churches, chapels and elements of former convents (*Les collectivités territoriales et le financement des lieux de culte*, 2015, p. 15). In Sweden, as we have previously seen, church buildings have a general legal protection.

The heritage conservation sector's classification of the buildings certainly affects the extent of financial state support and thereby the prospects of maintaining and preserving a church building. But when it comes to deciding over sacred space, how to furnish or arrange the inside of the church, research shows that heritage legislation has little effect on parish life in France (Fornerod 2006, p. 548). The congregation has to respect the common property of the municipality and is generally perceived as a guardian of the cultural heritage. On the whole, there are few conflicts. In the anthology *Le Patrimoine culturel religieux. Enjeux juridiques et pratiques culturelles*, legal historian Marie Cornu states that the religious cultural heritage cannot be divided into separate parts according to the different interests that believers, the Church, the average citizen or the public has in it (Basdevant-Gaudemet, Brigitte et al. Paris. L'Harmattan, Collection Droit du patrimoine culturel et naturel, 2006, Propos introductifs, in Basdevant-Gaudemet 2006, p. 11). Still, in order to guarantee the diversity of uses and users, this division forms the fundament of both the French and the Swedish system of publicly maintaining and financing church heritage.



## *Belgium*

### **National data**

Population (2013): 11,161,642

Population density (2013): 369 people / sq. km

Population trend (2012): 0.21%

GDP per capita USD (2012): 44 827.7 (2011: 47 814.1)

Unemployment (2013): 5.7%

Urban population (2012): 98%

Urbanization rate (2011): 0.32%

*Sources: Eurostat, 2015, Statistics Belgium in 2013, CIA World Factbook 2014, World Bank Population 2015*

The country has three official languages, French (about 41%), Dutch (about 58%) and German (about 1%). A federal state since 1993, the country consists of three regions: the Flemish, the Walloon and the Brussels-Capital Region, and the three so-called communities, *communautés*, Flemish, French and Germanic, which are responsible for education, culture and health policy issues in each region.

### **Religious conditions**

#### ***Religions, number of members, development***

Historically, Belgium is a Roman Catholic country. A survey in 2009 showed that just over half of Belgians regarded themselves as belonging to the Catholic Church (Schreiber et al 2012, p 75). As noted in the report of 2012, there is no information that indicates the extent to which Catholicism is reflected in human values. However, the survey shows that between 1977 and 2009, the proportion of Belgians who regularly attend mass declined from 30% to 5%; the number of wedding ceremonies in a church from 77% to 25% and the percentage of new-borns who are baptized in the church from 85% -54% (ibid; p. 76). Of the regions Flanders proves to be the most Catholic while the metropolitan region of Brussels shows the lowest figures.

The Roman Catholic Church is followed in terms of size by Islam with 4-5% and then the various Protestant denominations (Torrekens, Corinne 2005 and Landguiden 2013). According to a poll in Wallonia and the Brussels region, namely the French-speaking parts of the country, about 12% of Belgians are Islam and just over 5% are Protestants (Barometre du religieux 2008).

### **Organizational, legal, financial and administrative conditions**

The Belgian government was formed in 1830 after the southern regions of the Netherlands had revolted against the Dutch king. The French-speaking parts of the population, and especially the Catholic Church, were the driving force in this revolution (Sägesser 2009).

In his comparison of the Belgian and French systems, Sägesser notes that the newly-formed Belgian government chose to retain some elements of the French legislation which had been established during the time of Napoleon in the early 1800s, which included municipal responsibility for the secular aspects of religious practice (Ibid; p. 94). In 1831 the Constitution was adopted which established freedom of religion. In the same year, the national congress also decided to compensate the church for the confiscations and austerity measures that had been taken in the late 1700s, by allowing the state to pay for priests' salaries and pensions, not only the Catholics, but also the Protestants and Jewish rabbis. This still applies today, which means that the bond between the state and religious communities is comparatively strong (Sägesser 2009, p 92). Today the Muslim, Anglican and Orthodox denominations also receive financial support from the state, i.e. a total of six different religious communities (Husson 2007). The support is regulated in relation to the number of practitioners and priests. The Catholic Church receives about 86% of the state support for cult practice (Sägesser 2009, p 92).

