Country: Norway

Comitee: WHO

Igenda Item: Legalization of Euthanasia

Assisted Suicide is happens when the desiring patient is provided substances by the healthcare supervisors and ending their lives under the surveillance of the healthcare professionals such as doctors and nurses. Euthanasia refers to deliberately ending someone’s life, usually to relieve suffering. Doctors shall not provide euthanasia or assisted suicide, both of which are actions in which the doctor deliberately helps to accelerate the time of death. The limitation of life-sustaining or futile treatment is not regarded as assisted dying because in such cases the patient dies as a result of the underlying illness. The same applies to palliative sedation, where the aim is to control symptoms that cannot be relieved in any other way.

In recent years, a growing number of countries have legalised and introduced assisted dying. In Norway, only the Progress Party and the Green Party (as of September 2021) have spoken in favour of evaluating or introducing assisted dying, while the general population has repeatedly shown a positive attitude towards assisted dying in opinion polls. You get the feeling that 'assisted dying is on its way', also in Norway, and that it is just a question of time. Doctors shall not provide euthanasia or assisted suicide, both of which are actions in which the doctor deliberately helps to accelerate the time of death. The limitation of life-sustaining or futile treatment is not regarded as assisted dying because in such cases the patient dies as a result of the underlying illness. The same applies to palliative sedation, where the aim is to control symptoms that cannot be relieved in any other way.

Active voluntary euthanasia remains illegal, though a caregiver may receive a reduced punishment for taking the life of someone who consents to it. Norway allow passive euthanasia under strict circumstances where those suffering from an incurable disease can decide not to be administered life-prolonging treatmens, such as artifical nutrition or hydration. It’s important not to confuse passive euthanasia with witdrawing life sustaining treatment in the person’s best interests. The latter can be part of palliative care and is not necesserily euthanasia.