

ADMD-Letzebuerg news , first quarter 2007

The past months of this year have meant for ADMD-L the continued struggle to present our point of view concerning old and narrow-minded laws published in a new proposal for a bill on “palliative care and end of life” as well as questioning the Medical Association’s unrelenting deontology concerning euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Along with 8 associations concerned with medical and end-of-Life care, Admd-L was invited to a hearing in the House of Representatives to put forward her views concerning a Bill (5584) on “palliative care, living will and end of Life care” to be adopted before the end of the year.

ADMD-L regrets that the issue of depenalisation of euthanasia was not even mentioned in this bill.

Convinced that palliative care and euthanasia cannot be dissociated, ADMD-L refutes the idea that the development of better palliative care will render any termination of life solution unnecessary. Disappointed with the expression that “the doctor should consider the patient’s refusal to further treatment”, we feel strongly that this should read : “the doctor must respect the patient’s wishes concerning certain treatments”. *“Free consent is the patient’s right – a free patient in dialogue with a free doctor”.*

The bill on euthanasia , which was defeated in Parliament by 25 voices to 27 in 2002, will be re-presented with certain amendments concerning the controlling commission for euthanasia. This commission had been proposed as a pre-euthanasia “clearing”-commission of 9 members. This has however not been a happy proposal, since it defeated the idea of “self-determination”. – The new proposal is for a post-euthanasia examination by such a commission, as used successfully in Belgium and Holland.

Regular consulting afternoons at the offices of Patienten Verriedung to discuss and help with living wills have proved very popular. People are becoming more aware of the importance of a written statement for their end of life preoccupations. Our Living will has been re-worked as a model on which members can formulate their own wishes for treatment or refusal of such, or asking for a “peaceful” death, even though active euthanasia is not yet permissible.

We are aware that the Living Will is a good subject as an opening talk to groups to whom we wish to present our association. Such presentations are now taking place in several Pensioner’s clubs, throughout the country, combining it with the very moving film on Marie Humbert and her son Vincent. - We would welcome more speakers for this to relieve our committee members, especially people from the medical world would be most welcome. Not easy to find. Good contacts with a few doctors who do applaud our ideas, but refuse to get involved.

Our presence at a well-visited Health Day in a very vibrant town is now an established yearly fact . Our stand was visited by some 90 people, and our committee members took pleasure in passing on information and collecting new adherents. Visibility is important and for this we shall also be present at a day of “Bénévolat” organized by a central bureau to motivate more people to give their time and talents for benevolent work.

Two of our members were present in Bruxelles at the vibrant conference on Medically assisted dying and euthanasia : a matter of human rights ! , organized by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. – a great inspiration and good contacts to influence our work.

ADMD-L will also be represented by 2 members in Strasbourg for the RtD-Europe conference in October.