The Catholic Church in Belgium consists of 4,100 congregations, grouped in *doyennés*, a form of parish, which are in turn grouped in eight dioceses, one of which is an archdiocese with a archbishop. Most of the Catholic church buildings in Belgium are owned by municipalities (Fondation Rurale de Wallonie 2014). Churches built before 1795 are owned by municipalities or provinces and churches built thereafter are owned by the municipalities where they are built on public land. Religious practitioners have only *the right of use* of the buildings.

In discussions about the Catholic Church, the concept of *fabrique d'église* (from the verb *fabriquer* - produce, produce) is used for church administration. Other communities' administrative entities are called simply *conseil d'administration*. The construct of a *fabrique d'église* stems from 1809 when it was decreed that all churches would have a specific management dedicated to the church's secular matters. The management is required to ensure religious practice, its practical aspects, such as electricity, heating and necessary furnishings, pay for church employees (organist etc.) and the maintenance of the church building. Funds from collections and any rental and interest income are supposed to cover the costs, but where these are insufficient, the church administration is entitled to apply to the municipalities for financial support.

According to the researchers Sägerser and Schreiber, a very large part of the church administration and church building maintenance is paid for by the Belgian municipalities (Sägerser & Schreiber 2010, André 2000). The municipalities receive annual grants from the region for routine maintenance and major restoration of listed church buildings. The municipalities are also required to account for priests' accommodation.

Just as in France, responsibility for buildings entails a significant financial burden for many of the municipalities. In an ICOMOS report from 2002 on the situation in Belgium, Wallonia's largest city, Charleroi, is used as an example (ICOMOS 2002). Of the more than 200,000 inhabitants, around 7,000 are estimated to be regularly practicing Catholics. The number of church buildings is 71, of which 51 are the city's responsibility. To cover the most essential maintenance, the city would need a budget that is twice as large as that which is annually spent on all its municipal buildings.

### ***Cultural heritage: organization, government, legislation***

Within the state administration, the Ministry of Justice and La Direction Générale de la Législation civile et des Cultes deal with issues related to the religion's secular tasks and relationship with the state. Church buildings are not covered by general protection, not even the oldest buildings. The Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique - Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium (KIK IRPA) is a federal scientific body whose mission is to study, preserve and evaluate the whole of Belgium's artistic heritage. The ecclesiastical heritage is included in IRPAs work, but it does not work with cultural heritage management or legal protection and is not involved in issues relating to the reuse or adaptation of church buildings. The Institute was founded in 1948 and brings together art historians, chemists, physicists, restoration architects and photographers. There are three departments, Documentation, Laboratory, Conservation-Restoration, all of which work in an interdisciplinary way. Research reports and an annual bulletin are among the Institute's publications.

Cultural environments in Belgium are protected in accordance with regional rules and regulations. In the Brussels-Capital region, protection is regulated through the regulation on the conservation of cultural heritage from 1993. Here, as in Wallonia, the following categories are used: monuments, places, *sites* and environments, *ensembles*. Maximum protection is afforded to classified objects, then those on the preservation list. All interventions, except maintenance, require approval from the respective region's cultural commission, la Commission royale des Monuments et des Sites. Today, there are four such commissions, one for each region and one for the German-speaking regions in the east of Wallonia, Königliche Denmal-, Landschaft- und Ausgrabungskommission.

The regions also have their own cultural heritage organizations, such as the Institut du Patrimoine Wallon (IPW), which also owns and manages its own buildings, some of which are religious. In 2013 the

institute, in collaboration with the Fondation Rurale de Wallonie, and the region of Wallonia, issued SOS patrimoine rural 2013 (Institut du Patrimoine Wallon 2014). This is a handbook that addresses inter alia congregations facing the desecration and/or sale of one of their churches. It explains the key concepts and legal paragraphs, as well as addresses and tips on approaches

In the capital city there is, La Direction des Monuments et des Sites Ministère de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, whose subdivision Cellule Protection deals with the issue of legal protection (La Direction des Monuments et des Sites 2013). Administrative duties are governed by legislation in the form of Le Code bruxellois de l'Aménagement du territoire - Conservation du Patrimoine immobilier which entered into force in 2004. There are two forms of legal protection: classification "le classement", and listing "inscription sur la liste de sauvegarde". Several churches and monasteries have one of those designations but there is no general protection for old churches similar to that found in Sweden and Norway.

