

Position Paper BestMUN'22

Country: Ireland

Committee: Ga 6 Legal

Agenda Item: Legality Of Euthanasia



Ireland is an island nation on the westernmost edge of Europe. It is the continent's second largest island (after Great Britain) Geopolitically, Ireland is divided between the Republic of Ireland (officially named Ireland), which covers five-sixths of the island, and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. In 2011, the population of Ireland was about 6.6 million, ranking it the second-most populous island in Europe after Great Britain. As of 2016, 4.8 million lived in the Republic of Ireland, and 1.8 million in Northern Ireland.

The geography of Ireland comprises relatively low-lying mountains surrounding a central plain, with several navigable rivers extending inland. Its lush vegetation is a product of its mild but changeable climate which is free of extremes in temperature. Much of Ireland was woodland until the end of the Middle Ages. Today, woodland makes up about 10% of the island, compared with a European average of over 33%, and most of it is non-native conifer plantations. There are twenty-six extant land mammal species native to Ireland. The Irish climate is influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and thus very moderate, and winters are milder than expected for such a northerly area, although summers are cooler than those in continental Europe. Rainfall and cloud cover are abundant.

Active Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide are currently illegal in the republic of Ireland, under the Criminal Law (Suicide) Act 1993.

It is an offence if someone 'aids, abets, counsels or procures the suicide of another, or an attempt by another to commit suicide'.

In 2013 the Supreme Court made clear in the Fleming decision that whilst there was no Constitutional right to die by suicide, the Oireachtas was free to legislate for Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, i.e. there is no Constitutional prohibition on the introduction of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in Ireland.

From the Supreme Court's 1996 In Re Ward of Court ruling, it is clear that Passive Euthanasia (the removal of feeding tubes etc) is permissible.

The Medical Council Guidelines make the above legal position clear in section 46 of its Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics

