

Country: Serbia
Committee: World Health Organization
Agenda: Legalization of Euthanasia



Serbia is a landlocked country located in the west-central Balkans in East Europe. Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo to the west, Romania, and Bulgaria to the east, Hungary to the north, North Macedonia to the south (1). Serbia, whose capital is Belgrade, is a member of the European Council, OSCE, CEFTA, UN, PfP, BSEC and seeks to join the EU by 2025. The official language is Serbian. The capital is Belgrade. The population is approximately 6.844.000 citizens. The form of government is a unitary multiparty republic with one legislative house; Aleksandar Vučić is the President of Serbia, and Ana Brnabić is the Prime Minister of Serbia (2). From an economic view, Serbia is a middle-high-earning country(3).

Serbia is a country where active euthanasia is illegal but the Serbian laws protect passive euthanasia (rights of refusing life-saving and refusing to maintain the treatment, etc.) (4).

The Law on Patient's Rights regulates "The patient's right to reject proposed medical measures, even when it leads to rescuing or maintaining his/her life." Therefore, patients in Serbia who suffer from incurable diseases and endure severe pain and torment are allowed to terminate treatment voluntarily (5).

Serbia doesn't let anyone euthanase themselves or any people for no reason except the patient doesn't want this. In situations in which the patient is in a coma or a persistent vegetative state, Serbia gives this right to people who are professionals, which know about this topic, to doctors. For example, if the patient is in the situation we have mentioned, the ultimate decision about a patient's life or the termination of artificial life support is still made by physicians, primarily based on medical criteria and the findings of the consultative team (5).

According to Akbayram (6) and Dimovski et al (7) only %52 of the medical faculty students support active euthanasia, and %62,4 of them support a referendum for euthanasia. It is so near to the statistics in the countries which don't let active euthanasia like Turkey and has so much difference with the countries which allowed active euthanasia like the

Netherlands. Therefore, our doctors, our life-savers are also same-minded with our government, laws, and citizens.

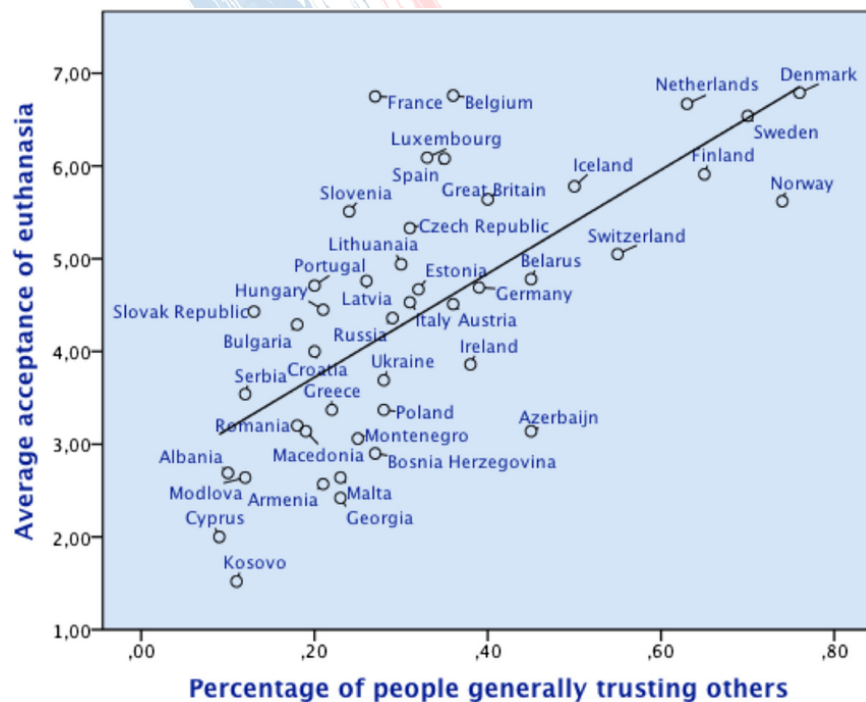


Figure 1. Average acceptance of euthanasia and trust rates by country.

If you look at Figure 1, you can see that also our people disagree with the thought of euthanasia. This also proves that we, our people, our government, our doctors, and our people are the same-minded about this topic (8).

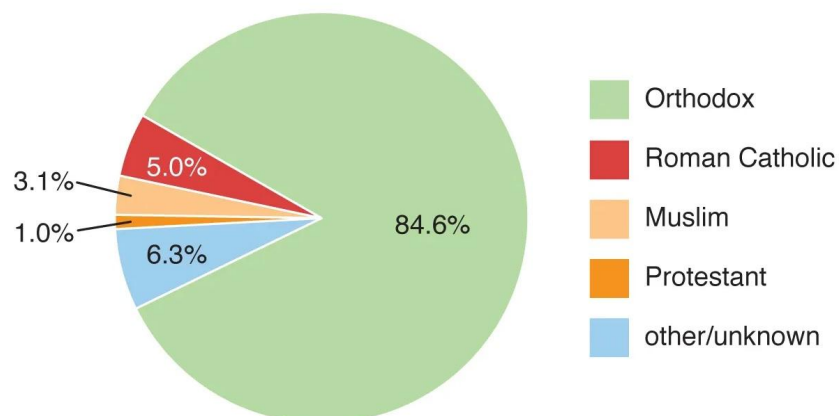


Figure 2. Religious affiliation of Serbia (9)

We pride ourselves on having a community, most of which do not do moral or unethical work. Also, most of these people believe the god and define themselves as orthodox people as you can see from Figure 2 (9).