Belgium is also home to the foundation Églises ouvertes which to some extent seems to act as a unifying organization when it comes to the state of Catholic churches (Églises ouvertes 2013). In 1988, when it started in Belgium, similar organizations had existed in several other European countries for a long time. The aim is to draw attention to the religious heritage and make it available to locals as well as visitors. The aim is also to improve the chances of discovering and interpreting the religious heritage, including organizing concerts, conferences and other events in religious buildings.

### Religious heritage / building stock

In the absence of a national body that compiles data from the different regions, there is no comprehensive information on the number and status of Belgian religious buildings. The Catholic Church in Belgium also has no facts about its buildings on its website and in the summary that the Council of Europe commissioned in 1989, there are no figures (Rauti 1989).

In the spring of 2013, however, a policy proposal was put forward on the management and funding of religious practice and religious buildings in Wallonia (Brabant 2013). The proposed initiatives include merging multiple church administrations to avoid competition between the churches in the same municipality, and ensuring the long-term management of church buildings. In the proposal, it is stated that Wallonia, which consists of 262 municipalities, has about 1900 Catholic churches and 39 (recognized and supported) mosques. Of the Catholic churches and chapels in the region, 600 are classified and of these 38 are considered to be exceptionally valuable (Delwiche 2011). The region provides financial contributions for the maintenance and restoration of these legally-protected buildings.

### Current situation and debate

In Belgium there are several examples of deconsecrated church buildings that have been converted for other purposes, but the conversion process is still in its infancy. One of the most famous examples is the conversion of the Capuchin (*Les Frères mineurs*) monastery and monastic church in Malines (Mechelen), between Brussels and Antwerp. The church was deconsecrated in 1999 and since 2010 has provided 79 hotel rooms of which the largest and most luxurious, the suite, is located just above the altar (Hotel Martins Patershof 2013).

In the above-mentioned SOS Patrimoine Rural 2013, the following examples are given: in the town of Virton there was a small chapel from 1905 that originally belonged to a nunnery. Since 2010, the chapel, called La biblio'nef, has been converted into a library and can accommodate children and young adults.

In Sint Idesbald in western Flanders is Keunekapel, a small private chapel built in 1906. It was deconsecrated in 1935 and was sold as a studio for an artist. In 1985, the municipality of Coxyde bought back the chapel and now organizes cultural events and exhibitions here.

In Rendeux, there is the Marcouray church from 1877. The church was deconsecrated in 2002 when work commenced on redevelopment as part of a rural development project. The aim was to create a

venue for Marcouray children in particular and the inhabitants of Rendeux in general. In 2006 the church was inaugurated as a community centre.

In the public debate, the question of church financing, and not just *the church building*, appears to be the most debated topic. The stringent finances of the local municipalities is the first issue to be addressed. For many municipalities, building maintenance is a heavy financial burden. The state's expenditure on salaries for priests, is admittedly relatively low, totalling about 0.3% of the state budget, but many believe that the system is antiquated (André 2000). Sägesser & the Coorebyter believe that it is primarily the automation of the system that arouses criticism, and the fact that the Catholic Church still receives a large share of public support (Sägesser & the Coorebyter 2000).

In December 2011 in *Le Vif*, Michel Delwiche wrote that the Catholic Church is well aware that it is losing members, and that the municipalities are not able to bear the costs of the large church buildings (Delwiche 2011). In principle, it is not against either disposal or reuse, but expresses wishes regarding the nature of the new function. Ideally, churches should be converted into libraries, exhibition halls and concert halls - that is, any kind of public function which also allows a small part of the building to still be used for prayer or even church services.

In the summer of 2011, the question of the future of Catholic Church was the subject of animated debate in connection with the decision to deconsecrate one of Brussels' largest churches, Sainte-Catherine. The decision was taken by the church central body and was advertised in the local press which also stated that the church would be converted into a fruit and vegetable market. The reasons for the church's closure were falling numbers, major costs to society and the lack of priests.

The organization "Friends of 'Sainte-Catherine'" was formed soon after the decision, and they gathered around 8000 signatures to stop the deconsecration. They also ran a very targeted and successful campaign. At present, Sainte-Catherine is used as ecumenical church for Catholics and Orthodox. The organization still exists and runs the blog '*Eglise Sainte-Catherine à Bruxelles Espace oecuménique Priere au coeur de la ville*' where you can follow what is happening not only with Sainte-Catherine, but also with other church buildings in Brussels.

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