

MARIUSZ DOMŻALSKI



LEGAL ASPECTS OF DECONVERSION

ABSTRACT. Mariusz Domżałski, *Legal Aspects of Deconversion*, edited by Sławomir Sztajer, Ewelina Berdowicz, „Człowiek i Społeczeństwo” vol. LX: *Religion and Culture Beyond Tradition: Contemporary Perspectives*, Poznań 2025, pp. 67–80, Adam Mickiewicz University. ISSN 0239-3271, <https://doi.org/10.14746/cis.2025.60.4>.

Guarantees of religious freedom and respect for conscience and beliefs are the foundation of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. Among all human rights, freedom of conscience and religion holds a special place. This freedom has been shaped by numerous and long-lasting social, historical, and philosophical processes. According to Article 53, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Polish Constitution: “Everyone shall be guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion” and “Freedom of religion includes the freedom to profess or accept a religion of one’s choice, as well as to manifest one’s religion, either individually or collectively, publicly or privately, through worship, prayer, participation in rites, practice, and teaching.” Regulations concerning religious freedom are also included in numerous international legal instruments. The right to change one’s religion includes two components: the right to join a religious community and the right to leave it. The right to change religion is closely linked to the freedom from coercion in matters of faith and worldview. The state is not entitled to decide on the religious beliefs of its citizens, nor to take actions that force them to change their religious convictions. Likewise, discrimination on the grounds of religious affiliation or lack thereof is impermissible.

The aim of this article is to examine the concept of deconversion and to analyze the legal regulations in this regard at both national and supranational levels. The study employs the formal-dogmatic method, supplemented by the theoretical-legal method.

Keywords: religion, Constitution, legal acts, state

Mariusz Domżałski, Headquarters of the 18th Mechanized Division “General of the Army Tadeusz Buk”, Pileckiego 5, 08-110 Siedlce, e-mail: mariuszdomzalski89@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7749-2598>.

Introduction

Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion belongs to the category of personal freedoms inherent to every human being, regardless of race, gender, language, nationality, or citizenship (Astramowicz-Leyk & Turchyn, 2023: 196). Freedom of conscience and religion is one of the fundamental human rights (Cebula, 2011: 29), and the guarantees of its observance and exercise are among the cornerstones of modern democracy. These are fundamental values, derived primarily from the constitution and safeguarded by numerous legal acts, both international and national. Even in earlier times, they were recognized as one of the pillars of civil liberty. Alongside freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and religion is considered one of the oldest civil liberties, enshrined in the earliest written constitutions – including the Constitution of the United States of America of 1787 and the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791 (Serzhanova & Tuora-Schwierskott, 2018: 304–305). It is therefore not surprising that this freedom is recorded and reaffirmed in legal acts, including those of constitutional rank, in the vast majority of democratic states, constituting a key element in defining the legal status of the individual (Szymanek, 2006: 5).

In the field of religious law, religious freedom is understood – in the positive sense – “as the right of the human will, unrestricted by any coercion, to self-determination in religious matters, within the framework of religious purposes and according to legal-religious norms” (Płoski, 2003: 143).

Nevertheless, there are also other factors that influence the shape and understanding of this freedom. A significant role in this regard is played by the body of legal doctrine – not only Polish, but also international and European law – as well as the jurisprudence of courts, particularly constitutional tribunals, which subject the content and interpretation of this freedom to a continuous process of evolution (Serzhanova & Tuora-Schwierskott, 2018: 303).

This freedom is unconditionally granted to every individual. It encompasses freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and has both an internal and external dimension. It includes the freedom to hold religious beliefs, to adopt or reject religion according to one’s own choice, including the right to retain one’s religion or beliefs. It entails both the manifestation of religious views and convictions, as well as the expression of areligious or even anti-religious thoughts and opinions (Sobczak & Gołda-Sobczak, 2019: 34).

Religious freedom is a subjective right – a right of the human person. It also implies the entitlement to demand from other entities freedom from

coercion to undertake or refrain from undertaking religious acts (Płoski, 2003: 143).

Religious freedom consists in freedom from coercion in the manifestation of one's religious beliefs and includes a prohibition on: forcing anyone, by any person or authority, to participate or not to participate in religious practices, and obligating individuals by public authorities to disclose their worldview, religious beliefs, or religious affiliation (Krukowski, 2000: 77–80).