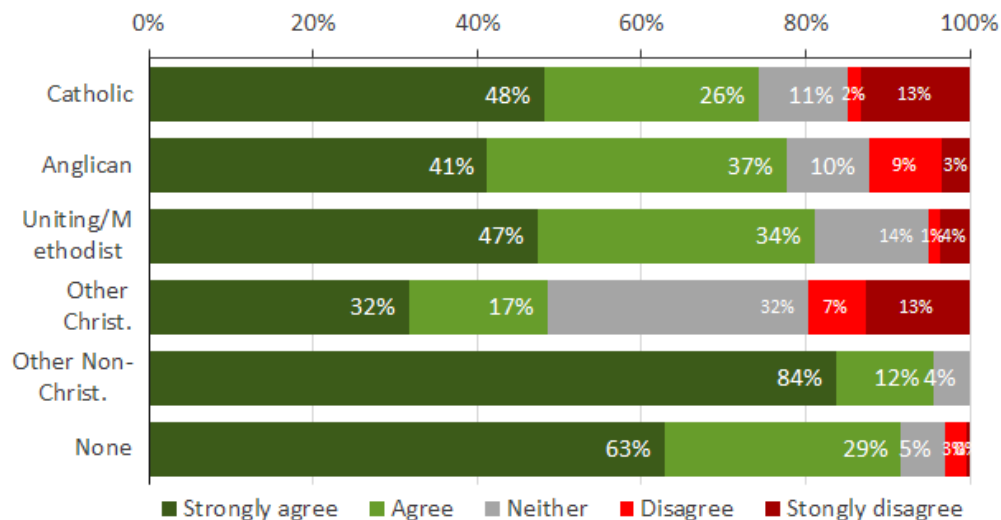


Figure 3. Attitudes toward VAD (Voluntary Assisted Dying) by religious affiliation 2019 (AES data) (10)

If you look at Figure 3, you can see that most orthodox people believe that active euthanasia and physician-helped suicide are unacceptable things, and they also think, they need to be banned (10).

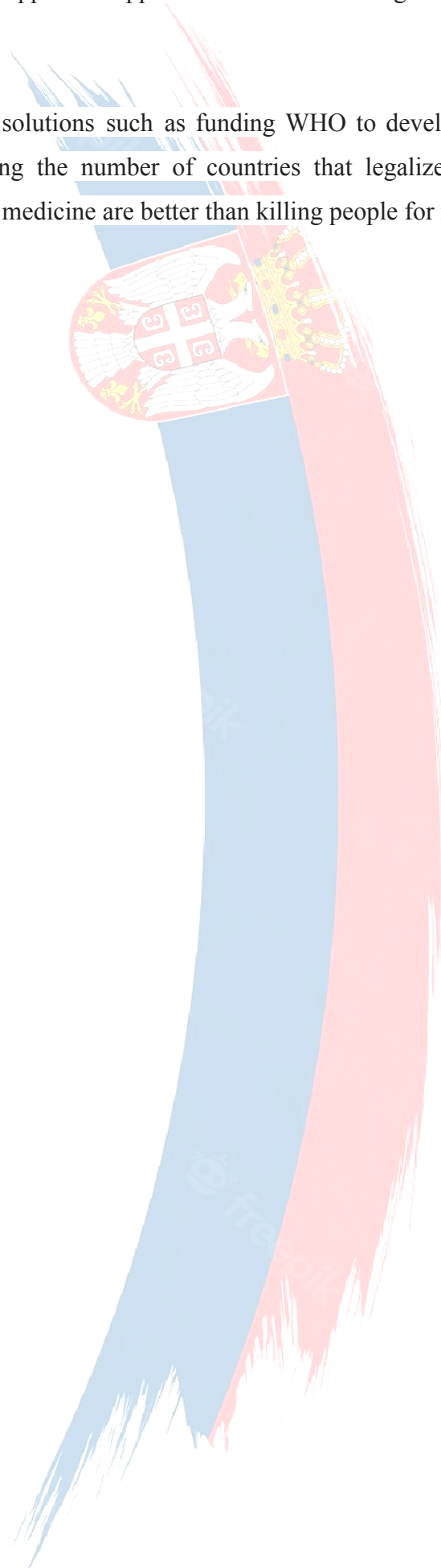
The action of our state in this regard is to enact the “Patient Rights Law”. This law legalizes passive euthanasia, gives our patients the freedom to do whatever they want, makes active euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide illegal, and protects our patients by giving doctors the right to decide for a patient in a coma or a persistent vegetative state (5). Our state protects the health and freedom of our people and doesn’t let anyone be killed for no reason with this law.

Fortunately, our country, Serbia, doesn’t let anyone be killed for no reason by another human or by themselves. Also, we don’t suppress the freedoms of our people, our country’s freedom like a totalitarian government. We let all of our people use their rights and freedoms totally in this topic like other topics and if they are not able to do it, we give their rights to a secure place; to our doctors, and science.

In the world, there are some internationally recognized covenants like “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”. According to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, humans don’t have the right to kill themselves (11). Also, everyone knows

that Hippocrates the father of medicine said, “Primum non nocere” (First, do no harm). This shows that euthanasia is opposite Hippocrates's axioms although some scientists say, it is an aged axiom (12).

We believe that solutions such as funding WHO to develop healthcare facilities in poor countries, increasing the number of countries that legalize passive euthanasia, and increasing confidence in medicine are better than killing people for no reason.



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