

## AGREEMENT AMENDMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE ITALIAN STATE AND THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ITALY

**(7 July 2025)**

In the prestigious institutional setting of Palazzo Chigi, the official signing ceremony of the amendment to the agreement between the Italian Republic and the Apostolic Church in Italy took place on June 26, 2025. The original agreement was signed on April 4, 2007, and approved by Law No. 128 of July 30, 2012.

Representing the Government was the Undersecretary to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Hon. Alfredo Mantovano, accompanied by Senator Lucio Malan. Representing the Apostolic Church were President Emanuele Frediani and an official delegation, which included Prof. Ludovica Decimo, Associate Professor of Ecclesiastical and Canon Law at the University of Sassari, serving as legal advisor to the religious denomination.

The preparatory work for defining the new agreement text was overseen by the Commission for Agreements with Religious Denominations and for Religious Freedom, chaired by Prof. Geraldina Boni, who led the revision process and dialogue between the parties in close cooperation with ministerial offices and representatives of the Apostolic Church.

The amendment reflects the evolving organizational identity and pastoral needs of the denomination, introducing several important innovations. The competence of the denominational body responsible for the appointment and dismissal of ministers of religion (Art. 2, para. 1), and for the designation of those handling requests related to religious matters (Art. 9, para. 1), has been updated. These functions are now assigned to the Apostolic Team, in accordance with the new text of the Apostolic Constitution, which restructured the Church's internal order in 2024.

Article 2-bis has been introduced, regulating international missionary activity and the transnational mobility of ministers of religion. In a global context marked by wars and crises, the apostolic missionaries of the Apostolic Church in Italy have intensified their efforts both nationally and abroad. Their commitment focuses on humanitarian and spiritual support to vulnerable communities through prayer gatherings, psychological assistance, and the distribution of essential goods, sometimes in collaboration with projects led by other denominations. In conflict-affected areas, their presence translates into direct support actions: managing reception centers, distributing emergency aid, and promoting dialogue and reconciliation initiatives.

The first paragraph of Article 2-bis affirms that the Apostolic Church in Italy is part of a global network of religious organizations sharing the same evangelical, Pentecostal, and apostolic inspiration. This spiritual and organizational communion results in operational collaboration with foreign missionaries who actively contribute to pastoral and assistance activities in Italy. The second paragraph highlights the international dimension of the apostolic mission: the Church coordinates evangelical and humanitarian initiatives in many foreign countries and also provides theological and pastoral training for foreign ministers of religion through the recognized institutions mentioned in Article 11. The third paragraph specifies that the entry and stay of foreign missionaries in Italy must comply with Italian and European Union immigration and religious freedom regulations.

Article 11, concerning theological education and the recognition of academic qualifications issued by Apostolic Church institutions with legal personality in Italy, has also been revised. The new wording broadens and strengthens the legitimacy and legal validity of such qualifications, enhancing the institutional accreditation of training institutions and ensuring clarity about academic levels and access standards. This update reinforces the academic and institutional recognition of apostolic theological qualifications, promoting greater transparency and recognition at interdenominational and international levels.

Finally, Article 24 has been revised regarding the allocation of the eight per thousand share of IRPEF tax revenues. The first paragraph broadens the purposes for which the Apostolic Church may use such funds: in addition to social, cultural, and humanitarian interventions (also abroad) already included in the previous version, the new provision allows the use of resources for the support of ministers of religion (salaries, assistance, welfare) and for the construction and maintenance of places of worship. These measures allow the Church to sustain ordinary pastoral activity even in economically disadvantaged contexts and ensure that all local communities have suitable spaces for religious practice.

Regarding the shares related to taxpayers' unexpressed choices, the Apostolic Church in Italy has declared, in paragraph 3, its intention to participate in the proportional distribution of such funds, allocating them exclusively to the purposes set out in paragraph 1.

These provisions mark an important step toward the full implementation of religious freedom, as they recognize not only the spiritual and doctrinal dimension of the Apostolic Church's mission in Italy but also its material, organizational, and structural needs.

It should be noted, however, that pursuant to Article 8, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, the agreed amendments will take effect only after their approval by law by the Parliament.

The amendment to the agreement between the State and the Apostolic Church in Italy constitutes, in any case, a virtuous example of institutional dialogue and the evolution of concordatary law. It demonstrates

the capacity of negotiated sources to dynamically adapt to religious and social transformations, while respecting each group's confessional identity and constitutional principles.

At the same time, amendments to the agreements with the Italian Hindu Union and the Italian Union of Seventh-Day Adventist Christian Churches were also signed, confirming the vitality and relevance of the agreement-based model outlined in Article 8, paragraph 3, of the Constitution. Taken together, these updates reflect the commitment of republican institutions to ensure effective protection of religious pluralism through flexible legal tools, respectful of each religious community's specificities and coherent with the principle of secularism.

**Ludovica Decimo**