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PROPOSED LAW

ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOLLOWING THE ACCELERATED PROCEDURE,

on the legal regime for group actions,

COMMISSION TEXT

OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, LEGISLATION, UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, THE RULES OF PROCEDURE AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (1)

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See the numbers:

National Assembly (16^e legislature): 639, 862 and T.A. 87.

Senate: 420 (2022-2023) and **271** (2023-2024).

Proposed law on the legal regime for group actions

TITLE IER

GROUP ACTION

CHAPTER I

Purpose of the group action, standing and commencement of proceedings

Article 1er

A group action is brought by a claimant referred to in article 1^{er} bis on behalf of several natural or legal persons,

placed in a similar situation, resulting from the same breach or from a breach of the same nature of its legal or contractual obligations committed by any person acting in the exercise or on the occasion of his professional activity, by any legal person governed by public law or by any body governed by private law entrusted with the management of a public service.

A group action shall be brought in order to obtain either the cessation of **b** infringement referred to in the first paragraph of this Article, or compensation for the infringement referred to in the second paragraph of this Article. damages of any nature whatsoever suffered as a result of the breach, or satisfaction of both claims.

Article 1er bis A (new)

- I .- By way of derogation from Article 1^{er}, when the subject of the complaint is a breach of legal or contractual obligations under the Public Health Code, group action may only be brought in respect of a breach of legal or contractual obligations by a producer or supplier of one of the products mentioned in II of article L. 5311-1 of the same code or by a service provider using one of these products.
- II. By way of derogation from article 1^{er}, where the subject of the action is a breach of legal or contractual obligations arising from the Labour Code, the action for

The group's right of action is exercised only with a view to establishing that several applicants for a job, an internship or a period of in-company training, or several employees, are being discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on the same grounds as those mentioned in Article L. 1132-1 of the Labour Code and attributable to the same employer.

Article 1er bis

- I. Group actions shall be brought by associations approved for this ppeApproval may be granted by the administrative authority responsible for its application. issued to any duly registered not-for-profit association that meets the following conditions:
- 1° On the date of submission of the application for authorisation, the company provides evidence of twelve consecutive months' actual and public activity with a view to

defence of interests that have been adversely affected;

- 2° Its objects under the Articles of Association include the defence of interests that have been adversely affected;
- 3° It is not, on the date of submission of its application for authorisation, the subject of collective proceedings under Book VI of the Commercial Code;
- 4° (new) It shall be independent and shall not be influenced by persons, other than those whose interests it defends, whave an interest in it. in bringing a group action. To this end, it has adopted written procedures for preventing and managing conflicts of interest;
- 5° (new) It shall make available to the public, by any appropriate means, information on its statutory purpose, its activities, the main sources of its financing and organisation.

Approval may be withdrawn by the administrative authority responsible for issuing **i**f it finds that one of the conditions laid down in this I is no longer filled.

- *Ia.* Group actions may also be brought by representative trade union organisations within the meaning of Articles L. 2122-1, L. 2122-5 or L. 2122-6.
- L. 2122-9 of the Labour Code or Article L. 221-1 of the General Civil Service Code, and the trade unions representing the judiciary:
 - 1° In the fight against discrimination;
 - 2° With regard to the protection of personal data;
- 3° Or where the claim seeks the cessation of an employer's failure to comply with its obligations or compensation for damage caused by that failure to comply to several persons.

 placed under the authority of this employer.

- II. (Unchanged) Group actions may also be brought by qualified entities appearing on the list drawn up by the European Commission in application of Article 5(1) of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 on representative actions to protect the collective interests of consumers and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC where its purpose is to penalise infringements by traders of the provisions of European Union law listed in Annex I to that Directive which harm or are likely to harm the collective interests of consumers.
- K III. (Unamended) The Public Prosecutor's Office may be the principal party in the group action for an end to the breach.
- **p** It may also intervene as an added party in any group action.
- K IV. The persons referred to in I to II of this Article who may bring a group action pursuant to Article 1^{er} may bring this action by The court may bring an action jointly or intervene voluntarily in proceedings that have been commenced.
 - V (new). The persons mentioned in I to II of this article shall make available to the public, by any appropriate means, information on the group actions they have decided to initiate, the progress of those they have initiated and, for each of them, the outcome.
 - VI (new). Persons meeting the conditions for bringing a group action on the date of entry into force of this Act shall retain this option until the expiry of a period of two years from the date on which it was exercised.

