

Invitation to the two-yearly RTDE Conference,
11-12 October 2017, Wemmel/Brussels.

It has taken a lot of time in negotiating with our MEP representatives for our presentation in the European Parliament (EP) but, at last, we are expected on Thursday 12 October 2017 in the Parliament in Brussels.

This will be part of our two-yearly Conference, in Brussels this time.

The program is that we meet in Wemmel near Brussels on the 11 October 2017, in the Centre of Expertise for a Dignified Death (<http://www.wemmel.center>) founded by Wim Distelmans, professor at the Free University of Brussels.

The presentation in the European Parliament will be introduced by Mrs Hilde Vautmans, a Belgian MEP, and by Dr Aycke Smook, the President of RTDE.

Lectures will be given by Prof Dr Joachim Cohen, Professor of Public Health and Palliative care, End of Life Research Group, Brussels Ghent, Mrs Isabel Alonso Dávila, Presidente of DMD-Catalunya (Spain), Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Dieter Birnbacher, Präsident of DGHS (Germany), and Mrs Agnes Wolbert, CEO of NVVE (NL).

We must ask all persons that want to attend this presentation to provide us with a copy of their passport (ID page), which is required by the European Parliament for their security procedures.

We have an option in the Best Western Hotel Expo in Brussels with shuttle coach facilities to Wemmel and the European Parliament.

On behalf of the Right to Die Europe board,



Aycke Smook MD
President of RTDE, INGO, CoE

RTDE CONFERENCE
Wednesday 11 October 2017 at
The Wemmel Center, Wemmel, Brussels, Belgium

Programme

10:00-10:30. Arrival and Registration (coffee, tea, and cold drinks).

10:30. Reception and Welcome by Prof Dr Wim Distelmans, Director of the Wemmel Center.

10:45. Introduction by Dr Aycke Smook, President of RTDE.

11:00. Talks on the situation in the Benelux Countries concerning Euthanasia, and Palliative Care in Hospitals, Elderly Homes and at Home, by Prof Dr Joachim Cohen and Dr Aline De Vleminck.

12:15. Questions

12:30. Lunch: in the Wemmel Center

13:15. Talk by Prof Dr Wim Distelmans on the function of the Wemmel Center of Expertise concerning Dying in Dignity within the Law (which has been in Operation for 15 years in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg), and comparing this to other European Countries.

14:00. Short Talks by
Prof Dr Dr h c Dieter Birnbacher, DGHS,
Dr Agnes Wolbert, NVVE, and
Mrs Isabel Alonso Dávila, DMD-Catalunya (Spain).

Possible Discussion Topics

1. Should other Countries take the situation in the Benelux Countries as a model?
2. What are the difficulties that caregivers, activists, and lay people meet, concerning the legal and ethical problems, including issues for foreigners, and should we accept voluntary euthanasia tourism?

3. How do we deal with increasing domestic and foreign concerns about requests for Medical Aid in Dying by the Elderly, and Alzheimer's, and Psychiatric Patients.
4. How do we improve the implementation of Belgian, other Benelux Countries, and European legislation?

15:00. Break for coffee, tea, and cold drinks.

15:15. RTDE two-yearly General Meeting

1. Two-Yearly Report 2015-2017
2. Financial Report
3. Election of Board Members.

15:45. Short Oral Reports by Delegates of attending RTD societies.

16:30. Discussion of questions and comments to take to the MEPs meeting in the European Parliament (the next day), possibly including the following:

Questions for Members of European Parliament (the next day):

1. How to recognize and ensure that every citizen has the right to be considered for pain management, palliative care, a worthy end of life and a dignified death (potentially including voluntary euthanasia).
2. How to make pain management (diagnosis and treatment) and palliative care a high priority in all National and European Health Systems.
3. How to Establish a European Working Group for pain management, palliative care, and a worthy and dignified end of life, including systems of periodic evaluation of progress and results.

Questions for our Societies:

1. How to recognize and realise the Right of every Citizen to access palliative care, a worthy end of life, a dignified death, and medical aid in dying within each & in every European Country.
2. How to establish a European Platform to ameliorate the quality of the end of life for every European Citizen.

3. How to create a European palliative care Platform, suitable for life's end, to improve the quality of life's end for every European Citizen.

17:00. Conclusions.

18:30. Dinner. In the Brasserie de l'Expo (seven minutes' walk from the Best Western Hotel Expo).

Please note that items may be subject to change, due to circumstances beyond the organisers' control.

**Right to Die Europe (RTDE) in the European Parliament,
Thursday 12 October 2017.**

Dignified End-of-Life in Europe.

A Dignified End of Life is a Human Right: How to Guarantee this?

10:00. Welcome by Mrs Hilde Vautmans, Member of the European Parliament.

10:10. Introduction and welcoming by the Chairman, Dr Aycke Smook, President of RTDE.

10:20. A talk by Prof Dr Joachim Cohen, Professor of Public Health and Palliative care, End of Life Research Group, Brussels and Ghent:

Advance Care planning, end-of-life and Medical Aid in Dying in the BENELUX Countries regulation and practice.

10:45. A talk by Dr Agnes Wolbert, CEO, NVVE, The Netherlands:

"The Euthanasia Debate in The Netherlands".

11:10. A talk by Mrs Isabel Alonso Dávila, Presidente of DMD-Catalunya, Spain:

"Developments in Spain".

11:35. A talk by Prof Dr Dr h c Dieter Birnbacher, Präsident of DGHS, Germany:

"The Situation in Germany".

12:00. Questions and debate with Members of the European Parliament from Benelux Countries, Germany, and Spain.

12:15. Signature of the Charter by the various Members of the European Parliament.

13:00. Stand-up reception with refreshments, informal talks, and networking.

14:00. Departure.

INFO.

Human rights, right to life, right to end life.

Every European country should make everyone free to decide on his or her own end of life.

Is the right to life inherent at the end of life, the commission can determine?

Scientific support, scientific counsel, and the European Union.

Text, leaflets, and invitations to Members of the European Parliament.

RTDE has links with 25 groups in the following countries:

Austria,
Denmark,
Finland,
France,
Germany,
Ireland,
Israel,
Italy,
Luxembourg,
The Netherlands,
Norway,
Portugal,
Spain,
Sweden,
Switzerland,
United Kingdom.

RTDE is a member of the Council of Europe's Conference of INGOs.

The Netherlands uses life-ending actions, and a written request is preferable. A second opinion by an independent physician required (SCEN)

Belgium and Luxembourg have comprehensive rules of procedure, including registration.

Belgium has no arrangement for Rational Suicide (Dignicide).

Luxembourg and Belgium require that the patient must make a written request.

In Belgium, at the end, two doctors must be involved.

In Belgium, Euthanasia is classed as a natural death.

In the Netherlands, there is a scheme for minors aged over 12 years, but in Luxembourg and Belgium there is not.

In Luxembourg, the procedure must be professional, and there are substantive requirements for diligence.

An important difference from the Netherlands is the medical discipline: in Belgium and Luxembourg, professional codes and disciplinary law apply.

There is mandatory disclosure, and transparency in all Benelux Countries, and mutual recognition in a treaty.

Challenges:

1. Refusing euthanasia.
2. Problems affecting minors.
3. Permanent proficiency/capacity (enduring advance decisions) or permanent accepted declaration of will.
4. Palliative sedation and (slow) euthanasia.

Countries where Euthanasia or (Medical) Aid in Dying is legal (in date order):

1940, Switzerland

1997, Oregon, USA

1997, Washington State, USA

2002, Netherlands

2002, Belgium

2002, Luxembourg, experts and 2 doctors

2009, Montana, USA

2010, Colombia

2013, Vermont, May 20, USA

2016, Canada

2016, California, USA

Anecdotally, in Ireland, illegal active euthanasia by physician accounts for 57% end of life, as a patient agreement in threatening diseases.