One of the fundamental values that must be respected by democratic states governed by the rule of law is the set of rights related to freedom of religion (Sobczak & Gołda-Sobczak, 2019: 27). The adoption, change, or rejection of a religion must not result in civil or criminal sanctions, nor may it lead to restrictions on public rights (Drewniowska, 2020: 40). Freedom of religion includes both the freedom to profess and practice a specific religion and the freedom to choose a denomination within a particular faith or to refrain from professing any religion at all (Świst, 2020: 149). It should therefore be concluded that the terms “freedom of religion” and “freedom of belief” are synonymous (Płoski, 2009: 57).

The departure from an existing system of beliefs, practices, and moral values, as well as from membership in a religious or spiritual community, is referred to as “deconversion.” The term “deconversion” is rarely used, both in religious studies and in everyday language. In Polish academic literature, the concept is essentially absent, although the phenomenon of believers abandoning their former religious convictions and practices has long been the subject of research in the social sciences. Various terms have been used to describe this process, including: “religious disaffiliation,” “apostasy,” “leaving the Church,” “secularization,” or even “conversion to non-belief” (Nowosielski & Bartczuk, 2015: 7).

Deconversion occurs not only in cases where one moves from a particular religious tradition to non-belief, but also in situations where there is visible mobility within the religious field – for example, when an individual changes their beliefs and convictions in connection with transferring membership from one church, denomination, or religious movement to another (Sztajer, 2024: 122).

One of the few definitions of deconversion was developed by H. Streib, who defined it as “a change in a person's religious orientation at a specific biographical time, which entails a reworking of the person's religious identity, a revision of their belief system and worldview, and a restructuring of their way of thinking, moral reasoning, and attitude toward authority – with particular attention to the act of leaving behind the old and seeking something new” (Grupa, 2022: 131).

Since the 1960s, processes of secularization have become increasingly noticeable, expressed in phenomena such as the rise in apostasy, the crisis of church institutions, and the abandonment of previously held religious identities. Secularization means, among other things, the loss of credibility of religious beliefs and narratives, as well as the awareness of the existence of multiple religious options from which individuals can choose (Sztajer, 2024: 122).

Deconversion processes encompass all changes in beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that involve a departure from current ways of experiencing and/or expressing religiosity. In other words, deconversion processes are psychological processes that lead to deconversion (Nowosielski & Bartczuk, 2017: 45).

The main reasons for deconversion typically include a loss of faith in the teachings of a given religious denomination, the belief in the hypocrisy of religious followers, and the perception that religious leaders are attached to power and wealth (Sztajer, 2024: 126).

From a legal perspective, deconversion can take two forms – a change of denomination and the adoption of a new faith, or a complete cessation of religious practices.

Under Polish law, the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997, regulates matters related to freedom of religion in Article 53 (Journal of Laws 1997, No. 78, item 483, as amended). In implementation of the constitutional regulations on freedom of conscience and religion, the Act of May 17, 1989, on the Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion was enacted (Journal of Laws 2023, item 265, consolidated text).

The right to change religion, as an element of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, is also articulated in international human rights law. The most important instruments include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights (Journal of Laws 1993, No. 61, item 284, as amended), the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Official Journal of the EU 2010, No. C 83/02), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Journal of Laws 1977, No. 38, item 167), and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.¹

¹ Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. <https://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/onz/1981-tekst.html>, accessed: 24.08.2025, further: Religion or Belief Declaration.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Agreements, declarations, and conventions adopted by the United Nations play an extremely important role in the system of human rights protection. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on December 10, 1948, by the United Nations General Assembly. The Declaration articulates fundamental rights and freedoms that should be incorporated into other international instruments and national legislation. Although the Declaration is not legally binding, it has had a significant influence on the development of other legal instruments concerning human rights and freedoms (Matwiejuk, 2014: 106–107).

According to Article 18 of the Declaration: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

This regulation corresponds with Article 7: “All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.”²

They establish freedom with regard to the religion professed as well as a categorical prohibition of discrimination based on religion. It is also worth noting Article 29, which states that any limitations on the right to freedom may be imposed solely for the purpose of protecting morality and public order.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Regulations concerning freedom of conscience and religion are also included in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 19, 1966. This Covenant guarantees individuals fundamental rights and political and civil freedoms: the right to life, prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention, the right to a fair trial, the right to privacy, prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to freedom of thought, conscience,

² Universal Declaration of Human Rights: adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on 10 December 1948. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, accessed: 24.08.2025.

and religion, freedom of assembly and association, and equality before the law (Tychmańska, 2017: 73).

Article 18 of the Covenant states: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief” (Journal of Laws 1977, No. 38, item 167). This article sets out the general framework for freedom of religion.

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief from 1981 holds particular significance due to its content and scope of religious regulation. It emphasizes the importance of the prohibition of discrimination based on religion as an integral part of the standard of religious freedom (Balcerzak, 2024: 64).

According to the Declaration, every person has the right to freedom of religion. No one shall be subjected to coercion that would impair their freedom to profess a religion or belief of their choice. Religious freedom may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of public safety, order, health, or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. These regulations align with Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. No one shall be discriminated against on the basis of their religion or lack thereof. Discrimination among human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a repudiation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, and must be condemned as a violation of human rights (Articles 1–3 of the Religion or Belief Declaration).

European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

International agreements of regional scope concluded within European organizations also play an important role in guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion. The European Convention on Human Rights and

Fundamental Freedoms was signed on November 4, 1950, in Rome (Journal of Laws of 1993, No. 61, item 284, as amended).

The Convention is an instrument aimed at shaping and respecting individual rights and freedoms. It defines the protected rights and the obligations of the States Parties to observe them in their actions towards entities enjoying the rights under the Convention (Zębek, 2024: 126).

Several essential functions of the Convention can be distinguished. First, it establishes a European guarantee of fundamental freedoms and human rights in a substantive law aspect. Second, it introduces its own jurisdictional mechanism in the form of a supranational judicial body – the European Court of Human Rights. Third, the Convention provides the possibility for any person whose rights have been violated to bring a complaint to the Court (Article 34). Fourth, in the States Parties, the Convention has been incorporated – although in various forms – into the domestic legal system and is directly applied by national public authorities, particularly courts. Fifth, the Convention also fulfills constitutional functions (i.e., the function of filling gaps, the standard-setting function, and the impetus function) (Pazura & Uniejewski, 2016: 71–72).

Freedom of religion is guaranteed in Article 9 of the Convention: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance” (Journal of Laws of 1993, No. 61, item 284, as amended).

Any restrictions regarding religion or beliefs contained in the Convention aim to maintain a balance between the individual’s right and the interest of the community as a whole (Warchałowski, 2004: 325).

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is another document that extensively addresses the issue of freedom of conscience and religion. It was adopted on December 7, 2000, during the European Council summit in Nice.

The Charter has the nature of an inter-institutional agreement and is a legally binding act. In light of the Lisbon Treaty, it has become a legally binding act of the European Union. The Charter defines the rights and freedoms of the individual through seven fundamental principles of values that constitute a unified whole: the legal status of the person, with the principle

of respect for human dignity; the principle of safeguarding the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen; the principle of equality; the principle of solidarity; the principle of democracy; and the principle of legality of the state (Cymerys, 2011: 394).

Freedom of conscience and religion is guaranteed by Article 10, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, publicly or privately, to manifest religion or belief through worship, teaching, practice and observance.” Moreover, discrimination on grounds of religion is prohibited, as stated in Article 21 (Official Journal of the EU 2010, No. C 83/02).

Constitution of the Republic of Poland

The highest legal act of the Republic of Poland was adopted on April 2, 1997, by the National Assembly. It consists of a preamble and 13 chapters covering 243 articles. The foundation of all religious regulations in Polish law is the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion for every individual. The Constitution establishes the autonomy of the individual in public life, including freedom of religion and conscience. Historically shaped freedom of conscience and religion also appears today under other names: freedom of beliefs, freedom of religion, freedom of worship, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of convictions, freedom to profess and propagate religious, non-religious, as well as anti-religious ideas and doctrines (Pietrzak, 2010: 21). Freedom of conscience and religion is classified among freedoms and rights of a personal nature, as their exercise is closely related to the personality of the individual, and their recognition and respect by the state and society stem from the obligation to protect human dignity (Sobczak & Gołda-Sobczak, 2019: 40).

The normative content of freedom of conscience and religion largely overlaps; however, these freedoms should not be fully equated. Freedom of religion primarily includes the freedom to choose a religion, to manifest it, and to act in accordance with its rules. Freedom of conscience and religion means the possibility, free from any interference by public authorities and third parties, to choose a worldview and to express that worldview both privately and publicly (Oroń, 2016: 126).

Issues related to an individual’s choices regarding a particular religion, membership in a specific church, changing religion, adopting a new faith,

or completely ceasing religious practices cannot be determined by regulations or decisions of public authorities, which must refrain from any interference in this area (Nowak, 2013: 22).

Changing religion or rejecting any form of religion must also be voluntary, free from any physical or psychological coercion by state authorities, religious authorities, or individuals. Literature emphasizes that all forms of social ostracism from close or distant surroundings of such persons should be combated as manifestations of intolerance or discrimination (Sobczak & Gołda-Sobczak, 2019: 49).

Religious matters are regulated in several different legal regulations across various chapters. These include Articles 25, 32, 48(1), 53, 85(3), 191(1)(5), and Article 233(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. These regulations complement each other and should be interpreted together.

The most important regulation regulating religious issues in the Constitution is Article 53, which governs fundamental human rights – freedom of conscience and religion. According to Article 53(1), “Everyone shall be guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion.” The subsequent paragraph of this article contains the legal definition of religious freedom – “Freedom of religion shall include freedom to profess or accept a religion of one’s choice and to manifest it individually or collectively, publicly or privately, by worship, prayer, participation in ceremonies, practice, and teaching. Freedom of religion shall also include the possession of churches and other places of worship according to the needs of believers and the right of individuals to receive religious assistance where they are” (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483, as amended).

It is appropriate to agree with W. Brzozowski that since the regulation refers not to “acceptance” but to “accepting” religion, it is possible for an individual to repeatedly abandon previous beliefs over the course of life. Moreover, it should be recognized that this regulation concerns not only conversion to another faith or establishing a new religious community but also renouncing faith and adopting an attitude hostile or indifferent to religion (Brzozowski, 2024: 96–97).

At the same time, it is necessary to agree with P. Leszczyński that despite being quite extensive, the regulation in Article 53(2) is incomplete. It would be reasonable to use the phrase “in particular,” which would indicate that other forms of religious activity not explicitly mentioned in this regulation are also protected constitutionally. This may raise concerns among non-religious persons about discrimination due to the lack of professed religion (Leszczyński, 2001: 62).

Act on Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion

The constitutional regulations have been further specified in more detailed religious laws. Of primary importance here is the Act of May 17, 1989, on Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion (consolidated text: Journal of Laws 2023, item 265). This Act implements the regulations of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland regarding freedom of conscience and religion, while simultaneously detailing the content of freedom of conscience and religion granted by the fundamental law.

According to Article 1 of the Act, the Republic of Poland guarantees every citizen freedom of conscience and religion, which includes the freedom to choose religion or beliefs and to express them individually or collectively, privately or publicly. Believing citizens of all denominations as well as non-believers have equal rights in public, political, economic, social, and cultural life. Exercising freedom of conscience and religion, citizens may choose to belong or not belong to churches and other religious associations.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

According to Article 31(3) of the Constitution, “Restrictions on the exercise of constitutional freedoms and rights may be imposed only by statute and only when necessary in a democratic state for its security or public order, or for the protection of the environment, health, or public morality, or the freedoms and rights of others. These restrictions shall not violate the essence of freedoms and rights.”

Therefore, freedom of religion and its manifestation can be restricted only by law and only in specifically defined situations. This regulation is of great importance and clearly indicates that freedom of conscience and religion cannot be invoked without reference to the rights of others: no one should be confronted with the manifestation of others’ beliefs in a way that violates their rights. In case of a conflict between a religious mandate and a state mandate, the individual must comply with the state’s requirement (Serzhanova, Tuora-Schwierskott, 2018: 309).

It should also be noted that the imposition of any restrictions on individual rights and freedoms is limited not only by the form of a statute but also by the necessity to comply with international law, including treaties to which the Republic of Poland is a party.

It is worth emphasizing that even during a state of war threat or a state of emergency, certain freedoms and rights, such as religious freedom, cannot be restricted, as explicitly stated in Article 233(1) of the Constitution. Furthermore, according to Article 208(1) of the fundamental law, the protection of religious freedom as a right granted to every individual is also ensured by the Ombudsman, who “safeguards the freedoms and rights of the human and citizen specified in the Constitution and other normative acts” (Jabłońska, 2022: 56).

Summary

Freedom of conscience and religion is a personal right of all human individuals and is one of the fundamental principles of a democratic society. This imposes specific obligations on the state to ensure that every citizen is protected in their individual religious values as well as their constitutional right to have no religion. The state is also responsible for safeguarding citizens against any form of discrimination by anyone towards any individual on religious grounds.

Freedom of religion has gradually developed through long historical and philosophical processes. Today, this freedom is regulated by the Constitution, the Act on Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion, and numerous international legal acts. Freedom of religion is personal in nature and, as such, is an absolute subjective right, meaning it is effective against everyone.

The catalog of individual rights stemming from freedom of religion is quite extensive and its content raises no objections. It includes, among others, freedom to hold religious beliefs, to accept or reject religion according to one’s own choice, including the right to maintain one’s religion or beliefs. Leaving one’s existing system of beliefs, practices, and morality, as well as membership in a religious or spiritual community, is referred to as deconversion. Legally, deconversion may take two forms – changing one’s religion and adopting a new faith, or completely ceasing religious practices.

Freedom of religion is not unlimited. The need to impose restrictions on this freedom is dictated by various considerations. Under Polish legal regulations, restrictions on the exercise of constitutional freedoms and rights may be imposed only by statute and only when necessary in a democratic state for its security or public order, or for the protection of the environment, health, or public morality, or the freedoms and rights of others. These restrictions must not violate the essence of freedoms and rights.

Literature

- Astramowicz-Leyk, T., Turchyn, Y. (2023). Ochrona prawna wolności myśli, sumienia i wyznania [Legal protection of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion]. *Constitutional Law Review*, 2, 193–206. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15804/ppk.2023.02.14>
- Balcerzak, M. (2024). Międzynarodowe standardy ochrony wolności religijnej – analiza systemowa [International standards of religious freedom protection – a systemic analysis]. In: M. Bielecki (Ed.), *Ograniczenia wolności religijnej w przestrzeni publicznej [Restrictions on Religious Freedom in the Public Sphere]* (pp. 61–87). Warszawa: Akademia Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości.
- Brzozowski, W. (2024). Konstytucyjne prawo do zmiany wyznania [Constitutional right to change religion]. *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, 1, 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.15804/ppk.2024.01.07>
- Cebula, S. (2011). *Prawa i wolności religijne we współczesnej Polsce* [Religious rights and freedoms in contemporary Poland]. Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.
- Cymerys, K. (2011). Aksjologia, idee i zasady ogólne Karty Praw Podstawowych Unii Europejskiej [Axiology, Ideas, and General Principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union]. *Humanum – Międzynarodowe Studia Społeczno-Humanistyczne*, 2, 385–398.
- Drewniowska, K. (2020). Granica między wolnością sumienia i wyznania a laickością państwa na przykładzie noszenia chusty islamskiej w świetle orzecznictwa Europejskiego Trybunału Praw Człowieka [The boundary between freedom of conscience and religion and the secularity of the state on the example of wearing Islamic headscarves in light of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights]. *Zeszyt Studencki Kół Naukowych Wydziału Prawa i Administracji UAM*, 10, 39–51.
- Grupa, M. (2022). Problematiczne używanie Facebooka a procesy dekonwersji wśród młodzieży. Moderacyjna funkcja orientacji temporalnej [Problematic use of Facebook and deconversion processes among youth: The moderating role of temporal orientation]. *Społeczeństwo*, 1, 129–144.
- Jabłońska, P. (2022). Wolność religijna w prawodawstwie polskim [Religious freedom in Polish legislation]. *Libertas Religiosa*, 1, 40–66.
- Krukowski, J. (2000). *Polskie prawo wyznaniowe* [Polish religious law]. Warszawa: LexisNexis.
- Leszczyński, P. (2001). Zagadnienia wyznaniowe w Konstytucji RP [*Religious Issues in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland*]. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.
- Matwiejuk, J. (2014). Konstytucyjne wolności, prawa i obowiązki człowieka i obywatela [Constitutional freedoms, rights, and duties of man and citizen]. In: S. Bożyk (Ed.), *Prawo konstytucyjne* [Constitutional Law] (pp. 89–112). Białystok: Temida 2.
- Nowak, I. (2013). Wolność jednostki w zakresie przekonań religijnych i światopoglądowych a zwolnienie od pracy i nauki z tytułu święta religijnego – soboty (szabatu, szabasu). [Individual freedom regarding religious and worldview beliefs and exemption from work and school for religious holidays – Saturdays (Sabbath)]. *Przegląd Prawa Publicznego*, 1, 19–36.

- Nowosielski, M., Bartczuk, R. (2015). Religijność w procesie przemian – koncepcja dekonwersji Heinza Streiba [Religiosity in the Process of Change – Heinz Streib's Concept of Deconversion]. *Studia Psychologica UKSW*, 15(2), 5–21.
- Nowosielski, M., Bartczuk, R. (2017). A structural analysis of deconversion processes in adolescence: The construction of the Adolescent Deconversion Scale. *Annals of Psychology*, 20(1), 167–190.
- Oroń, M. (2016). Gwarancje wolności sumienia i religii w wybranych aktach prawa międzynarodowego oraz Konstytucji RP [Guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion in selected international law acts and the Constitution of the Republic of Poland]. *Kortowski Przegląd Prawniczy*, 3, 123–128.
- Pazura, A., Uniejewski, J. (2016). Konwencja o Ochronie Praw Człowieka i Podstawowych Wolności jako fundamentalny akt prawa europejskiego – czy twierdzenie to nadal zachowuje aktualność? [The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as a fundamental act of European law – does this statement still hold?]. *Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego*, 2(30), 53–75.
- Pietrzak, M. (2010). *Prawo wyznaniowe* [Religious Law]. Warszawa: LexisNexis.
- Płoski, T. (2003). Gwarancje wolności sumienia i religii w Polsce [Guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion in Poland]. *Studia Warmińskie*, 40, 141–157.
- Płoski, T. (2009). Wolność sumienia i wyznania w warunkach izolacji więziennej [Freedom of conscience and religion in prison conditions]. *Studia Prawnoustrojowe*, 9, 55–76.
- Serzhanova, V., Tuora-Schwierskott, E. (2018). Wolność sumienia i wyznania w Konstytucji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej [Freedom of conscience and religion in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland]. *Gdańskie Studia Prawnicze*, 40(4), 303–314.
- Sobczak, J., Gołda-Sobczak, M. (2019). Wolność sumienia i wyznania jako prawo człowieka [Freedom of conscience and religion as a human right]. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska. Sectio K, Politologia*, 19(1), 27–65.
- Sztajer, S. (2024). Dekonwersja w warunkach późnej nowoczesności [Deconversion in late modernity conditions]. *Przegląd Religioznawczy*, 4(294), 121–131. <https://journal.ptr.edu.pl/index.php/ptr/article/view/551>
- Szymanek, J. (2006). Prawna regulacja wolności religijnej [Religious freedom legal regulation]. *Studia Prawnicze*, 2(168), 5–30.
- Świst, G. (2020). Wolność sumienia i religii w Konstytucji RP z 1997 roku w wymiarze indywidualnym i instytucjonalnym [Freedom of conscience and religion in the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland in individual and institutional dimensions]. *Studia Gdańskie*, 42, 145–159.
- Tychmańska, A. (2017). Znaczenie Międzynarodowego Paktu Praw Obywatelskich i Politycznych oraz Międzynarodowego Paktu Praw Gospodarczych, Społecznych i Kulturalnych dla polskiego porządku prawnego na przykładzie analizy orzecznictwa polskich sądów administracyjnych [The Significance of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for the Polish legal system based on an analysis of the case law of Polish administrative courts]. *Studenckie Zeszyty Naukowe*, 20(34), 71–85. DOI: 10.17951/szn.2017.20.34.71
- Warchałowski, K. (2004). *Prawo do wolności myśli, sumienia i religii w Europejskiej Konwencji Praw Człowieka i Podstawowych Wolności* [The Right to Freedom

of Thought, Conscience and Religion in the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms]. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II.

Zębek, E. (2024). Konstytucyjne prawa i obowiązki obywatela wobec środowiska w warunkach zrównoważonego rozwoju [Constitutional rights and duties of citizens towards the environment under conditions of sustainable development]. *Ius Novum*, 18(1), 124–143.

Legal acts

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 (Journal of Laws of 1997, No. 78, item 483, as amended).

The Act of May 17, 1989, on Guarantees of Freedom of Conscience and Religion (consolidated text, Journal of Laws of 2023, item 265).

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Official Journal of the EU 2010, No. C 83/02).

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms drawn up in Rome on November 4, 1950, subsequently amended by Protocols No. 3, 5, and 8 and supplemented by Protocol No. 2 (Journal of Laws of 1993, No. 61, item 284, as amended).

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief of November 25, 1981. <https://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/onz/1981-tekst.html>, accessed: 24.08.2025.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights opened for signature in New York on December 19, 1966 (Journal of Laws of 1977, No. 38, item 167).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights: adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) on December 10, 1948. https://amnesty.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Powszechna_Deklaracja_Praw_Czlowieka.pdf, accessed: 24.08.2025.