Article 1er ter

(Deleted)

Article 1er quater AA (new)

The claimant in a group action for damages shall ensure, **a**ll stages of the proceedings, that he or she does not place himself or herself in a situation of conflict of interest and that he or she

protect the exercise of the group action that it initiates from the influence of a third party to the proceedings likely to prejudice the interests of the persons represented.

Where it finds that the claimant in a group action for damages has not complied with the obligation laid down in the first paragraph, the authority shall administrative authority referred to in I of article 1^{er} *bis* may, after inviting the applicant to submit written observations, withdraw its approval.

Where the court considers that it is uncertain whether the claimant in group action for damages has complied with the obligation set out in the first paragraph of the Where the court finds that the claimant in a group action for damages has failed to comply with the obligation laid down in the first paragraph of this Article, it may order the claimant to produce a financial overview listing the sources of the funds used to support the action. Where it finds that the claimant in a group action for damages has failed to comply with the obligation set out in the same first paragraph, it may declare the action inadmissible and refuse to approve any agreement between the parties.

Article 1er quater A

I (new). - Prior to bringing a group action, the person entitled to bring the action shall give formal notice to the person against whom the action is to be brought. it intends to take group action to cease or bring to an end the breach or to compensate for the damage suffered.

On pain of inadmissibility, which the court may raise of its own motion, a group action may not be brought until four months have elapsed from the date on which the action was brought.

from receipt of this formal notice.

II. - By way of derogation from I, prior to commencing a group action based on a breach of the Labour Code, the plaintiff in the action shall asks the employer, by any means that gives the request a date certain, to put an end to the alleged breach.

Within one month of receipt of this request, the employer shall inform the social and economic committee and the employees concerned.

representative trade union organisations in the company. At the request of the Social and Economic Committee, or at the request of a representative trade union organisation, the employer initiates a discussion on measures to put an end to the alleged collective breach.

A group action brought to defend the interests of several applicants for a job, an internship or a period of in-company training; or

of several employees may be lodged on expiry of a period of six months from the date of the request to put an end to the breach or from the date of notification by the employer that the request has been rejected.

CHAPTER II

Group action to put an end to the breach

Article 1^{er} quater

Where a group action seeks to put an end to a breach of contract, the plaintiff is not required to plead prejudice to the members of the group. The intention or negligence of the defendant does not have to be established. If the court finds that there has been a breach, it shall enjoin the defendant to cease or cause the breach to cease and to take, within a period to be determined by the court, all appropriate measures to that end, if necessary with the assistance of a third party designated by the court. If the court imposes a fine, it is paid to the plaintiff.

CHAPTER III

Group action for damages

Section 1

Judgment on liability

Article 1er quinquies

When a group action seeks compensation for harm suffered, the plaintiff must present individual cases in support of his or her claims.

The judge rules on the defendant's liability.

It defines the group of persons in respect of whom the defendant is liable, setting out the criteria for inclusion in the group, and determines the losses to be compensated for each of the categories of people making up the group it has defined.

Where the evidence produced and the nature of the damage so permit, the court shall, in the same judgment, determine the amount or all the elements of the damage.

allowing the assessment of the losses likely to be compensated, for each of the categories of persons making up the group it has defined.

It shall order, at the defendant's expense, appropriate publicity measures to inform persons likely to have suffered damage of the decision. caused by the event in question.

It also sets the time limit within which persons meeting the criteria and wishing to avail themselves of the judgment on liability

may join the group in order to obtain compensation for their loss. Unless otherwise provided, this period may not be less than two months nor more than five years from the completion of the publicity measures ordered by the court.

It sets the time limit within which the defendant must pay compensation and the time limit after expiry of the first time limit within which the defendant must pay compensation.

refer to it any claims for compensation that the defendant has failed to satisfy.

It sets out the conditions and limits under which group members may apply to the courts for individual compensation.

