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In Poland, the activities of churches and religious associations are regulated by [the Freedom of Conscience and Religion Act](#) , amended on February 9, 2023, under which any religious association can be registered by meeting certain requirements. One of the conditions is a confirmed list of 100 people who declare their affiliation. However, a religious association may be deleted from the register pursuant to [Art. 36a.](#) of this Act when it is found that the activities of a church or other religious association are inconsistent with the provisions of law or the statute. In practice, no religious association has yet been deregistered due to activities inconsistent with the statute. Proving that this activity is destructive and inconsistent with the submitted documents is very difficult. The Act excludes groups that undertake influence through psychological research and experiments from being classified as churches and religious associations.

The danger of abusing the concept of church or religious organization for purposes contrary to the principles of religious freedom has been noticed. Despite this provision, the courts, fearing not to violate religious freedom, ignore this important aspect of the case in various court cases; divorce, family, alimony and care.

There is a need for an additional act on psychomanipulation, extensive knowledge about the activities of various destructive groups, state support for associations like ours and information centers.

Currently, the issue of cults is not discussed in social life or in the mass media. Occasionally, topics related to the destructive activities of some

pseudo-religious or therapeutic group appear.

There is no detailed research regarding the number of operating destructive groups. Currently we estimate that there are 200 cults operating in Poland and about 80000 people remain in their circle of influence, counting families. This is an unreliable number which is given by various cult centers.

In the years 1993-2000, there were several court cases related to the destructive activities of sects. The Institute of Identity Knowledge Mission Czaitania cult accused the Chairwoman of the Family and Individual Protection Movement of publishing lies in the press, radio and television about the activities of IWOT. There were high-profile cases during this period related to the activities of the Heaven cult, where the leaders were not accused of destructive activities but of stealing wood and placed in custody for several months. A pedagogy student was deprived of the possibility of practicing her profession in the future due to the abduction of underage girls to a cult.

The mother of the girl who committed suicide accused the leaders of the Heaven cult of not providing help and even encouraging her to commit suicide. Unfortunately, the court found no fault on the part of the leaders and discontinued the case. There have been and are currently ongoing trials in the courts regarding alimony, granting parental rights, divorce cases, property extortion, threats to life and health, and the reason is the activities of cults that, using manipulative techniques, make their members addicted and take advantage of them. Since 2000, reports have mainly concerned the manipulation of adults, often one of the spouses who left the family due to joining a cult. In all trials, the court did not take into account psychomanipulation or mental addiction. It did not

refer to the regulations defining the destructive activities of the cult because such regulations do not exist in our legislation.

In Poland, more and more educational and therapeutic concepts are emerging, where metaphysical and theological half-truths are conveyed under the banner of science. In Poland, various destructive groups operate under the guise of proposed therapeutic training and companies selling cosmetics, natural medicines and natural cleaning products. Proposals of training for business and education often serve to extort money and make the participant want to further improve their skills in subsequent highly paid classes, obviously indicated by a leading therapist or healer. Often, these leaders do not have the appropriate qualifications to promote their pseudomethods of healing the soul and body.

There is a huge demand for counseling and therapy in the field of life-related issues. Those who seek help find it impossible to research or evaluate the various therapies or pseudo-therapies and techniques that are offered to them.

Methods used: mystical music, mirror gazing, hypnosis, spinning, steady drum beating, occult breathing techniques, rebirthing, regression, yoga positions, brain relaxation machines, self-hypnosis, occult spinning dances, relaxation beds, using crystals as a transmitter from astral bodies. There are about 100,000 healers in Poland. Since 2005, we have noticed an increase in consultations on issues related to the New Age movement, which is characterized by eclecticism - it draws its practices and ideas from many sources, e.g. from various religious and

philosophical systems, various directions of psychology, as well as occult, shamanic systems and even modern physics. More and more groups are emerging, separating themselves from the Catholic and Protestant churches, registering or not, and bearing the hallmarks of a cult. /there are such cases in our association/. Schools are being established where the subjects taught are occult techniques, which create a network of courses arranged in a pyramidal manner, aimed at extracting as much money as possible from potential clients.

There are more and more musical bands promoting Satanism, which, under the guise of freedom of speech and artistic freedom, convey to young, sensitive, not yet fully formed minds content promoting death as a solution to life's problems and hatred of Christianity. Some members of the Satanic movement create the so-called higher initiation group and are a closed circle, they benefit from the sale of satanic gadgets and drug trafficking.

In Poland, there is no interest of the authorities and parliamentarians in legal regulations and in helping victims of cults. Help and care for victims of sects falls solely on the family.