

# Icelandic humanist group first to get legal recognition as a “secular life stance organisation”

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On Friday 3 May 2013, the Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association, [Sidmennt](#), was registered as the first "secular life stance organization" in Iceland. This move comes in accordance with a law, passed by the Icelandic Parliament earlier this year, which regulates registered religions and life stance organisations.

The President of Sidmennt, Hope Knutsson, has expressed deep gratitude for Sidmennt's new status, stating that by making an ethical and Humanist association fully equal in terms of institutional recognition, Iceland is again at the forefront of human rights victories worldwide. She said: "Our Humanist life stance is now officially recognized by the government. This turning point demonstrates that in Iceland there are progressive people who respect human rights. Icelandic recognition of GLBT rights in recent decades is an excellent example and now people with a secular Humanist philosophy of life are gaining respect and acceptance".

Sidmennt has been organising secular confirmation ceremonies for 25 years, and secular and Humanist baby-namings, weddings, and funerals for 5 years. As a listed organisation in the national registry, Sidmennt's marriage ceremonies will now have legal status, meaning that couples will no longer have to go to government authorities to have a non-religious wedding.

Sidmennt will also now benefit from the so-called 'church tax' for people who join through that institution. Knutsson noted the benefits of this for Sidmennt's prospects of growth: "Almost all of the work within Sidmennt [...] has been done on a volunteer basis which has limited its growth. We look forward now to being able to develop our services and programs more fully and to continue to work for separation of church and state and towards a truly secular society where diversity and respect for all life stances and human rights are celebrated".

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