Where, with the exception of losses resulting from bodily injury, the court considers that compensation in kind is more appropriate, it shall specify the terms and conditions of such compensation.

the conditions of its implementation by the defendant.

Article 1er sexies

Excluding group actions seeking compensation for damage resulting from personal injury, where the claimant so requests and

if the evidence produced and the nature of the losses allow it, the court may decide to implement collective proceedings to liquidate the losses.

To this end, it empowers the claimant to negotiate with the defendant compensation for the losses suffered by each of the persons making up the claimant's family.

group. It shall determine, in the same judgment, the amount of such damages or, failing that, the elements enabling their assessment, for each of the categories of persons making up the group it has defined. It shall also set the deadlines and procedures by which this negotiation and assessment must be carried out, in particular the deadline, which may not be less than six months, at the end of which, in the absence of an agreement, it shall rule directly on the damages likely to be compensated.

The court may also order the defendant to pay anadvance on the costs not included in the costs incurred by the defendant. applicant to action.

Article 1er septies

When ruling on liability, the court may order, where it deems it necessary and compatible with the nature of the case, that part of the sums owed by the defendant be deposited with the Caisse des dépôts et consignations.

Section 2

Compensation for damage

Subsection 1
Individual compensation procedure

Article 1er octies

(Unchanged)

Within the time limits and under the conditions set by the judgment on liability, persons wishing to join the group referred to in the third paragraph of Article 1^{er} *quinquies* address a claim for compensation either to the person declared liable by this judgment, or to the plaintiff in the action, who thus receives a mandate for the purposes of compensation.

This mandate does not constitute or imply membership the applicant association or trade union organisation. It is given for the purposes of representation to bring the group action and, where applicable, to enforce the judgment handed down at the end of the procedure.

Article 1er nonies

(Unchanged)

The person declared liable by the judgment on liability shall pay individual compensation for the losses resulting from the event giving rise to liability and suffered by the persons meeting the criteria for inclusion in the group and who have joined it.

Article 1er decies

(Unchanged)

Persons whose claim for compensation has not been satisfied may apply to the court that ruled on liability, under the conditions and within the limits set by the judgment on liability, for compensation for their individual loss.

Subsection 2

Collective procedure for the liquidation of damages

Article 1er undecies

Within the time limits and subject to the conditions laid down by the court in application of bjudgments on liability and having ordered collective proceedings of

If you are interested in settling a claim, you can join the group by contacting the claimant.

Membership of the group constitutes a mandate in favour of the claimant for the purposes of compensation. To this end, the claimant negotiates with the the defendant the amount of compensation, within the limits set by the judgment ordering collective proceedings for the liquidation of damages.

Membership of the group, which does not constitute or imply membership of the association trade union organisation making the application, constitutes a mandate given to the latter for the purposes of

representation for the purposes of the legal proceedings referred to in article 1^{er} duodecies and, where applicable, for the purposes of enforcing the judgment given at the end of the proceedings.

Article 1er duodecies

Within a time limit that may not be less than that set for joining broup by the judgment on liability, the judge who has ruled on the claim must inform the claimant.

The agreement, which may be partial, reached between the parties and accepted by the members of the group concerned, is submitted for approval to the Board of Directors.

The judge shall refuse homologation if the interests of the parties and the members of by group appear to him to be insufficiently protected under the terms of the agreement.

In the event that the court orders collective compensation proceedings, it may refer the matter back to the negotiating table for a further two months.

In the absence of a total agreement, the matter shall be referred to the court within the time limit set in the first paragraph of this article for the purpose of settling the remaining damages. In

In the latter case, the court shall rule within the limits set by the judgment ordering collective proceedings for the liquidation of damages.

If the matter is not referred to the court within one year of the date on which the judgment ordering collective liquidation proceedings was issued

of the damage has acquired the force of res judicata, the members of the group may submit a claim for compensation to the person declared liable by the judgment on liability. The individual compensation procedure defined in subsection 1 of this section shall then apply.

A civil fine of up to 50,000 euros may be imposed on the plaintiff or defendant in the proceedings where the latter has,

in a dilatory or abusive manner, prevents the conclusion of an agreement on the basis of the judgment ordering the collective proceedings for the liquidation of damages.

Subsection 3

Management of funds received as compensation for group members

Article 1er terdecies

(Unchanged)

Subject to the legislative provisions relating to the handling of funds by the regulated legal professions, any sum received by way of compensation for injured parties who are members of the group shall be immediately paid into an account opened with the Caisse des dépôts et consignations. This account may only be debited to settle the case that gave rise to the deposit.

Section 2a

Simplified group action procedure

(New division)

Article 1er quaterdecies A (new)

Where the identity and number of the persons whose interests have been hamedare known and where these persons have suffered harm of the same amount, of an identical amount per service rendered or of an identical amount by reference to a period or duration, the court, after ruling on the defendant's liability, may order the defendant to compensate them directly and individually, within a period and according to terms that it shall determine.

The decision referred to in the first paragraph shall be enforced by the defendant in accordance with the procedures advithin the period set by the court,

When the decision is no longer subject to ordinary appeal or to an appeal to the Supreme Court, the persons whose interests have been harmed are individually informed, at the defendant's expense, so that they can agree to be compensated in accordance with the terms of the decision.

In the event of the defendant's failure to comply with the decision rendered in respect of the persons whenterests have been adversely affected and who have accepted the compensation, in the event of the defendant's failure to comply with the decision rendered in respect of the persons whose interests have been adversely affected and who have accepted the compensation.

Within the time limit set, the claimant in the action who has received a mandate for the purposes of compensation is deemed to be a creditor, within the meaning of articles L. 111-1 and L. 111-2 of the Code of Civil Enforcement Procedures, for the forced execution of the judgment. To this end, acceptance of the compensation under the terms of the judgment constitutes a mandate for the purposes of compensation in favour of the claimant.

Section 3

Mediation

Article 1er quaterdecies

The persons referred to in article 1^{er} bis may take part in mediation, under the conditions set out in chapter I^{er} of title II of law no. 95-125 of 8 February 1995 relating to the organisation of the courts and to civil, criminal and administrative procedure, in order to obtain compensation for individual losses.

Article 1er quindecies

(Unchanged)

Any agreement negotiated on behalf of the group is subject to approval by the judge, who checks that it is in line with the interests of those for whom it is intended.

and gives it binding force.

The agreement specifies the publicity measures required to inform people likely to be compensated on the basis of the agreement of its existence, as well as

as well as the deadlines and procedures for benefiting from them.

CHAPTER IV

National register of group actions

Article 1er sexdecies

The following shall be entered in a register kept and made available to the public by the Minister of Justice:

- 1° Group actions that are in progress, have been terminated or have been withdrawn before all the courts;
- 2° Actions for recognition of rights that are pending, closed or have been withdrawn before all courts;
- 3° Actions for the cessation of unlawful conduct that are in progress, closed or have been withdrawn before all courts;
- 4° Actions for the elimination of unfair terms that are pending, closed or have been withdrawn before all courts:
- 5° Joint representation actions in progress, closed or withdrawn before all courts.

This register includes also the list of agreements of mediation agreements relating to the actions listed.

CHAPTER V

Jurisdiction over group actions

Article 2

I. - Group actions shall be brought before the court having jurisdiction to hear them.

Unless otherwise provided, group actions brought before the courts shall be brought and governed in accordance with the rules laid down in the Code of Procedure.

civil proceedings and those brought before the administrative courts are brought and governed in accordance with the rules set out in the Code of Administrative Justice.

II. - Article L. 211-15 of the Code de l'organisation judiciaire is reinstated as follows:

"Art. L. 211-15. - At least two specially hear group actions brought in all matters on the territory of the Member States.

The French law on the legal regime for group actions.

CHAPTER V BIS

Provisions specific to certain group actions

Article 2a A

(Deleted) Article

2a B

(Unamended)

In matters of compensation for losses resulting from personal injury, the out-of-court settlement between the person liable and the claimant or his heirs and the judgment ruling on the claimant's or his heirs' rights to compensation are subject to Chapter VI of Title VII of Book III of the Social Security Code, to Chapter IV of Title V of Book IV of the Social Security Code, to Article L. 752-23 of the Code rural et de la pêche maritime (Rural and Maritime Fishing Code), Ordinance no. 59-76 of 7 January 1959 relating to actions for civil damages by the State and certain other public bodies or Chapter II and Article 44 of Law no. 85-677 of 5 July 1985 designed to improve the situation of victims of road traffic accidents and to speed up compensation procedures.

Article 2a C

(Deleted) Article

2a D

(Unamended)

Where the alleged breaches relate to compliance with the rules laid down in Title II of Book IV of the Commercial Code or Articles 101 and 102 of the Commercial Code.

of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the professional may only be held liable in the context of a group action on the basis of a decision against the professional by the competent national or European Union authorities or courts, which establishes the breaches and which is no longer subject to appeal for the part relating to the establishment of the breaches.

The group action may not be brought after a period of five years from the date on which the decision referred to in the first paragraph is no longer in force. subject to appeal.

CHAPTER VI

Miscellaneous provisions

Article 2a

(Unchanged)

A group action, whether for the cessation of a breach or for compensation for damages, suspends the limitation period for individual actions for damages.

compensation for losses resulting from breaches found by the judge or from the facts set out in the approved agreement.

The limitation period shall begin to run again, for a period of not less than six months, from the date on which the judgment is no longer in force. subject to ordinary appeal or appeal in cassation or from the date of approval of the agreement.

Article 2b

(Unchanged)

The judgment on liability and the judgment approving the settlement have the force of res judicata with regard to each of the members of the group whose loss has been compensated at the end of the proceedings.

Article 2c

(Unchanged)

Membership of the group does not preclude the right to take action under ordinary law to obtain compensation for losses that do not fall within the scope defined by the judgment on liability, which is no longer subject to ordinary appeal or appeal to the Supreme Court, or within the scope of an approved agreement.

Article 2d A

(Deleted)

Article 2d

(Unchanged)

A group action based on the same cause of action, the same breach and the same damages as those recognised by the judgment on liability or by an approved agreement is not admissible.

Article 2e

(Unchanged)

When a group action has been referred to the court and the plaintiff in the action is in default, any person with principal right of action may ask the court to substitute the plaintiff's rights.

Article 2 septies

(Unchanged)

Any clause whose purpose or effect is to prohibit a person from participating in a group action shall be deemed unwritten.

Article 2g

(Unchanged)

The plaintiff in the action may take direct action against the insurer covering the civil liability of the person responsible pursuant to article L. 124-3 of the Insurance Code.

Article 2h

If the action is of a serious nature, the judge may, in a specially reasoned decision, decide that the advance payment of costs relating to the measures to be taken must be paid by the parties.

The cost of the investigation it orders shall be borne in whole or in part by the State.

If the application before it is dismissed, it may also order the State to pay all or part of the costs.

Article 2i

(Unchanged)

The detailed rules for the application of this Title shall be determined by decree in the Conseil d'État.

TITLE II

MISCELLANEOUS AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER I

(Division deleted)

Article 2 undecies

(Deleted)

CHAPTER II

Authorisation to carry out cross-border representative actions

Article 2 duodecies A

For the purposes of this Chapter, cross-border group action means a group action brought by a claimant before a court or competent authority of a Member State of the European Union other than that in which the claimant has been designated, pursuant to Article 4 of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 on representative actions to protect the collective interests of consumers and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC.

Article 2k

In accordance with conditions defined by decree, the Minister responsible for consumer affisissues an authorisation to carry out the following activities cross-border representative actions, within the meaning of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 on representative actions to protect the collective interests of consumers and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC, to legal persons who:

1° Provide proof that, on the date their application for approval is submitted, they have been effectively and publicly involved in the protection of the environment for twelve consecutive months.

consumer interests:

- 2° Have a statutory purpose which demonstrates that they have a legitimate interest iprotecting the interests of consumers;
 - 3° Are non-profit-making;

- 4° Are not, on the date their application for authorisation is submitted, the subject of collective proceedings as provided for in Book IV of the Commercial Code, a insolvency proceedings and are not declared insolvent;
- 5° Are independent and not influenced by persons other than consumers, in particular professionals, with an interest in in the introduction of any representative action, including in the case of financing by third parties. To this end, they have adopted written procedures for preventing and managing conflicts of interest;
- 6° Marvailable to the public, by any appropriate means, information on their statutory purpose, their activities, the sources of their information and their activities.

their financing and organisation.

