

Religious-Only Weddings in Family Law

Essay

Family Law Project aims to reflect modern tendencies in marriage legislation. In particular, it plans to significantly enlarge the number of places of venue where the ceremony can be held. Moreover, it seeks to change the marriage proceedings to reflect a more flexible approach to the marriage ceremony. Finally, the project intends to allow more people to solemnize legal marriages.

Current legislation holds that marriages can take place only in special places of venue approved for civil weddings, which drastically limits the choice of place where weddings can be held. Seeking to reflect the modern trend for outdoor weddings, the project aims to extend the variety of locations to include outdoor places such as parks, beaches, forests, and cruise liners and local locations.

The project proposes changing marriage proceedings to reflect modern times. First of all, couples will be able to give notice of their intended wedding online and choose the registration office. Secondly, the marriage ceremony will not necessitate any strict ritualized form and, instead, would seek to reflect the couples' beliefs and wishes. Certain religious words may be included into a civil ceremony while a religious wedding will not necessarily necessitate the pronouncement of specific words. The project aims to significantly enlarge the number of people who will be able to conclude legal marriages. The proposed groups comprise non-religious belief organisations and independent officiants who are, as legislature stands now, not allowed to solemnize bonding marriages.

The project runs in line with the family legislation of recent years that, on the one hand, aimed to settle controversial issues of family law such as cohabitation and, on the other, sought to make the demarcation line between religious and cultural communities in the society less pronounced. The most well-known legal document that aims to regulate the issues of cohabitation is Civil Partnership Act 2004 adopted to facilitate the legal side of relationship for those couples who are unwilling to enter a marriage. The Act presupposes practically the same legal rights for couples who entered into Civil Partnership as for those are legally married. Another option specified by law is concluding Living Together Agreements that specify partners' joint responsibilities in certain areas of law. A wide range of legal options portrays the priority of diverse approaches in legal practice that, hopefully, reflect indiscriminatory practices established in the society.

The basic law ensuring equality for religious and cultural minorities in society is the Human Rights Act 1998 that incorporated much of the legislation of European Convention on Human Rights. The equality for religious and cultural minorities in society was further promoted in court cases where the judges were clearly considering some cases from the human rights perspective. Thus, in *Copsey v WBB Devon Clays Ltd* case, though it was actually lost by the plaintiff, the judge clearly established that there were attempts to accommodate his religious requirements. Further

judgements indicated that the freedom of conscience is considered to be a fundamental right of a person by the UK laws.

I agree with the Law Commission's recommendations because I believe that every person should have a freedom of choice, especially on such an important day as wedding. Moreover, the proposed legislation runs in line with the legislative course of reflecting a multi-cultural and multi-religious society that we live in nowadays.

References

Weddings. [Law Commission](#). Web.