The Minister responsible for consumer affairs shall publish and make available to the public the list of legal entities which he has approved in advance.

for the purposes of bringing cross-border representative actions within the meaning of Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 referred to above.

Article 2 terdecies A

(Unchanged)

At the request of the European Commission or a Member State the European Union, the administrative authority responsible for competition and competition policy shall

If one of the bodies referred to in Article 2k no longer meets the criteria for which it was granted approval, the consumer will carry out the necessary checks.

The administrative authority responsible for competition and consumer affairs will inform the authority that made the request of its position.

CHAPTER III

Coordination provisions

Article 21

The Consumer Code is amended as follows:

1° In the third paragraph of Article L. 132-1 A and in the second paragraph of Articles L. 241-1-1, L. 241-5 and L. 242-18-1, the words "and L. 623-1" are deleted.

replaced by the words: "and Title I^{er} of the law regime for group actions";

on the legal

1° bis Article L. 621-7 reads as follows:

"Art. L. 621-7. - The associations mentioned in article L. 621-1 and horganisations mentioned in I bis of article 1^{er} bis of law no. of

to the legal system for group actions can take action before the civil courts to stop or prohibit any unlawful act that directly or indirectly harms the collective interests of consumers.

"Unless otherwise provided for in this Title, this action shearried out in accordance with the procedures laid down in Title I^{er} of the aforementioned Act of ...";

1° *ter* In Article L. 621-9, the words: "for acts that do not constitute a criminal offence" are deleted and, after the reference: "L. 621-1", the following words are inserted: "and the bodies mentioned in *Ia* of Article 1^{er} *bis*

de la loi n° durelative au régime juridique des actions de groupe";

2° At the end of Article L. 652-1, the words "in Article L. 623-1" are replaced by by the words: "au 1°du I of Article 1^{er} bis of the loi n° durelative au régime juridique des actions de groupe";

3° (Deleted)

Article 2m

Article L. 77-10-1 of the Code of Administrative Justice reads as follows:

"Art. L. 77-10-1. - Group actions are governed by Title I^{er} of the French Act on the legal status of group actions.

Article 2n

(Deleted)

CHAPTER IV

(Division deleted)

Article 2e

(Deleted)

CHAPTER IV BIS

Overseas provisions

(New division)

Article 2 septdecies (new)

This law, with the exception of article 1^{er} *quindecies*, is applicable to the Wallis and Futuna Islands.

CHAPTER V

Entry into force and repeal of specific group action regimes

Article 3

- I. (Unamended) The following are repealed:
- 1° Chapter III of Title II of Book VI of the Consumer Code;
- 2° Article L. 142-3-1 of the Environment Code;
- 2° bis The articles L. 77-10-2 à L. 77-10-25 of the code de justice administrative ;
- 3° Chapter XI of Title VII of Book VII of the same Code;
- 3° bis Article L. 211-9-2 of the Code of Judicial Organisation;
- 4° Articles L. 1143-1 to L. 1143-13 of the Public Health Code;
- 5° Section 2 of Chapter IV of Title III of Book I^{er} of Part One of the Labour Code;

- 6° Article 37 of Law no. 78-17 of 6 January 1978 on data processing, data files and individual liberties;
- 7° Article 10 of Law no. 2008-496 of 27 May 2008 containing various provisions adapting to Community law in the field of the fight against money laundering, terrorism and terrorism-related crime is hereby amended. against discrimination;
- 8° Chapter I^{er} of Title V of Act 2016-1547 of 18 November 2016 on the modernisation of the justice system for the 21st^e century.
- *Ia (new)*. In the first paragraph of article L. 532-20f the codede l'organisation judiciaire, the reference: "L. 211-9-2," is deleted.
- K II. (*Unamended*) The provisions of I shall continue to apply to actions brought before the publication of this Act.
- p III. This law shall only apply to actions where the event giving rise to liability or the failure to fulfil obligations occurred after the entry into force of this law.

 this law.

Articles 4 to 6

(Deletions maintained)